

# BULLETIN of the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation

Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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## 7TH INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

Our 7th International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration (13 April to 31 July) contained 94 artworks by 86 artists from many countries. This latest show in the series, in preparation since the last International in 1988, provided an excellent overview of the continuing vitality and diversity of contemporary botanical art. Selections from the exhibition will be included in a travel show that will be circulated to museums, schools, botanic gardens and other institutions.

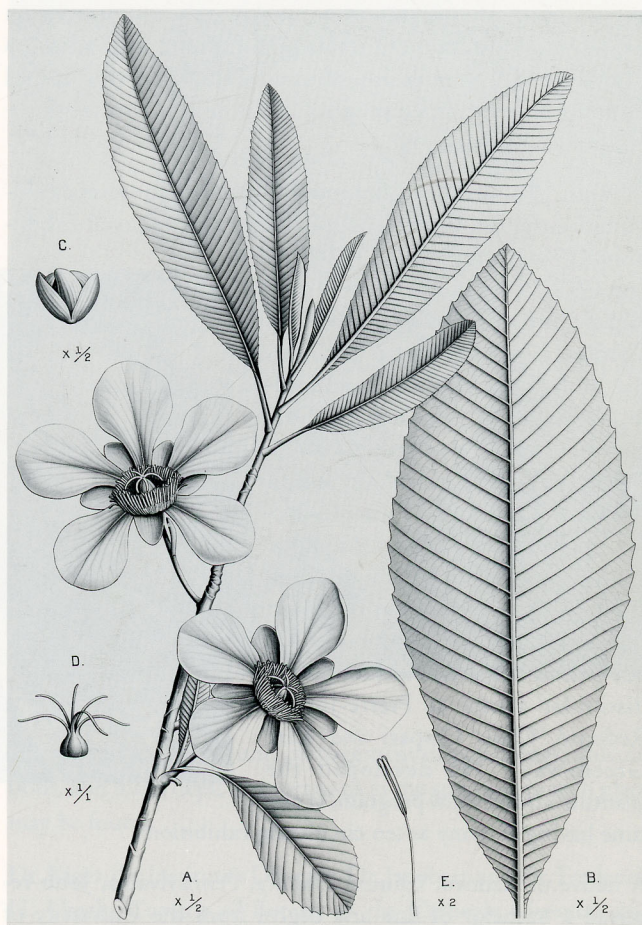
Over half of the works were from the Institute's collection. Significant loans were provided by the Japan Botanical Art Society and Nihon-Kobunkan Co., Ltd. in Tokyo, the Jardin Botanique National de Belgique in Brussels and the Wageningen Agricultural University in The Netherlands. Attracting much attention were seven extremely detailed Indian artworks, depicting such subjects as bonsai trees and red apples, from Jaipur and Dehra Dun. We thank the Smithsonian Special Foreign Currency Program for a grant enabling us to find and include the works of certain Indian artists.

Approximately forty artists, including six from England, three from Japan, two from Canada and one from Belgium, attended a lively preview reception. We are grateful to Galison Books of New York for sponsoring an artists and lenders colloquium. The camaraderie and "cross-pollination" among the artists was gratifying to Institute staff.

We are most grateful to the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and The Franklin Mint Foundation for the Arts for their grants in support of the exhibition. We also thank The British Council for their contribution toward travel expenses of the British artists.

The first exhibition in this series appeared in 1964, followed by successive shows in 1968/1969, 1972/1973, 1977/1978, 1983 and 1988. Collectively, the catalogues from those earlier shows and the present one contain the most comprehensive record available of 20th-century botanical artists and illustrators — the number of individuals now totals 622.

To date reviews and/or publicity notices have appeared in the *Pittsburgh post-gazette* (4 April and 2 May), *India abroad* (1 May), the *Guild of Natural Science Illustrators newsletter* (April and



Watercolor of *Dillenia* sp. by Ganga Singh

Summer), *Carnegie Mellon magazine* (Summer), *Antiques and the arts weekly* (12 June) and *American horticulturist* (July).

