

ARNOLD ARBORETUM  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



BULLETIN  
OF POPULAR INFORMATION

---

SERIES 4. VOL. VI

JUNE 3, 1938

NUMBER 8

---

PLANTS AND THE MEN WHOSE NAMES  
THEY COMMEMORATE

“To him who in the love of Nature  
Holds communion with her visible forms  
She speaks a various language.”

**F**ROM time immemorial Nature has spoken her language to the souls of men and held their minds enthralled; like an enchantress she has lured them over land and sea, to the far corners of the earth to search out her secrets and her hidden beauties. Many of our well-known trees and shrubs record the results of these journeys in the names they bear, perpetuating the names of men who have risked their lives to bring beauty from the wilds to brighten the gardens of the civilized world, while others honor the memory of some botanist working quietly in laboratory or garden. Research on the origin of these names opens a fascinating study in biography, history and romance. Thus for strictly herbaceous groups such familiar names as fuchsia, dahlia and lobelia perpetuate the names of men. The practice of selecting such names to commemorate individuals was commenced by Hippocrates and Theophrastus in the 4th and 5th centuries B.C., continued during the classical period, persisted through the Middle Ages, and thus following the Renaissance was adopted by European botanists and then transmitted to modern times.

From the many thousands of plants so perpetuating the memory of men, a few of the more common ones may be selected from the large number one notes in passing through the Arboretum. These are listed in the order of their blooming from early spring to late autumn.

**Prunus Sargentii.** One of the earliest and most showy of the flowering trees, this Japanese cherry is a beautiful and graceful memorial to Professor C.S. Sargent, for more than fifty-three years the Arboretum's devoted and able Director.

**Forsythia suspensa Fortunei.** The forsythia, as is so well known, was named for William Forsyth (1737-1804), a prominent English horticulturist who was trained under Philip Miller and in 1784 became Royal gardener at Kensington and St. James' Palaces. The variety *Fortunei* received its name from Robert Fortune (1812-1880), a British traveler and horticulturist in China. He introduced the tea industry into India, and wrote a number of books on China and tea culture, the interest and value of which are very great. He was one of the first who opened the treasures of Chinese gardens to European horticulture.

**Magnolia Soulangeana.** Pierre Magnol (1638-1715), Professor of medicine and Director of the Botanic garden at Montpellier, and Etienne Soulange-Bodin (1774-1846), a French horticulturist and writer, are commemorated in the name of this magnificent tree.

**Viburnum Carlesii.** Hemsley named this attractive little shrub, valued for its delightful fragrance and handsome early flowers, for William Richard Carles of the British Consular Service. Carles was appointed a student interpreter in China in 1867, and in 1883 was sent by his Government to Corea, where, among other plants, he collected *Viburnum Carlesii*, which bears his name.

**Malus Halliana Parkmanii.** Hall's flowering apple, often called the Parkman crab, reveals an interesting history. Dr. George R. Hall of Bristol, R. I., after graduating from the Harvard Medical School in 1846, embarked for China, and in 1855 made a voyage to Japan. From Japan, in about 1863, he sent to this country by F. Gordon Dexter of Boston, a plant of the Japanese crab, which found a home in the garden of Francis Parkman in Jamaica Plain. It is probably true that the double-flowered Japanese apple was thus introduced into America before it reached Europe, and is named for the two men responsible for its introduction into cultivation.

**Leitneria.** The name of this plant is derived from that of Dr. E. F. Leitner, a German naturalist, killed in Florida during the Seminole war.

**Fothergilla,** bottle-brush, perpetuates the name of John Fothergill (1712-1780), an eminent English physician, who introduced and cultivated many new plants.

**Sinowilsonia.** As the fame of E. H. Wilson rest chiefly on his travels in China and his investigations of the Chinese flora, "Sino" meaning Chinese, is very appropriately bestowed upon this botanically extremely interesting genus, discovered by him in China and introduced into cultivation by him.

**Berberis Thunbergii,** a Japanese barberry with dainty yellowish flowers, introduced into cultivation about 1864, and named by De Candolle for Carl Pehr Thunberg (1743-1822), the celebrated Swedish



ROBERT FORTUNE (1813-1880)

botanist. Thunberg was an explorer of the flora of Japan, and subsequently Professor of botany at Upsala, succeeding the younger Linnæus. His "Flora japonica" (1784) is an important contribution to the flora of that country.

**Mahonia.** A member of the barberry family, this genus was named by Thomas Nuttall for Bernard M'Mahon (1775-1816), a prominent American horticulturist.

