

The Concise British Flora in Colour

W. KEBLE MARTIN - 1486 SPECIES ILLUSTRATED



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THE CONCISE
BRITISH FLORA
IN COLOUR

with nomenclature edited and revised by Douglas H. Kent

and Foreword by

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Preface to the First Edition

In recent years many illustrated works on the British flora have issued from the press. It may appear at first sight to be superfluous to publish another. But there seem to be good reasons for this. The present work is on a somewhat different scale, comprising as it does some 1480 figures mostly in colour, drawn with all the care of which the draughtsman was capable, over a period of about sixty years. It is an attempt to attain scientific accuracy without losing the attractive appearance of the flowers. Although this work has been such a long while in preparation, an effort has always been made to keep it in touch with changing ideas through contact with leading botanists of each period. The drawings however are in a form in which their sequence could not be altered. With small exceptions this follows that of the National Herbarium at the British Museum, and *The London Catalogue of British Plants*, XIth Edition.

A further reason for desiring publication is that a number of experts have helped by selecting and identifying specimens for these drawings, thus ensuring suitable and accurate material for the purpose. In addition some three hundred of the specimens drawn were sent by a wide circle of botanists. Valuable help, as acknowledged below, has been given in the preparation of the short text, especially in bringing the nomenclature into accord with the Rules of the International Botanical Congress. The production of this work has therefore been very much a combined effort, and it is only fair to all these botanists that the result should be published.

Every figure of these plates was drawn direct from nature. The drawings were first made in the form of pen outlines on small separate sheets. On each sheet the name of the species was recorded, with the date, the place from which the specimen came, and the name of the sender, if any, or of the referee who named it. These sheets form four octavo loose-leaf volumes. We hope they may ultimately be made accessible for reference at the British Museum (Natural History Dept.) by the kindness of the Keeper of Botany.

In building up the plates the draughtsman's aim has been to show an average fragment, with its essential features, and to give each a place in the sun without crowding. He has tried where possible to show white or pale coloured flowers against green foliage, as in the hedge-row, though this was not always possible. These aims involved much patience in rearranging and redrawing. During the years there have always been gaps on the plates, because the necessary specimens could not be obtained. Some of these gaps have waited for twenty or even twenty-five years before being filled. The author's own visits to distant botanical spots have of necessity been rather few and brief. Owing to the pressure of the author's parochial work the specimens received by post sometimes perished. Some species difficult to obtain had to be sent in two or more seasons, but, owing to great kindness and much forbearance shown by correspondents, the gaps were all filled at last.

It was the desire to know the food plants of Lepidoptera that first promoted the effort to identify the plants required. Then the author was studying for his degree in the Botany School at Oxford, under Professor S. H. Vines and Mr A. W. Church. It was Mr Church

Prodromus of the British Hieracia and his *Revision of Euphrasiae*, both of them published in the *Journal of the Linnean Society*, and also Dr C. E. Hubbard's *Grasses*.

We are much indebted to the Keeper of Botany and his staff at the British Museum (Natural History) and also to the Director and the Herbarium staff at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. In both we have had valuable advice accompanied by the selection of suitable material from the National Herbaria for drawing. This has been especially the case in the choice of Sedges and Grasses, but in other groups also.

In drawing the figures we have had helpful advice or determination of specimens from those who have specialized in several groups. This was often coupled with the posting of fresh specimens as follows: *Fumaria*, H. W. Pugsley, who also personally conducted us around Cornwall in search of these; *Cruciferae* and many other groups, Dr G. C. Druce; *Rubus*, Wm. Watson, who himself wrote the notes for the text on those figured; the Rose plate was redrawn after kind criticism of N. Y. Sandwith; *Sorbus*, A. J. Wilmott; *Mentha*, R. Graham; *Salix*, R. D. Meikle; *Potamogeton*, Dr G. Taylor; *Cyperaceae*, E. Nelmes and A. W. Stelfox; *Gramineae*, Dr C. E. Hubbard. All these gave valuable help and we are much indebted to them. For other drawings we acknowledge with gratitude that many botanists past and present kindly helped by sending fresh specimens, carefully determined and posted for this work. They are too numerous to name here. Their names are on the separate drawings referred to above.