In the *Guild of Natural Science Illustrators Newsletter*, Norm Frisch favorably reviewed the catalogue of the 7th International Exhibition: "...[W]hat an impressive record this 142 page catalogue is.... It presents the best of the best at the international level." He further remarked: "A full gamut of presentations is seen.... It is interesting to see that while illustration presentation conventions unite the discipline, there is still room for distinct personal expression." Mr. Frisch commended the inclusion of biographical information and portraits of the artists and praised the preservation of detail in the reproductions of the illustrations, deeming the catalogue a "worthwhile addition" to personal libraries. (See Other New Publications, p. 8.)



IN MEMORIAM  
JOHN V. BRINDLE (1911-1991)

We note with much regret the death of John V. Brindle, Curator of Art Emeritus. John was the Institute's first Curator of Art and was appointed to the faculty in 1961. He retired in 1981. He was chiefly responsible for all aspects of the Institute's art collection and program. He was recognized worldwide as an authority on 20th-century work in the field of botanical art and illustration. As Curator he built an extensive collection of such art and developed an active and diversified program of exhibitions, including accompanying literature.

Between 1961 and 1981, John was responsible for several exhibitions each year, including the first four International Exhibitions (1964, 1968/1969, 1972/1973 and 1977/1978). A few others of note include "Artists from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew," "American Cornucopia: 19th Century Still Lifes and Studies," "Reflections from The Third Day: Photographic Revelations of Plant Design," "A Northeast Folio," "Indian Botanical Paintings," "Torner Collection of Sessé and Mociño Biological Illustrations," "Flora Portrayed: Classics of Botanical Art from the Hunt Institute Collection" and numerous one-person exhibitions including such dissimilar artists as Pierre-Joseph Redouté, Claus Caspari and Kate Greenaway. He developed the Institute's travel show program, at one time having as many as ten circulating exhibitions.

A native of Renovo, Clinton County, Pennsylvania, John received a bachelor of fine arts degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1941 and worked there as an assistant in the fine arts library and gallery and as an instructor in the air cadet program. Subsequently he worked as a draftsman for the Pennsylvania Railroad and then for the Rust Engineering Company. From 1955 to 1960 he also worked independently as an exhibit preparator, in which connection he worked with Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt's collections of botanical books and artworks before they came to Carnegie Mellon.

--James J. White

John worked for Mrs. Hunt before the Hunt Botanical Library was established and so, when the time came for a curator of prints to be appointed to the new library, John was the obvious choice. His knowledge of art history and his infallible taste were joined to a considerable technical ability in framing and displaying to

advantage the many treasures that came under his purview, and he set the standard for all future exhibitions at the Hunt Institute.

Artists have the reputation of being difficult or temperamental, but John's genuine admiration for what they did and his warmth and humor soothed all difficulties that may have arisen in his dealings with them. Many of them became close friends. Nothing was ever too much trouble for him and he was never ruffled and never impatient.

He was a dedicated and catholic reader, but he disliked writing himself and found it difficult; it is strange that this distaste existed along with a great interest in words and language. He loved to collect and quote examples of solecisms, and we find ourselves still repeating and laughing at some of his finds, such as "irregardless," which he improved upon with the monstrous triple negative "disirregardless." He was fond of poking fun at politicians who would speak of "true facts"; or he would ask a botanist, with serious demeanor, whether he worked with "a botanical plant." He was fond of P. G. Wodehouse's works on Bertie Wooster and Jeeves and was delighted when he discovered that nieces and nephews were becoming avid Wodehouse fans. In spite of his reluctance to write, his exhibition

catalogues are models of accuracy and style. He was generous in his praise of others' writing talents. He would have been a good choice to bring out a new edition of Wilfrid Blunt's classic book, *The art of botanical illustration*, but he always resisted the idea when it was broached.

