

EXPLORE WITH THE COLUMBUS MUSEUM

Botany and Art



From left to right: Attributed to Catharine and Sarah Lüders, *Cornus Florida*, Dogwood (North American Flowering Dogwood), ca. 1838-1879, Collection of The Columbus Museum; Attributed to Catharine and Sarah Lüders, *Clatonia*, 1848, Collection of The Columbus Museum; Attributed to Catharine and Sarah Lüders, *Lady-by-the-Lake* (*Collinsia verna*), ca. 1838-1879, Collection of The Columbus Museum

The three drawings shown here are examples of botanical illustrations. Frequently completed in watercolor, botanical illustrations depict scientifically accurate renderings of different plant species. Traditionally, they were used by gardeners, pharmacists, and physicians to identify, analyze, and classify plants. These illustrations were often accompanied by written descriptions of the plant, as well as the location and conditions in which it was found. Today, botanical illustrations also play an integral role in conservation efforts as they provide a record of endangered plant species around the world.

Why draw or paint a plant when you can just take a picture? Illustrations require the artist to look closely and observe the plant more rigorously, carefully observing each detail. At the time these illustrations were created, photographic techniques could not produce the carefully rendered images needed by botanists.

Take a moment to examine the flora, or plants, depicted above. What are each species' defining characteristics? What is the same or different about the leaves? The stem? What do you notice about the shape, size, and color of the different blooms?

Fun Fact: Flowering Dogwoods (left) are native to the eastern United States and can be found throughout the state of Georgia. They are characterized by their showy white and pink blooms. Before the advent of modern medicine, the bark of the Dogwood was often used as an herbal remedy to treat fevers.



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(Continued)

Illustrate! Now that you know a bit more, go outside and observe a plant in its natural environment. Illustrate your find in the space above, paying close attention to the color, form, and minute details of the specimen you chose. Remember, a good scientific record includes both pictures and verbal descriptions. You can even experiment with adding close-ups of small details to show visual texture. After you are done drawing, head over to Southeasternflora.com to identify your specimen. What did you discover?

