

# ARNOLDIA



A continuation of the  
BULLETIN OF POPULAR INFORMATION  
of the Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University

---

VOLUME 18

SEPTEMBER 19, 1958

NUMBERS 6-7

---

## HORTICULTURE ON POSTAGE STAMPS

**I**N spite of the fact that the United States has issued very few stamps illustrating flowers of horticultural origin or of the native flora, the professional or amateur gardener may find a wealth of interest in philately with which to pass his leisure hours. There are over 2000 different stamps issued throughout the whole world in which botanical portraits are used either to depict the beauty of certain species, or they are used as a basic design, often in stylized manner, to supplement other commemorative events or expression of thoughts. Almost every phase of botany may be found on stamps: Portraits of famous botanists, samples of plants native to a certain area, national flowers, various fruits, as well as a large number of species of horticultural origin. Since many of the stamp collectors specialize in assembling topical collections, my intention is to describe here some of the stamps which pay tribute to famous botanists or botanical events and those which deal with ornamental horticulture. In this paper the numbers given in parentheses refer to Scott's "Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue," a standard reference work for philately available at most libraries and stamp dealers. An asterisk indicates that the stamp has been issued in full color, while the double dagger refers to stamps illustrated in the accompanying plates. Within each group the plants shown on the stamps are listed in the order of the families in the system of Engler and Prantl.

### Historical

Three stamps of Sweden (294<sup>†</sup>, 296, 298) honor "The Father of Botanical Science," Carl von Linné, who, in his monumental work "Species Plantarum" established the binomial nomenclature. The French botanist Auguste Saint-Hilaire spent six years, a century ago, exploring various parts of Brazil which resulted in the publication of the first Brazilian flora. He is commemorated in Brazil (758) on the centenary of his death. Another stamp (Brazil 616<sup>†</sup>) repre-

sents the greatest Brazilian botanist José Barbosa Rodrigues whose "Sertum Palmarum" and "Genera et Species Orchidacearum Novarum" are fundamental textbooks of South American botany. On March 15, 1958, a stamp honoring Gardening and Horticulture was released in Ithaca, New York (U.S. 3¢) to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Liberty Hyde Bailey, one of the most famous horticulturists, whose eloquent pen has enriched the horticultural literature with nearly seventy volumes. This stamp represents an emblematic figure holding a horn of plenty surrounded by flowers, vegetables, fruits and shrubs.

Botanical events have also been commemorated by stamp issues. In January 1938 the first South American Botanical Congress was held in Rio de Janeiro and on this occasion a stamp (Brazil 477‡) illustrating *Doxantha unguis-cati* was released. In 1944 a sheet with twenty-five designs portraying flora and fauna of Chile celebrated the centenary of the publication of the first volume of Claudio Gay's Natural History of Chile (Chile 254-255‡). In November 1946 the Fourth National Exhibition of Orchids took place in Rio de Janeiro and at that time a stylized *Cattleya* flower was used (Brazil 652‡) to announce this event to the world.

#### Cultivated Monocotyledons

The majority of the stamps about which I wish to write are those of horticultural origin. In the Monocotyledonae, the calla lily, *Zantedeschia aethiopica*, always appears with the coat of arms of Ascension (10 to 21) and St. Helena (79 to 99). The climbing spider lily, *Gloriosa simplex* (Belgian Congo 280\*, South West Africa 247) and *Aloe mitriformis* (South Africa 162\*, 163\*, 197\*) are also natives of Africa. *Hemerocallis middendorffii*, one of our cultivated day lilies, grows wild on the mountains of Eastern Asia (Japan 572). The true lilies are well represented, too; *Lilium bulbiferum* ssp. *croceum* with orange flowers is distributed throughout the Alps of Central Europe and the Carpathian Mountains (Romania 1957, 20 b\*, ‡, Switzerland B 168\*) as is *Lilium martagon* (Poland 1957, 60 gr.\*, Switzerland B 139\*). The former prefers sunny rock faces where it is relatively inaccessible, while the latter, which is more common, grows in exposed woods or alpine meadows. The Madonna lily, *Lilium candidum*, native to the Middle East (Israel 67\*, Turkey 1157\*) is cultivated for its beauty (San Marino 396) and is considered to be the symbol of purity. For this reason, it is usually carried in the hands of angels or saints (Vatican City 87). The Japanese lily, *Lilium japonicum*, comes from Japan (554), as does the Easter Lily, *Lilium longiflorum* var. *eximium*, which is very popular in the United States for its beauty (Bermuda 143, 145). Stylized lilies appear on several coats of arms. Nowadays it is supposed that the "fleur de lis" was originally an iris flower. The tulips, *Tulipa gesneriana* (Finland B 54, Germany 1957, 20 pf., Hungary 976\*, Luxembourg 300\*, Netherlands B 57, B 240\*, B 263\*) and its cultivar the parrot or dragon tulip, *Tulipa gesneriana* var. *dracontia* (Luxembourg 303\*, ‡, San Marino 337\*) as well as the