John invariably thought more of others than himself. He nursed his dear wife Kathleen for more than two years before she died. After that he would plan his short visits to friends and family around his meals-on-wheels deliveries to which he was faithful until cancer finally prevented him from driving. To many of us he was like a father, not least to Susan Brindle, his California-based niece, who gave up her job to nurse him for the final agonizing five months of his life.

He was a good companion, an entertaining conversationalist, a formidable disputant—and gameplayer, especially tennis (a passion with him)—a knowledgeable listener to music and even quite a good performer (on the recorder), a gentle and good man, and we shall miss his talk and wit and kindness and zest for life.

--Ian MacPhail and Michael T. Stieber





## NEW ADJUNCT RESEARCH SCIENTIST

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Edward P. Krenzelok, Director of the Pittsburgh Poison Center of Children's Hospital, as Adjunct Research Scientist at the Institute.

Dr. Krenzelok and Dr. T. D. Jacobsen, the Institute's Assistant Director, have been collaborating on several poison-prevention and education projects for medical practitioners and the general public. Last year's "Pretty deadly" poisonous plants exhibition at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History explored the toxicity of common house, garden and forest plants. Small stakes designed to be placed in houseplant pots or gardens to warn children of poisonous plants were introduced at the show and distributed to visitors. The stakes feature the nationally recognized "Mr. Yuk" symbol and the Pittsburgh Poison Center's phone number. The ubiquitous "Mr. Yuk," in fact, originated and was developed at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

Dr. Krenzelok and Dr. Jacobsen also have written a series of articles on common plant exposures, currently being published in the journal *Family Practice Recertification*, dispelling myths regarding the toxicity of certain plants and identifying those plants that are indeed toxic. The articles are accompanied by information pieces for physicians to distribute to their patients. In preparation is a Poisonous Flora of Pennsylvania, an extensive reference work that will identify all plants in Pennsylvania that are toxic to humans and animals. The Flora will draw on the expertise of botanists, toxicologists, pharmacologists, physicians and veterinarians, and will include information on plants' toxins,



Dr. Edward P. Krenzelok

toxic parts, symptoms and management of poisonings, illustrations, and maps depicting locations in the state where each plant may be found.

Dr. Kiger, the Institute's Director, Dr. Jacobsen and Dr. Frederick H. Utech, Curator of Botany at the Carnegie Museum and Adjunct Research Scientist at the Institute, often are consulted by the Pittsburgh Poison Center—usually in cases of emergency—to assist in identifying plants that are suspected of poisoning. Between 1985 and 1990, 545,000 plant exposures were recorded nationally, representing 7% of all cases to which poison centers responded.

Dr. Krenzelok earned a doctorate in pharmacy from the University of Minnesota. He is a Diplomate of the American Board of Applied Toxicology and is affiliated with several professional societies, including the American Academy of Clinical Toxicology and the American Association of Poison Control Centers, and has written hundreds of articles for toxicological and medical journals.

[Ed. note: Free "Mr. Yuk" plant stakes are available in limited numbers to *Bulletin* subscribers and Institute Associates. Please contact the Institute for more information.]

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The *Bulletin* does not publish book reviews. Books for review in the Institute's journal, *Huntia*, should be directed to Dr. Robert W. Kiger, its Executive Editor, at the Institute.

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## BRIDSON AWARDED FOUNDERS' MEDAL

Gavin D. R. Bridson, Bibliographer and Senior Research Scholar at the Hunt Institute, has been awarded the Founders' Medal of the Society for the History of Natural History. He received the medal on 1 May 1992 at a ceremony during the Society's annual meeting in London. The Founders' Medal was established in 1986, the Society's Jubilee year, and is awarded biennially to a scholar eminent in the history and/or bibliography of natural history. Mr. Bridson's citation recognized his notable contributions to the history of illustration and illustrative techniques as applied to natural history.

