

CBHL Literature Awards Recognize Excellence in Botanical and Horticultural Literature

May 7, 2024—The Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries, Inc. (CBHL) presented its twenty-fifth Annual Literature Awards on May 7, 2024 in East Lansing, Michigan. These awards were presented during CBHL's 56th Annual Meeting hosted by Michigan State University Libraries and held in conjunction with the United States Agricultural Information Network (USAIN). The CBHL Annual Literature Awards, created to recognize significant contributions to the literature of botany and horticulture, this year honored six remarkable works.

Honored with the 2024 CBHL Annual Literature Award was *Maria Sibylla Merian: Changing the Nature of Art and Science* edited by Bert van de Roemer, Florence Pieters, Hans Mulder, Kay Etheridge, and Marieke van Delft and published by Lannoo. Committee members lauded this stunning work containing essays exploring Merian's life contributions as both naturalist and artist. Long deserving serious scholarly considerations, this work presents a wide-ranging exploration of Merian's remarkable life, discoveries, and contributions.

Published by mineditionsUS, a division of Astra Books for Young Readers, the 2024 Award of Excellence in Literature for Children was presented to author and illustrator, Rosa Chang, and *My Indigo World: A True Story of the Color Blue*. In this picture book, Chang's love for the color blue leads her on an exploration of indigo dye techniques along with sharing seeds and traditions from her native Korea with family and friends in Baltimore. Through this book, Chang presents a rather complex process in an easy-to-understand style including a good balance of history, plant science, and her personal story.

The 2024 Award of Excellence in Botany was presented to *In the Herbarium: The Hidden World of Collecting and Preserving Plants* by Maura C. Flannery and published by Yale University Press. Through this book, Flannery relates the history of herbaria from the earliest documented collections to collections made not only by botanists, but also “poets, politicians, and painters.” Written by a scholar with a deep love for the subject, the author weaves a story exploring the intersection of herbaria, history, natural history, art, cultural heritage, ethnographic studies as well as the science behind the impetus to collect.

A Curious Herbal: Elizabeth Blackwell's Pioneering Masterpiece of Botanical Art edited by Marta McDowell with an essay by Janet Stiles Tyson and published by Abbeville Press was honored with the 2024 Award of Excellence in History. The introduction by McDowell coupled with the essay by Stiles Tyson were recognized for being particularly well-written, well-researched, and engaging. The finely executed reproduction of Blackwell's remarkable 18th century herbal allows her pioneering work to be accessible to new audiences.

Honored with the 2024 Award of Excellence in Garden and Nature Writing was *Soil: The Story of a Black Mother's Garden* by Camille T. Dungy and published by Simon and Schuster. Through this book, the author recounts her efforts to diversify her Colorado garden from a conventional suburban lawn into a pollinator garden full of native plants. Described as “personal and raw and inspiring,” Dungy shows how environmental justice, social justice, and how humans think and be are intertwined.

Plants of the Qur'ān: History & Culture by Shahina A. Ghazanfar, illustrated by Sue Wickison, and published by Kew Publishing was honored with the 2024 Award of Excellence in Botanical Art and Illustration. The text by Ghazanfar reveals the history of these plants, their significance in the Qur'ān, cultural significance uses, and botanical descriptions. The stunning botanical paintings by Wickison, created over a five-year period, features these plants in their natural environment. The well-researched text and artistic creativity presented in this book will introduce and engage a greater audience with the plant world.

The Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries strengthens its membership; addressing emerging issues, and providing expertise and value to our respective organizations. For more information, visit its website at <http://www.cbhl.net>.

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