We wish further to acknowledge our debt to Dr W. S. Bristowe (of Spider fame, President of the Ray Society) for earlier research into the possibility of publication. We are extremely grateful to His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh for his active interest and to Squadron-Leader David Checketts for introducing the project to Mr George Rainbird and his colleagues.

After these acknowledgements we hope that the plates may have a chance of speaking for themselves. The author is very conscious of their limitations.

Preface to the Second Edition

The past three years have been a period of considerable botanical study and experiment, and we are indebted to Mr Douglas H. Kent for adapting the text of this work to current botanical opinion, especially regarding closely related forms and subspecies, and in some cases, regarding nomenclature. In the text he has also described a number of additional established alien species. Mr Kent was formerly Editor of the *Proceedings of the Botanical Society of the British Isles*, and now, although busy in other ways, he has devoted much time and interest to making this *Concise British Flora* a standard work both for professionals and amateurs.

W. Keble Martin
Broadymead, Woodbury 1969

who specially urged his students to draw whatever they saw under the microscope and started them in the habit of drawing. The desire to help others in recognizing the plants around them led to the idea of this present work. In this the text is short, mentioning for the most part features that cannot be shown effectively in the figures.

It is an amateur work, which was from the beginning treated as a secondary interest and a recreation. For after further training at a Theological College the author was plunged at his own request in the Church work of large industrial parishes, which was happy work, but it left little time indeed for botany. Progress with these drawings was therefore slow and mostly confined to an annual holiday; and yet before 1918 work on the present lines was well under way.

For a few years, from 1921 to 1926, the author was in a small parish, and his work for a neighbouring housing estate had not yet begun. He had more time for this work, and several plates were redrawn. From 1949 he no longer held a benefice. And it happened that in five successive years as a Public Preacher he was in charge of some parish for more than six months in the winter, but had more interrupted engagements in the summer, and several other plates were redrawn.

We should like to make two suggestions about gathering flowers: first that it should be done sparingly, and secondly that collectors should be fully courteous to the owner of enclosed land.

We have tried to take care of the flowers, and only to gather rare species very sparingly or not at all. Often we have hidden them with foliage from less scrupulous fingers. And when leading walks or expeditions of field clubs, we have tried to persuade others to do the same. Unfortunately there was sometimes one in the party, who thought it his special privilege to pick the only specimen seen or even to come back afterwards and do so! It really is important that we should preserve rare and interesting flowers for future generations.

Real botanists understand this. Gathering the flower prevents the casting of seed. Even for drawing these figures we have sometimes been content with two florets from a good spike with an upper and a lower leaf. We have walked miles in mountain mist and rain to restore a small rare plant to its own niche.

We commend botanizing as a means of healthy recreation for young and old. It is an interest that takes us out to the beautiful places of the earth. And if we really know the wild flowers around us at home, the plants almost speak to us of their struggles to grow. This interest stays with us to the end of our pilgrimage. It is not exactly an armchair study. To fulfil it properly we need good boots, a compass and a companion, and must face the thorns and steep places, the dense clouds and sharp mountain thunderstorms or the tides and island crossings. But we take no undue risks. It is good fun and healthy.

We said that valuable help had been given in editing the short text. Mr Douglas Kent, formerly Editor of the *Proceedings of the Botanical Society of the British Isles*, has kindly helped much with it, making many adjustments, especially to the nomenclature, and adding a list of authorities for the names. The brief descriptions are indebted to the earlier Floras. The first pages were written before the publication of the Flora by Messrs Clapham, Tutin and Warburg; but the whole is now doubtless indebted in greater or less degree to this latter work. We gratefully acknowledge the debt, and commend that work to all who wish to make a more serious study of the British Flora. We have followed Mr H. W. Pugsley's

Contents

Foreword	5
Preface to the First Edition	7
Preface to the Second Edition	9
Glossary	10
Abbreviations of Authors' Names for the Plant Species	13
Abbreviations used in the text	15
The Plates	16
Index to Botanical Names	217
Index of Common Names	230