## LAWRENCE MEMORIAL AWARD WINNER

The recipient of the 1992 Lawrence Memorial Award is J. Travis Columbus at the Department of Integrative Biology, University of California, Berkeley. A student of Dr. Thomas Duncan, Mr. Columbus has undertaken a study of generic-level taxonomy and evolution in the grama grasses and relatives (Gramineae: Cynodonteae: Boutelouinae). He will use the proceeds of the Award for field research, especially in Mexico. Commemorating Dr. George H. M. Lawrence, founding Director of the Hunt Institute, the semi-annual Award of \$1,000 is made to an outstanding doctoral candidate for travel in support of dissertation research in systematic botany or horticulture, or the history of the plant sciences.

## "SIR JOSEPH BANKS" INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

An international conference on "Sir Joseph Banks: A Global Perspective" will be held 22-23 April 1993 at the Royal Society in London to mark the 250th anniversary of Banks' birth and examine his worldwide influence in the progress and development of science and technology. There is no registration fee for the conference, which is sponsored by the Royal Society, the Natural History Museum, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, The Linnean Society of London, and the Society for the History of Natural History in association with the Banks Archive project. For more information and an application form, please contact: Mr. Rex E. R. Banks, Head of Library Services, The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD.



*Digitalis purpurea* from J. J. Rousseau's *La Botanique*, Paris, H. Perronneau, 1805.

## NOTES FROM THE FIELD

*DIGITALIS*: FROM THE GARDEN TO THE APOTHECARY

People have always had a vulnerable, almost symbiotic, relationship with plants. Wherever civilizations developed, there was a direct dependence and pressure upon the local vegetation for food, shelter, medicine, tools, and in some instances religious symbols. Early in our species' development, we were drawn to the available vegetation for sustenance and became keenly aware of those plants that could heal or poison us. One genus with both healing and toxic properties is *Digitalis* or foxglove, a member of the Scrophulariaceae (foxglove or figwort family), with 19 species native to Europe, northwest Africa and central Asia. "Digitalis" comes from the Latin word for "finger," in reference to its long, tubular flowers. A summer-flowering biennial or perennial ornamental herb propagated from seed or by division, *Digitalis* is



prized in eastern North American gardens for its lush foliage and pink, purple, red, white, or yellow flowers with spotted corolla tubes. Its most prominent species are *Digitalis purpurea* Linnaeus (common foxglove, or "bloody fingers," "dead man's bells," or "witch's bells") and *Digitalis lantana* J. F. Ehrhart (Grecian foxglove).

Plants have always been the subjects of medical experimentation and folklore. Foxglove was used in England and Wales as early as the tenth century, and its prevalence in English folk medicine has been linked to witchcraft in the Middle Ages, hence the common name "witch's bells." Dr. William Withering (1741-1799), an English physician, initially observed foxglove's medicinal use in a midwife's healing concoctions. He also knew of an English folk remedy for "dropsy," a condition characterized by swelling in the extremities and lungs, a weak pulse and shortness of breath ("dropsy" is now called congestive heart failure). To ascertain the curing ingredient in such remedies, Withering



Dr. William Withering

investigated the concoction and eventually isolated *Digitalis* leaves. When brewed in specified quantities and drunk in a concoction, the leaves apparently increased the flow of urine and therefore reduced swelling. In 1775 he initiated ten years of experimentation on *Digitalis* preparation and dosage, using a powdered leaf extract, which culminated in 1785 with the publication of his findings, *An account of the foxglove, and some of its medical uses*. He became famous for his successful treatment

of dropsy patients—a remedy no doubt preferable to the puncturing of swollen tissues that previously had been recommended by some.

Withering, however, had realized that foxglove's main beneficial effect was on the heart, where it increased pumping efficiency by reducing congestion in the veins, slowing down the contractions, and eliminating fluid from the heart. Because of this, he is acknowledged as having formally introduced *Digitalis* to "modern medicine," and his experiments presupposed pharmacognosy, the science of natural-product drugs. For centuries there has been a close affiliation between plant science and medicine. Early physicians relied heavily on the plant world for their medicines and often were trained in botany. Most of our early medications were plant derivatives, and approximately 38% of current medical prescriptions continue to be composed of natural substances.

