

BOOK NOTICE

ANNA LAURENT. 2016. **Botanical Art from the Golden Age of Scientific Discovery**. (ISBN-13: 978-0-226-32107-3, hbk.). The University of Chicago Press, 1427 East 60th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.press.uchicago.edu, 1-800-621-2736 (USA and Canada), 1-773-702-7248 (International)). \$60.00, 224 pp., 300 color plates, 9" × 11".

From the publisher: Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, wall charts were a familiar classroom component, displaying scientific images at a large scale, in full color. But it's only now that they've been superseded as a teaching tool that we have begun to realize something their ubiquity hid: they are stunning examples of botanical art at its finest.

This beautifully illustrated oversized book gives the humble wall chart its due, reproducing more than two hundred of them in dazzling full color. Each wall chart is accompanied by captions that offer accessible information about the species featured, the scientists and botanical illustrators who created it, and any particularly interesting or innovative features the chart displays. And gardeners will be pleased to discover useful information about plant anatomy and morphology and species differences. We see lilies and tulips, gourds, aquatic plants, legumes, poisonous plants, and carnivorous plants, all presented in exquisite, larger-than-life detail.

A unique fusion of art, science, and education, the wall charts gathered here offer a glimpse into a wonderful scientific heritage and are sure to thrill naturalists, gardeners, and artists alike.

Anna Laurent is a writer, producer, and photographer living in Los Angeles and New York City.

The opening paragraph of the book beautifully describes this era of art and science: "More than an archive of illustration and inquiry, this book documents an extraordinary convergence of disciplines that flourished in the late-nineteenth and early-twenty centuries. Europe was enjoying a golden age of scientific discovery; naturalists were exploring the globe and there as a clamoring for knowledge of the natural world. A pedagogical curiosity was no longer limited to elite salons and research; education was now considered a right afforded to all, in classrooms across the continent. And thus the botanical wall chart was born: a synthesis of art, science, and education."

Botanical Art from the Golden Age of Scientific Discovery is anything but plain and simple. Rather it is a collection of scientific art and science displayed with incredible detail and beauty. You cannot help but slowly turn the pages to absorb the meticulous detail featured in every illustration from lilies to roses to curious and beautiful poisonous plants. This spectacular work should be in every primary and secondary school and higher. In fact, the very art and science presented in this book was once used in the classroom to teach about the great age of discovery from all over the world. These wall charts served as teaching tools and inspiration. The two-page spread showing *Dionaea muscipula* (Venus flytrap) and *Drosera rotundifolia* (common sundew) is mesmerizing.—*Barney Lipscomb, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.*