

CBHL Literature Awards Recognize Excellence in Botanical and Horticultural Literature

April 30, 2014 – Richmond, Virginia – The Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries, Inc. (CBHL) presented its fifteenth Annual Literature Awards on April 30, 2014. This presentation was made in Richmond, Virginia during CBHL's 46th Annual Meeting hosted by the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. The Annual Literature Award, created to recognize significant contributions to the literature of botany and horticulture, honored four monumental resources this year. *Flora of Virginia*, by Alan S. Weakley, J. Christopher Ludwig, and John F. Townsend, edited by Bland Crowder and published by the Botanical Research Institute of Texas, was presented with the 2014 CBHL Annual Literature Award. Additionally, this year's presentation marked the introduction of several awards of excellence in botanical and horticultural literature. The CBHL Award for Excellence in History was presented to Sachiko Kusukawa and the University of Chicago Press for *Picturing the Book of Nature: Image, Text and Argument in Sixteenth-Century Human Anatomy and Medical Botany*. Published by Éditions Hazan in France and distributed in North America by Yale University Press, *André Le Nôtre in Perspective* was honored with the CBHL Award for Excellence in Biography. *Victoria the Seductress: a Cultural and Natural History of the World's Greatest Water Lily* by Tomasz Aniśko, published by Longwood Gardens, won the CBHL Award for Excellence in Horticulture.

Combining field observations with herbaria work, the authors of the *Flora of Virginia* paint a detailed picture of the plant life of Virginia. Accurate descriptions and up to date taxonomy make this book useful to botanists beyond the state's borders, and the extensive glossary makes the book accessible to the non-botanists among us. Not content to be strict flora, the book also includes chapters on the natural history of Virginia's plant life and the history of botanical exploration and study in the area. Additionally, a list of sites representing the variety of habitat types where one might go botanizing is included in this thorough work. While Virginia botanists have waited hundreds of years for such a flora, they will discover the authors have presented them with a truly remarkable resource.

With original scholarship and fresh insights Kusukawa explores the production and use of images in Renaissance natural science in this elegantly produced book. The author focuses on two landmark printed books: Fuchs's *De historia stirpium* (1542) and Vesalius's *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543). Kusukawa explains in her introduction of *Picturing the Book of Nature* that she chose Fuchs and Vesalius not only because of their fame, but because the authors were "first in the period to write explicitly about the usefulness of pictures for forming knowledge about nature and to actually make their pictures integral to that knowledge."

André Le Nôtre in Perspective edited by Patricia Bouchenot-Déchin and Georges Farhat, and the other thirty-one contributors—experts in a wide range of fields including archeology, art, history, hydraulics, optics and, of course, landscape were honored with the CBHL Award for Excellence in Biography. Throughout the book these scholars cite new archival material and research that questions, if not debunk, previous work. How often can a publisher justifiably describe a work as

“magnificent” and “definitive”? This is one of those rare instances where those adjectives seem almost understated. From the elegant embossed jacket to the lavish reproduction of paintings, prints and sculpture that Le Nôtre collected, to documents, maps, design drawings and plans, this is the most comprehensive, challenging and visually rich study of Le Nôtre—his world, his art, and his reception and influence—that there is likely to be in a very long time.

The committee is pleased to announce that *Victoria the Seductress: a Cultural and Natural History of the World's Greatest Water Lily* by Tomasz Aniśko, published by Longwood Gardens, has won the CBHL Award for Excellence in Horticulture. Despite its impressive size, this is no mere coffee table book. It describes the explorers who overcame huge challenges to bring the Victoria to the gardens of the world, as well as the gardeners who struggled to make it thrive. Once established in botanical gardens, Victoria captured the imagination of the public and continues to do so. With incredible detail and gorgeous illustrations, *Victoria the Seductress* covers every aspect of this dramatic plant and its influence in the world of gardens and art.

The Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries, Inc. is the leading professional organization in the field of botanical and horticultural information services. It recognizes the critical importance of collecting, preserving, and making accessible the accumulated knowledge about plants for present and future generations. For more information, visit its web site at <http://www.cbhl.net>.

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