In modern American medicine, *Digitalis* continues to yield widely used cardiac medications, many called "digitalis" drugs. The crucial cardiac glycosides found in the leaves, seeds, and flowers—including digoxin or digitoxin in *Digitalis lantana* and others in *Digitalis purpurea*, from which cardioactive drugs are manufactured—have never been adequately duplicated synthetically. Digitalis drugs slow and strengthen heart contractions and reduce venous blood pressure. However, excessive amounts of digitalis drugs—and, likewise, consumption of the plant's flowers, seeds, or leaves—can cause vomiting, severe headache, irregular pulse and heartbeat, convulsions, and possibly even sudden death. Dosage is all-important in the administration of digitalis drugs, as just tenths of milligrams may make the difference between a medically valuable and a toxic dose. *Digitalis* poisoning or "intoxication" in heart patients is a serious enough threat to have precipitated the development of an antidote; such overdoses, fortunately, are rare.

While "poisoning" in adults usually results from medical overdoses of digitalis drugs, children may be poisoned by sucking the flowers for nectar or chewing the leaves or seeds. Drying the leaves or flowers does not diminish glycoside potency. Water from a vase containing the cut flowers also can be poisonous. *Digitalis* has been used by criminal poisoners worldwide and as an arrow poison in Africa. It may affect, and even arrest, animals' heartbeats if, in spite of its bitter smell and taste, they consume it.

--T. D. Jacobsen and Sharon Tomasic

[Ed. note: This article inaugurates the new "Notes from the field" *Bulletin* feature, which is intended as a flexible forum for Institute staff to discuss developments in their professions or fields of study and related subjects of avocational interest and expertise.]





Artist P. N. Sharma

## DELECTUS HUNTIANA 14

Artist P. N. Sharma retired from the Botany Branch of the Forest Research Institute in Dehra Dun, India, in 1980, but he has been doing free-lance work since 1945. We learned about him from botanical bookseller/publisher Mr. G. S. Gahlot (Bishen Singh Mahendra Pal Singh, Dehra Dun) and acquired his watercolor "*Beaumontia grandiflora*" for our International Exhibition in 1988.

In November 1991 I had the good fortune (with gratitude to the Smithsonian Special Foreign Currency Program and to my Dehra Dun host, Mr. Gahlot) to be invited to visit the artist in his home. Sharma, age 70, small in stature, and a remarkably polite gentleman, showed me some of his own paintings and told me of his inspiration and training under mentor Ganga Singh (1895-1970), many of whose artworks (both ink and wash and watercolor) are displayed in the herbarium of the Forest Research Institute in Dehra Dun where he was Senior Artist. Mr. Sharma graciously lent the Institute two outstanding artworks by Singh for our 7th International Exhibition this year.

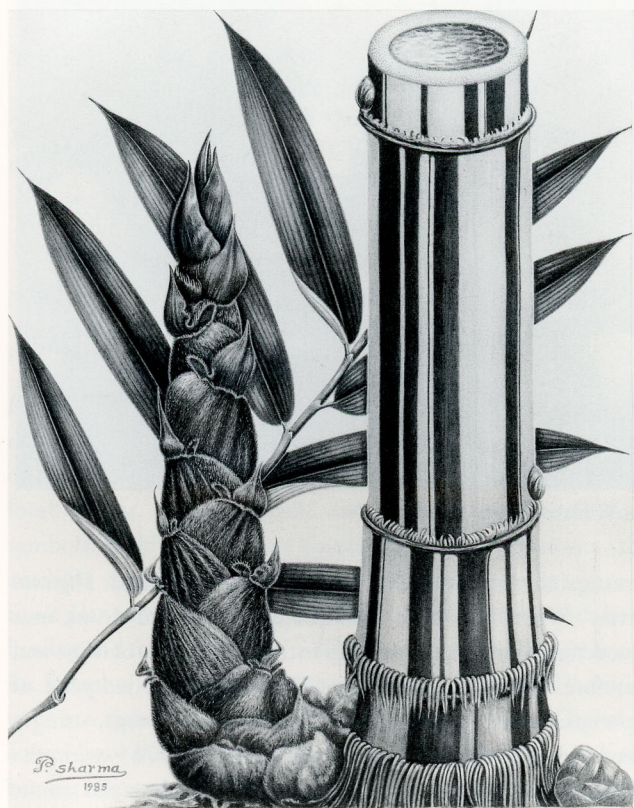
The Institute's collection also contains four bold and lively watercolors of bamboos by Sharma: "*Bambusa ventricosa*" (Buddah's Belly), "*Dendrocalamus strictus*" (*Dendrocalamus strictus* (Roxb.) Nees or Male Bamboo), "*Gigantochloa ater*" (*Gigantochloa atter* is a synonym of *G. atroviolacea* Widjaja or Black Bamboo) and "*Bambusa vulgaris* var. *striata*" (*Bambusa striata* Lodd. ex Lindl. or Yellow Bamboo). The latter originated