#### PLATE VI

Top row: Carl von Linnæus; José Barbosa Rodrigues

2nd row: *Doxantha unguis-cati*; stylized *Cattleya*; *Chaptalia (Loxodon) chilensis*, in honor of Claudio Gay's *Natural History of Chile*.

3rd row: *Lilium bulbiferum*; *Tulipa gesneriana* var. *dracontia*; *Convallaria majalis*.

4th row: *Gladiolus* sp.; *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* var. *bicolor*; *Cattleya* sp.

hyacinth, *Hyacinthus orientalis* (Netherlands B 249\*, Luxembourg 302\*) enjoy a widespread popularity everywhere, but we may look upon the Netherlands as the center of cultivation in spite of the fact that they are native to the Middle East. The lily of the valley, *Convallaria majalis*, is distributed in woods from Western Europe to Asia (Hungary 975\*†, Japan 393, San Marino 1957, 51\*). The snowdrop, *Galanthus nivalis*, also European, is not frequent in the wild state, though it appears in nearly every garden (Romania 1112\*). Two exotic crinum lilies, *Crinum bulbispermum* (Timor 269\*) and *Crinum scabrum* (Italian Somaliland 200\*) are not too well known to amateur gardeners.

The narcissus, *Narcissus poeticus*, (San Marino 336\*, Switzerland B 159\*) and the daffodil, *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* (Luxembourg 301\*, Romania 113\*) of European origin, are planted everywhere in temperate regions. The horticultural form, *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* var. *bicolor*, is represented on a stamp of the Netherlands (B 251\*†). The century plant, *Agave americana*, native to tropical America, is so widely distributed in the gardens of the Mediterranean region that it has become a real feature of the landscape and serves now as an advertisement for a mild climate (France 724, 776, Russia 1162, Spanish Morocco B 36, Tunisia Q 1 to Q 10).

With the snowdrop, the first flower to bloom when the snow melts, is the crocus, *Crocus vernus*. It occurs profusely on alpine slopes (Germany B 131, Switzerland 303, B 153\*) but it is also cultivated very widely, since it appears in every hue of the rainbow (Luxembourg 312\*). Among the dozens of cultivated *Iris* species, only a few appear on stamps: *Iris germanica* (Netherlands B 253\*), *Iris pallida* (San Marino 341\*) and as a design, a part of a traditional Japanese iris garden (Japan 609†). The *Gladiolus* of gardens is of horticultural origin representing crosses between several species (San Marino 401\*†).

Several orchids appear on stamps, especially from tropical regions. From Colombia we have a large series of species: *Masdevallia chimaera* (580), *Masdevallia nycterina* (546, 583), *Cattleya dowiana* var. *aurea* (548, 584), *Cattleya labiata* var.  *trianaei* (551, 582), *Odontoglossum crispum* (549, 581), *Miltonia vexillaria* (547, 585); from Costa Rica (184\*) and British Honduras (155), *Cattleya skinneri*; from Venezuela (590), *Cattleya violacea*; from Brazil (477, 652\*), Honduras (C 136) and Formosa (1958, 0.40†) other cattleyas and from Ecuador (602) an *Oncidium*. The national flower of Guatemala (293, C 189\*) is *Lycaste virginalis* called the "White Nun Orchid." Other orchids which are not cultivated are shown by Malaya and countries in Europe, Africa and Asia. A stylized orchid appears on the crest of Manchukuo, now a part of China. Two others [*Paphiopedilum insigne* (Belgium 432) and *Cattleya gaskelliana* var. *alba* (San Marino 1957, 41\*)], are well known greenhouse plants.

### Cultivated Dicotyledons

The carnation, *Dianthus caryophyllus*, and its cultivars are, with roses, one of



**PLATE VII**

Top row: *Adonis vernalis*; *Anemone coronaria*; *Rosa* 'Michèle Meiland.'

