



CHRISTENSEN'S PLANT CENTER

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Carl Linnaeus, Plant Hero!

Have you ever wondered why plants (and animals) have two scientific names, the first capitalized and the second lower case? I.E. *Quercus bicolor*? This is called the Binomial species name.

Thank the 18th century Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus, born in 1707. Starting in the 1730s, Linnaeus began his study of plants with two expeditions in Scandinavia. He started his Binomial system in 1735 with his 1st edition of *Systema Naturae*, his classification of living things. By the 10th edition in 1758 he had his system organized. Granted, there have been many major modifications to his system over the years, but he remains known as the "Father of Taxonomy".



Another Linnaean claim to fame are his many botanical acolytes, one of whom was Daniel Solander. Daniel Solander accompanied the famed British navigator James Cook on his epochal voyage to Polynesia, New Zealand and Australia between 1768 and 1771. James Cook, by the way, was the inspiration for Capt. James T. Kirk of the *Starship Enterprise*!

Linnaeus' plant collectors were also known for a stunning mortality rate while traveling around the world. Collecting plants in disease-ridden tropical areas in the 18th century was an extremely hazardous occupation.

Speaking about tropical explorers, please try to read "The Song of the Dodo" by David Quammen, about following in the footsteps of Alfred Russel Wallace, the actual originator of the Theory of Evolution. No! It was NOT Charles Darwin, although he received most of the credit. Check out "Just Before the Origin: Alfred Russel Wallace's Theory of Evolution" by John Landon Brooks. Critics have called it "A damning indictment of Darwin's plagerism!"

"Song of the Dodo" was my favorite book in 2013, to the point where I reread it in 2014. Fantastic! It's an ecological tour de force.

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Bill Ten Eyck

Christensen's Plant Center
6282 Gotfredson Road
Plymouth, Michigan 48170

(734) 454-1400 voice

(734) 454-1414 fax

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