

## CBHL Literature Awards Recognize Excellence in Botanical and Horticultural Literature

May 9, 2025—The Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries, Inc. (CBHL) presented its twenty-sixth Annual Literature Awards on May 8, 2025. These awards were presented during CBHL's 57th Annual Meeting. The CBHL Annual Literature Awards, created to recognize significant contributions to the literature of botany and horticulture, this year honored eleven remarkable works.

Honored with the 2025 CBHL Annual Literature Award was *The Vasculum or Botanical Collecting Box: Symbol of the Nineteenth-Century Botanist, Now an Obsolete Relic* by Régine Fabri and published by Plantentuin Meise. Meticulously researched and richly illustrated, the book presents a history of vasculums or botanical boxes as they were used by botanists for over two centuries. Fabri's exploration of this botanical mainstay provides fascinating insight into this significant piece of botanical history.

Published by Princeton University Press, the 2025 Award of Excellence in Botany was presented to *The Lives of Lichens: A Natural History* by Robert Lücking and Toby Spribille. In this book, the authors trace the scientific understanding of lichens from ancient Greek naturalist Theophrastus through to modern studies of lichen symbiosis and use. This book was recognized for combining sumptuous photographs and detailed scientific illustrations, making this book a visual feast with something interesting on every page.

*Palms of New Guinea* by William J. Baker and 8 co-authors; illustrated by Lucy T. Smith and published by Kew Publishing was honored with the 2025 Award of Excellence in Field and Regional Guides. A globally significant biodiversity hotspot, New Guinea is home to 250 species of palms. A result of over 20 years of work by multiple authors, the text is accompanied by detailed photographs of the plants and exceptional botanical illustrations by Smith. The committee felt this was an impressive and much needed flora for the region.

The 2025 Award of Excellence in Plants and Environmental Change was presented to *Rare Trees: The Fascinating Stories of the World's Most Threatened Species* by Sara Oldfield and Malin Rivers and published by Timber Press. With striking photographs and compelling text, the committee recognized this title for raising awareness of rare trees and their vulnerability.

Published by Timber Press, the 2025 Award of Excellence in Horticulture was presented to *Weeds of the Pacific Northwest: 368 Unwanted Plants and How to Control Them* by Sami Gray and Mark Turner, photographer. The thoughtful writing of Gray along with Turner's superb photographs encourage gardeners to know their weeds. An important reference, this work also looks at non-native plants that have established themselves in this region.

*Wild Greens, Beautiful Girl* by Erica Lee Schlaikjer, writer: Shan Li Bannai Serasis, translator: Cinyee Chiu, illustrator; and published by Sleeping Bear Press was honored with the 2025 Award of Excellence in Literature for Children. This stunning book on Taiwanese plants and indigenous heritage was recognized for teaching young readers how to appreciate the bounty of nature and the beauty of identity.

The 2025 Award of Excellence in Literature for Young Adults was presented to *The Miracle Seed* by Martin Lemelman and published by Eerdmans Books for Young Readers. Through this graphic novel, the complexities of history and botany are made accessible. Detailing the discovery and planting of 2000 year old palm date seeds, this fascinating story and imaginative artwork will appeal to budding scientists.

Olivia Laing's *The Garden Against Time: In Search of a Common Paradise* published by W.W. Norton & Company received the 2025 Award of Excellence in Garden and Nature Writing. Written in the style of a memoir, the author takes the reader through English garden history. Along with the reader learning more about the restoration of Laing's own garden, she interweaves the many-layered meanings of gardens over time and place.

*The Forbidden Garden: The Botanists of Besieged Leningrad and their Impossible Choice* by Simon Parkin and published by Scribner was honored with the 2025 Award of Excellence in History. Faced with an impossible choice, this book recounts the story of the botanists of the world's first seed bank during the 1941 Siege of Leningrad. Parkin recounts the harrowing story of those botanists and the deep sacrifices they made in the name of science.

The 2025 Award of Excellence in Botanical Art and Illustration was presented to *Botanical Icons: Critical Practices of Illustration in the Premodern Mediterranean* by Andrew Griebeler and published by University of Chicago Press. This carefully researched study shows how many of the critical practices characteristic of modern botanical illustrations in the West began in premodern manuscript culture in the Mediterranean. Described as a scholarly yet readable work with extensive illustrations.

The 2025 Award of Excellence in Series was presented to Phaidon Editors, commissioning editor, Victoria Clarke for their series:

*Plant: Exploring the Botanical World* (2016)

*Flower: Exploring the World in Bloom* (2020)

*Garden: Exploring the Horticultural World* (2023)

*Tree: Exploring the Arboreal World* (2024)

Within the four volumes in this series are a carefully selected presentation of a host of images. Curated by a global panel of experts, this visual survey showcases the diversity of plants, flowers, gardens and trees. Along with the enlightening descriptions of the images, the unexpected way these vibrant images are presented will have broad appeal.

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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