2nd row: *Pelargonium* hybrid; *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*; *Viola odorata*.

3rd row: *Passiflora coerulea*; *Rhododendron obtusum*; *Primula auriculata*.

4th row: *Jasminum officinale* var. *grandiflorum*; *Allamanda cathartica*; *Antirrhinum majus*.

the most popular of cut flowers (U.S. 737, Dominican Republic 358 to 361, Portugal 638 to 641, San Marino 340\*, Turkey 1154\*). The Indian water lotus, *Nelumbium nucifera*, is planted in ponds of botanical gardens or greenhouses (Macao 378\*).

The blue columbine, *Aquilegia coerulea*, is the state flower of Colorado (U.S. 1001). This species, a member of the buttercup family, played a basic role in the development of the garden columbines. Two other spring flowers from Europe belonging to the buttercup family are the marsh marigold, *Caltha palustris* (Netherlands B 239\*) and the Christmas rose, *Helleborus niger* (Netherlands B 61\*). The first is found in marshes of temperate Europe and extends even into the sub-alpine zone where it often blooms a second time in autumn. The second is limited to the open woods of the southern Alps. The pheasant's eye, *Adonis vernalis*, occurs in Central Europe as a species of the steppes (Hungary 908\*, Yugoslavia 432\*†). Two pasque flowers belonging to the alpine flora, *Pulsatilla alpina* ssp. *sulphurea* (Switzerland B 188\*) and the rarely cultivated *Pulsatilla vernalis* (Germany B 124, Finland B 102), also represent this family. The *Anemone coronaria*, commonly sold as a cut flower (Luxembourg 310\*, Netherlands B 252\*, San Marino 403\*†), comes from the Middle East (Israel 64\*, 73\*).

But the best known and most widely appreciated of all flowers is certainly the rose. It is a typical horticultural product obtained by numerous crossings of wild species of the genus *Rosa* and improved by selection through the centuries (Austria 388, 389, Cuba RA 26 to RA 29, Czechoslovakia 1957, 60 h.\*, Israel 79\*, Saar 229, San Marino 344\*, C 84\*, C 85\*, C 87\*, Switzerland B 252, Turkey 1156\*, Vatican City 87, 209 to 211). Two recent stamps of Luxembourg, with perfect design and exact colors, show two varieties of roses which are among the most popular ones in Europe: "Souvenir of Claudius Pernet" (311\*) and "Michèle Meiland" (313\*†). In Bulgaria roses are cultivated for their essence which forms the base for numerous perfumes. The Japanese apricot, *Prunus mume* (Macao 380\*), and the Higan cherry tree, *Prunus subhirtella* (Japan 269, 370), are the most favored ornamental cherry trees in springtime in the Far East.

The Scotch broom, *Cytisus scoparius*, a member of the legume family introduced from Western Europe (Netherlands B 58\*), is now naturalized in some parts of the United States. The wattle, *Acacia* (Australia 170), the caballero, *Poinciana pulcherrima* (Timor 261), the flame tree, *Delonix regia* (Italian Somaliland 201\*, Timor 263\*), and the coral-tree, *Erythrina cristagalli* (Uruguay 605\*, 608\*, 610\*, 615\*, 616\*, 618\*), are all native to warmer countries and can be cultivated only in the southern parts of the United States.

Another plant of horticultural derivation is the geranium which is the result of crossings between different species of *Pelargonium* of South African origin (Hungary 909\*†, Liechtenstein 170, San Marino 343\*). The poinsettia, *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, is the most popular flower at Christmas time (Cuba 469\*-470\*). It is native in southern Mexico and Central America. From Madagascar comes



### PLATE VIII

Top row: *Campanula persicifolia*; *Tagetes patula*; *Chrysanthemum morifolium*.  
 2nd row: *Cupressus sempervirens*; *Phoenix canariensis*; *Banksia vulgaris*.  
 3rd row: Royal Botanic Garden, Jamaica; Botanic Garden, Brazil; Botanic Station, Montserrat.  
 4th row: Iris garden, Japan; Le Grand Trianon, France; Exotic Garden, Monaco.