in China and Japan but is cultivated in India as an ornamental and used for poles and in construction. The culms are striped yellow and green. The species last flowered in November 1873.

These bamboos are quite similar in format to those illustrated by Sharma (under the botanical guidance of the late K. N. Bahadur) for S. S. R. Bennet and R. C. Gaur, *Thirty seven bamboos growing in India* (Dehra Dun, Forest Research Institute, 1990). We note that in the published paintings Sharma's culms, leaves and sections are parallel; in our originals, he has positioned the leaf diagonally behind the culm and section and he has depicted the shoot growing from the ground.

Our paintings of bamboo, all dated 1985, were acquired from the artist by Dr. Thomas R. Soderstrom, Curator of Grasses at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Upon his death in 1989 they were kindly donated to the Institute by his mother, Albinia Soderstrom. We took the opportunity to display these artworks during the university's International Festival last fall.

--James J. White

Watercolor of *Bambusa striata* Lodd. ex Lindl. by P. N. Sharma



## DELECTUS HUNTIANA 15

"I personally do not care one iota if I am never remembered at all anywhere by anyone." Benjamin Yoe Morrison wrote these words to his secretary May Blaine in response to her insistence that he preserve his papers. We at the Hunt Institute are fortunate that Miss Blaine's persistence prevailed.

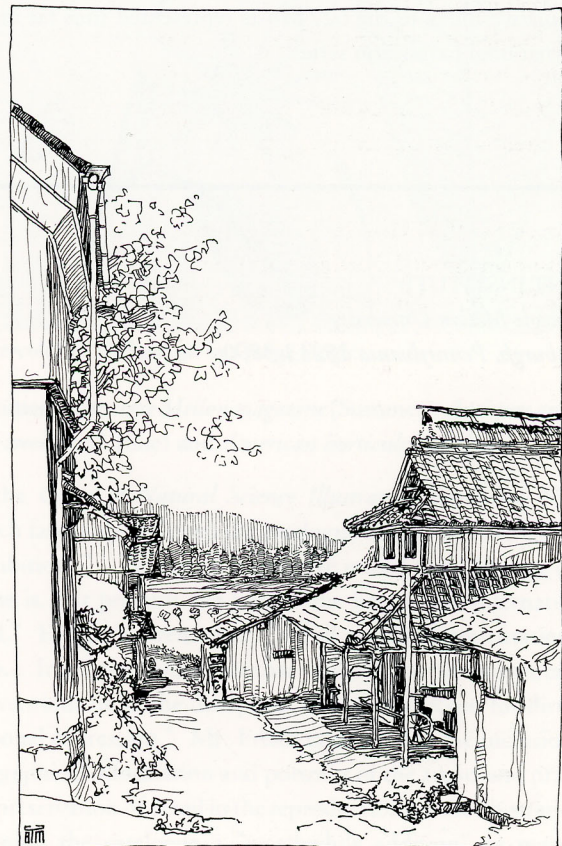
Benjamin Yoe Morrison was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1891. After graduating from the University of California and Harvard, he served in World War I. In 1920 he joined the United States Department of Agriculture as assistant to David Fairchild. From 1934 to 1948 he was Chief of the Division of Plant Exploration and Introduction, and from 1937 (while still with Plant Exploration) until 1951 he was Acting Director and then Director of the United States National Arboretum. He died in Pass Christian, Mississippi, in 1966. Morrison is probably best remembered for his introduction of ornamental plants into the United States. He developed a magnificent series of cold-hardy, large-flowered azaleas that have come to be known as the Glenn Dale Hybrids. Morrison was a multi-talented individual. In