**Rhododendron obtusum Kaempferi.** A flaming beauty, the torch azalea, is indebted for its specific name to Engelbrecht Kaempfer (1651-1716), an eminent German botanist and traveler. Like many another of the early botanists, he studied medicine and the languages. In 1683 he accompanied the Swedish ambassador to Persia. Having passed into the service of the Dutch East India Company as surgeon, he visited Bengal, Java, Sumatra and Japan. On his return to Europe in 1693, he published an important work entitled "Amoenitates exoticæ" (1712), which contains the results of his researches in Persia and the other countries visited.

**Amelanchier Bartramiana.** This shrub's chief claim to distinction is in its specific name, which was given in honor of one of the Bartrams, father and son, famous travelers and explorers of the southern United States and whose garden, the first botanical garden in America, founded in Philadelphia in 1728, is still in existence.

**Halesia.** The halesia or silver-bell, a handsome tree covered in spring with a cloud of delicate, shimmering white flowers, honors the memory of the Rev. Stephen Hales (1677-1761), an eminent English philosopher. He made important discoveries in vegetable physiology and in 1727 published a work entitled "Vegetable statics."

**Syringa Meyeri.** This small shrub bears the name of Frank L. Meyer, successful collector for the United States Department of Agriculture. He was born in Holland in 1875 and lost his life in the Yangtze River in 1918.

**Wisteria,** also spelled *Wistaria*. This charmingly graceful vine, the most beautiful of all climbers hardy in temperate regions, was named by the distinguished American botanist, Thomas Nuttall, in 1818 for Caspar Wistar (1761-1818). Dr. Wistar was Professor of anatomy in the University of Pennsylvania. Although there are inconspicuous North American species of *Wisteria*, the commonly known and cultivated species are the Chinese and Japanese wisterias (*W. sinensis* and *W. floribunda*) of which the former was listed in the 1828 Catalogue of William Prince of Flushing, Long Island.

**Weigela,** also spelled *Weigelia*. This shrub with its clusters of beautiful pink flowers was named for Christian Ehrenfried von Weigel, a German physician and naturalist (1748-1831). He wrote "Observa-



AUGUSTINE HENRY (1857-1930)

tiones botanicae," and other works. *Weigela* often has been referred to the following genus:

**Diervilla.** *Weigela*. Named for Dierville, or Diereville, a French surgeon who traveled in Canada, 1699-1700, and introduced *Diervilla Lonicera* into Europe.

**Spiraea Thunbergii.** A graceful early-flowering shrub, native to Japan and China, and introduced into cultivation about 1863 is another of the many plants named in honor of the Swedish botanist, Thunberg.

**Spiraea Vanhouttei.** One of the handsomest of the spring-flowering spireas and extensively planted, this shrub honors the memory of Louis van Houtte, an eminent Belgian horticulturist, who was born in 1810 and died in 1876. He traveled extensively in South America and introduced many new plants. In 1845 he founded *Flore des serres*, an important horticultural publication, which ran until 1883. In 1872 he established the famous nurseries at Ghent, which are perhaps the largest in the world, and for which he is best known.

**Spiraea Wilsonii.** *Spiraea Wilsonii* is given its specific name in honor of the intrepid traveler E. H. Wilson who made expeditions to China from 1899 to 1905 for the Veitch Nurseries in London. Later expeditions to China, Japan and various other eastern countries were made between the years 1906 and 1919 in the interest of the Arnold Arboretum, for which institution he collected many rare and valuable ornamental plants, many of which have been widely distributed in cultivation in Europe and America.

**Deutzia.** Among the most popular early flowering shrubs are the deutzias. They were named in honor of Johann van der Deutz, alderman of Amsterdam, by the distinguished Swedish botanist Carl Pehr Thunberg, whose friend and patron he was.

**Deutzia Lemoinei.** This dainty shrub has the added distinction of bearing the name also of Victor Lemoine, the wonderful French nurseryman (1823-1911), who in his world famous nurseries at Nancy worked incessantly in the hybridizing of garden and greenhouse plants, and to such purpose, that there is not a garden today in which the products of the master genius are not familiar friends.

**Deutzia Sieboldiana.** Philipp Franz von Siebold, for whom this species was named, was a celebrated German naturalist who accompanied the Dutch embassy to Japan as physician and naturalist in 1823, and spent about seven years in scientific researches in that country. After his return he published a number of valuable works, that of most interest to the botanical world being his "Flora japonica", 2 vols. 1835-1870. Many other species have been named for this noted man.

**Lonicera Henryi.** *Lonicera*, commonly called honeysuckle, derives

its name from Adam Lonicer, or Lonitzer, (1528-1586), a German physician and naturalist. Lonitzer obtained in 1554 the position of official physician of Frankfort, which he occupied thirty-two years. He published several treatises on medicine, and a Latin work on plants, animals and minerals called "Naturalis historiae opus novum" (1551-1555), which was often reprinted. The specific name *Henryi* honors Augustine Henry (1857-1930), who in his younger days collected extensively in Hupeh and Yunnan, provinces of China, demonstrating the richness of the flora of an area hitherto little known to botanists. Later in life he was associated with Henry J. Elwes in their great work, "The trees of Great Britain and Ireland."