the dragon-claw or crown-of-thorns, *Euphorbia milii*, which is another spurge with striking red bracts (Macao 374\*). Different species of hibiscus are used in various countries as ornamentals with the mahoe, *Hibiscus tiliaceus*, a tall shrub or tree (Jamaica 163) and the rose-of-China, *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* (Curacao B 22\*, B 25\*†) being the most common ones. The rose mallow, *Hibiscus trionum*, an annual from China, is the national flower of Korea (92, 109, 213 to 215). The florist violet, *Viola odorata*, from Europe, is prized in gardens for its delicate aroma (Austria B 235\*†, Romania 1113\*). The pansy, *Viola tricolor* var. *hortensis*, is a horticultural derivative of a common plant of European wheat fields (Poland 689\*, San Marino 400\*). The most commonly cultivated passion-flower, *Passiflora coerulea*, is a native of Brazil (Uruguay 608\*, 616\*†). Among the numerous species of begonias, *Begonia tuberhybrida* is certainly the most appreciated due to its variation in shapes and colors, attributable to its horticultural origin (Belgium 430). Two widely planted rhododendrons from Japan, *Rhododendron obtusum* (Belgium 413† and *Rhododendron indicum* (Macao 373\*), appear also on stamps.

The auricula, *Primula auricula*, grows in the cracks of calcareous rocks in the Alps of Central Europe (Germany B 125, Switzerland B 167\*†). In its wild state the color is always yellow, as is also the cowslip, *Primula veris* (Bulgaria 839, Hungary 978\*), the oxlip, *Primula elatior* (San Marino 395\*), *Primula elatior* var. *carpathica* (Romania 1957, 1.55 1\*) and the primrose, *Primula vulgaris* (Austria B 238\*), all native to Europe. A much-admired houseplant during the winter is the cyclamen, *Cyclamen persicum* (San Marino C 82\*, C 86\*, 342\*), a native of the Middle East which has been improved by cultivation. A few jasmines are also represented: *Jasminum officinale* var. *grandiflorum*, widely distributed throughout Asia (Tangier 1956, 5 c.\*†), *Jasminum sambac* (Indonesia 401) and *Jasminum pubescens*, the national flower of the Philippines (530\*); the latter two are from India. The allamanda, *Allamanda cathartica* (Timor 265\*†) and the frangipani, *Plumeria rubra* var. *acutifolia* (Timor 264\*) are members of the dogbane family, cultivated in the subtropical countries and in greenhouses. The periwinkle, *Vinca minor*, has been introduced into our gardens from the woods of Europe (Belgium B 470\*). The oleander, *Nerium oleander*, is another member of this family (Curacao B 24\*, Portugal RA 3, San Marino 338\*). It grows wild along the streams in southern Europe and northern Africa. A bush called the cup-and-saucer plant, *Holmskioldia sanguinea*, is a native of the Himalayas and is cultivated in warm countries (Jamaica 166). The snapdragon, *Antirrhinum majus*, comes from the Mediterranean region and has been improved by cultivation (Netherlands B 23\*, Romania 1114\*†). The purple foxglove, *Digitalis purpurea*, is very common in Europe in clearings on primitive soil (Belgium B 487\*). The maquilishuat, *Tabebuia pentaphylla*, is a tall tree of tropical America (Salvador 581\*).

A bluebell, *Campanula persicifolia*, is shown in its natural color as it occurs when native in the open woods of Europe (Hungary 910\*†). The zinnia, *Zinnia elegans* (Saar 229), and the marigold, *Tagetes patula* (Netherlands B 249\*†), are

two garden flowers of Mexican introduction. The oxeye daisy, *Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*, is common in the meadows of the eastern United States where it has been introduced from Eurasia (Netherlands B 241\*, San Marino 394\*). The cornflower, *Centaurea cyanus*, is another weed of the same origin, abundant in the European wheatfields (Hungary 974\*, Israel 63\*, Netherlands B 59\*, B 242\*, San Marino 399\*). Cultivation, however, has extended its range of colors to almost all hues of the rainbow. The florists' chrysanthemum, *Chrysanthemum morifolium*, is one of the most ancient cultivated flowers and it has been improved for thousands of years in China (Macao 379\*†) and Japan (533, 535), where it is regarded as the national flower.

*Chrysanthemum* closes the present list of cultivated flowers on stamps. However, new sets concerning botany appear almost monthly. There are other stamps which can be an interesting part of a collection concerning horticulture. Flower arrangement is represented in a bouquet of European mixed flowers (Sweden 484, 485) and in a bouquet of Japanese May flowers (Japan 381). Some of the flowers mentioned were in vases. Others, not dealt with here, are set in garlands or stylized on coats of arms. These represent symbols which would extend the subject too far for this paper.