addition to his work as a plant explorer and breeder, he excelled as a landscape architect, administrator, author, lecturer, musician and artist. His talent as a botanical artist is evident in the Hunt Institute Art Department where 39 of his works are included in the collection. But it is in the Archives of the Hunt Institute that other facets of his genius predominate. His correspondence, manuscripts, reports, breeding notes, and journals are some examples of the material available, but the jewels in this collection are the sketchbooks and drawings that accompany the papers—drawings with intriguing titles such as "One of the side streets near Sinkakuji, looking S.E. toward Nanpenpi" and "The back yard of one of the houses in the village about Sinkakuji." (See illustrations.) Morrison used his sketchbook as we, today, use the camera, and perusing his sketches is a visual adventure. We have over 150 drawings in various media of Chinese and Japanese gardens and other scenes he encountered during his travels. For these sketches along with seven boxes of Morrison's papers we are indebted to May Blaine's perseverance and her wish to ensure "monuments to his genius."

--Anita L. Karg



"The back yard of one of the houses in the village about Sinkakuji"



"One of the side streets near Sinkakuji, looking S.E. toward Nanpenpi"



*B-P-H/S* NOW AVAILABLE

*Botanico-Periodicum-Huntianum/Supplementum (B-P-H/S)* is a supplement to and partial revision of *B-P-H* that contains over 25,000 title entries arranged alphabetically by full title and is designed as a key to entries in both volumes. This new volume features citation abbreviations for all titles, improved cross-referencing and an expanded thesaurus of title words and their abbreviation equivalents. Its expanded coverage now includes periodicals dealing with molecular biology, biotechnology, environmental studies and conservation. The price of *B-P-H/S* is \$95.00 plus postage and handling.

## OTHER NEW PUBLICATIONS

*Catalogue [of the] 7th International Exhibition of Botanical Art & Illustration*. By James J. White and Autumn M. Farole. 1992. 142 pp.; illus. Pictorial stiff paper cover. \$18.00 ISBN 0-913196-55-X.

Portraits, biographies and bibliographies of 86 artists from 17 countries, with illustrations of works by each. Also includes a cumulative index to the 622 artists represented thus far in the International Exhibition series.

*Plant Taxonomic Database Standards. No. 2. World geographic scheme for recording plant distributions*. By S. Hollis and R. K. Brummitt. 1992. ix, 104 pp.; 16 maps. Stiff paper cover, \$18.00 ISBN 0-913196-56-8.

This scheme meets the need for a standard yet adaptable system of geographical units for use in recording plant distributions and arranging specimens. It identifies geographic units worldwide in a four-level hierarchy, incorporating continents, regions, provinces and countries. Each geographical unit at each level has its own numeric or alphanumeric code. The scheme is presented in five tables, the recognized geographical units are shown in 17 maps, and a gazetteer relates over 2,100 names to the system.

*Register of Pennsylvania biologists*. Second edition. Compiled and edited by T. D. Jacobsen and Sharon M. Tomasic. 1992. 120 pp. Paper cover. \$10.00 ISBN 0-911239-41-3.

Pennsylvania directory of biologists and their current research/specialties. Descriptive entries indexed by specialty, institution and geographic location within the state. Note: The Register is published by the Carnegie Museum of Natural History as Special Publication no. 16 and can be ordered from their Office of Scientific Publications. Order forms also are available from the Institute.

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