**Gleditsia.** This genus, popularly called the honey-locust, bearing greenish inconspicuous flowers in early summer and large ornamental pods in the autumn, was named for Johann Gottlieb Gleditsch (1714-1786), Director of the Botanic garden at Berlin. It is sometimes spelled *Gleditschia*.

**Davidia involucrata.** The *Davidia*, a rare tree, appropriately called the "dove tree" because of the large white bracts which surround a globose cluster of tiny flowers, and flutter in the breeze like a dove, has an interesting history. Père Armand David, for whom it is named, was a distinguished missionary and naturalist, who botanized in China from 1862 to 1873. He was one of the pioneer explorers of western China, and contributed largely to our knowledge of the natural history of that country. He entered the congregation of the Lazarists in 1848, was ordained to the priesthood in 1851 and in 1862 was attached to the mission of the Lazarists at Peking, where he soon began to apply himself zealously to the natural history of that country. It was for the purpose of securing seeds of the *Davidia* that E. H. Wilson made his first trip to China.

**Robinia.** The genus *Robinia* was named in honor of Jean Robin (1550-1629), a French botanist, who was patronized by Henry IV, and planted a garden which was the finest in Paris. He published a work on plants which grow near Paris, "Catalogus stirpium tam indigenarum quam exoticarum," etc. 1601. His son, Vespasien Robin, also a botanist, succeeded his father in the title of *arboriste du roi*, and lectured on botany at the Jardin Royal.

**Kolkwitzia.** This genus was named by Paul Graebner in honor of Richard Kolkwitz, a professor of botany in Berlin, who died in 1873. Its most charming and popular species is *Kolkwitzia amabilis*, a graceful ornamental shrub, very handsome in spring with its profusely produced pink flowers.

**Stewartia,** also spelled *Stuartia*. This very desirable ornamental shrub with its large, showy white flowers was named in honor of John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute (1713-1792), who took an extremely active

part in developing Kew gardens. He had been "Lord of the bed-chamber to the Prince of Wales, and on his death, became groom of the stole to his son, afterwards George III." In 1761 Lord Bute was made Secretary of State, and from 1762 served as Prime Minister.

**Kalmia latifolia.** The mountain laurel, the most beautiful of evergreen shrubs native to eastern North America, bears the name of the distinguished Swedish botanist, Pehr Kalm (1715-1779), who in 1748 sailed for America, where he spent three years engaged in the study of natural history. On his return to Sweden, he published an account of his travels under the title "En rese til Norra America," in three volumes, 1753-1761. This is one of the most important accounts of early voyages to America and was translated into several languages.

**Albizzia.** Closely related to the genus *Acacia*, *Albizzia* was dedicated to an old and illustrious Italian family, the Albizzi, since a member of that family was one of the first to introduce it into Tuscany. The founder of the genus was Doctor Antonio Durazzini, a Florentine who lived and wrote in the latter half of the 18th century.

**Spiraea Douglasii.** This spirea honors the memory of Dr. David Douglas, an eminent Scottish botanist, employed as a botanical explorer for the London Horticultural Society. He arrived in California on his second trip to America in 1830. In 1834 he visited the Hawaiian Islands, where he was found killed in a wild-bull pit, under strong suspicion of foul play. *Pseudotsuga taxifolia* is commonly known as the Douglas fir.

**Buddleia Davidii** honors the memory of two members of the clergy, the English botanist, the Rev. Adam Buddle (1660-1715), who wrote "Methodus nova stirpium britann," and Père Armand David, the French missionary.

**Koelreuteria paniculata**, or varnish-tree, received its name in compliment to Joseph G. Koelreuter (1733-1806), Professor of natural history at Karlsruhe. It is a native of northern China and was introduced into Petrograd from the neighborhood of Peking some time between 1740 and 1756. In midsummer it is a conspicuous tree, covered with a shower of golden yellow panicles.

**Franklinia alatamaha.** This exquisite, fall-flowering tree was brought in 1777 from the banks of the Altamaha River in Georgia to Bartram's garden at Philadelphia, and was named by John Bartram in honor of his lifelong friend, Benjamin Franklin. It was later transferred to the genus *Gordonia*, but later still, was found to differ by constant characters so that today *Franklinia* is the generally accepted name. This very attractive plant is now known only from cultivated specimens, no longer occurring in the South as a wild species.

As early botany was closely connected with the study of medicine, the herbals being our earliest works on the subject, it is only natural that a large number of plants should have been dedicated to the memory of physicians.

ETHELYN M. TUCKER