#### Ornamental Trees

Some ornamental trees are also depicted on stamps. The giant sequoia, *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, from California, has been introduced in parks with temperate mild climate (France 1957, 65 f.). The cypress, *Cupressus sempervirens*, is a feature of the Mediterranean region (Russia 667, 669, 672, 675, 676). Very often it is planted in cemeteries because of its straight, dark line, symbolizing sorrow and peace (French Morocco CB 28†). The bamboo, *Bambusa vulgaris*, is cultivated in warm countries where its rapid growth is amazing. A bamboo walk is pictured on a stamp of Jamaica (126†). Besides bamboos, every garden in a mild climate possesses palm trees. The phoenix, *Phoenix canariensis* (France 573†, 776, Gibraltar 110, Monaco B 25, Vatican City 24 to 27), and the fan palm, *Chamaerops humilis* (Russia 1312), both of African origin, are commonly grown in gardens around the Mediterranean. The Italian poplar, *Populus nigra* var. *italica*, is an ancient mutation of the black poplar. Only male specimens exist and these are propagated by cuttings. They are planted along roads or canals where their peculiar fastigiate shape is appropriate for this purpose (Andorra 124 to 127, Cyprus 148, France 719, Liberia 279, Switzerland B 155). The plane tree, which is also grown along roads, is an artificial hybrid between *Platanus occidentalis* of the United States and *Platanus orientalis* of southeast Europe and western Asia (Switzerland 238, U.S. 934, Russia 1586), but its shape is not so appropriate as that of the poplar. Its main advantages are that it tolerates repeated trimming and withstands tar dusts.

#### Gardens and Parks

The trees planted along entrance roads often characterize certain gardens il-

lustrated on stamps. The Botanic Station of Montserrat (95, 98, 100, 104<sup>†</sup>), the Botanical Garden of Georgetown (British Guiana 222, 229), the Botanical Gardens of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil 447), and the Royal Botanic Garden, Hope (Jamaica 168<sup>†</sup>), all display palm trees. Oddly enough, all of the botanical gardens represented on stamps are situated in the West Indies or South America, while much better known gardens such as the Kew Gardens in London, Le Jardin des Plantes in Paris, the Botanical Garden at Buitenzorg in Java or the Arnold Arboretum have never been depicted on stamps.

Other public gardens or parks occur and show the different styles in landscaping in various countries and climates. Tropical gardens are illustrated with the Victoria Park in Kingstown (St. Vincent 145A, 148, 160, 164, 174), La Mar Park in Lima (Peru C 16, C 17), Queen's Park (Trinidad 38, 55) and Memorial Park in Savannah (Trinidad 41, 53). Mediterranean vegetation is represented by a few stamps of Monaco with the Public Gardens (117, 130), the Palace Gardens (B 19), the Cactus Gardens (238<sup>†</sup>), wholly devoted to succulents. Russia features gardens in the Crimea, among them the Dzerzinski Rest House for Workers (672), gardens at Alupha (674), Crimean gardens (676), gardens at Suklumi (1052, 1053, 1163), a tree-lined walk at Sochi (1313) and a formal garden at the same place (1314). The last-mentioned shows the transition from more or less natural-looking parks to very elaborate gardens. This old-fashioned type of garden contributed, among other things, to the glory of the Moslems. The Europe Park in Constantinople (Mesopotamia N 38) and the Garden of Namazi Hospital in Teheran (Persia 1142) are examples. Later on, this sophisticated type of garden was carried to extreme by the French. The flowers more or less disappeared, their place being taken by trimmed bushes used in hedges like low walls or even contorted into unusual shapes to resemble statues. The French type of garden represented the most artificial period of horticulture. It corresponds in style to the classic architecture of castles (Villandry Castle in Indre et Loire 729, Grand Trianon at Versailles 734<sup>†</sup>, Valençay Castle in Indre 1957, 25 f.), but would not complement the small modern cottages.

With modern developments in horticultural technology and landscape architecture, more and more plants, both native and exotic, are being brought into extensive cultivation. These will undoubtedly enrich the botanical aspect of philately, and thus enliven the leisure hours of those interested.

CLAUDE WEBER