

CBHL Members' West News

Edited by Beth Brand
Head Librarian, Schilling Library
Desert Botanical Garden

Poison Books at Denver Botanic Gardens

Angela Naumov
Archivist, Helen Fowler Library
Denver Botanic Gardens

We have had the research of the Poison Book Project on our radar and on our minds for several years now, but with moving an entire library and a global pandemic, the opportunity to fully investigate our own collections for potentially hazardous materials was not entirely possible until now. Following the success of our Instagram reel about this toxic possibility, we reached out to a local university that had access to technology that could safely test these materials for arsenic and other heavy metals. The X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) Lab at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) allows professors and students to test and understand the elemental makeup of artifacts to answer all kinds of anthropological questions. Using these machines, they have collaborated with various community organizations around Colorado and Wyoming, and we hoped we would be one more they could add to their list. Not many universities have this technology, but a quick search may reveal that an institution near you just might.



Geranium illustration with deep arsenical green color.

Dr. Marian Hamilton, Associate Professor of Anthropology at UNC, came to Denver Botanic Gardens with several student assistants and two XRF spectrometers to spend the day testing nearly 100 of our items for arsenic. What we discovered was lead. Lots and lots of lead. And a few instances of other heavy metals on the covers, though none as concerning as arsenic. A whole day of testing and not even one book cover with arsenic? Thankfully, Dr. Hamilton and her students were thorough, and tested not only the covers of our books but also any colored top edges, endsheets and illustrative plates. It was in these testing locations that they discovered two books that contained high levels of arsenic: *Ten Lithographic coloured flowers with botanical descriptions: drawn and coloured by a lady* (Edinburgh, 1826) had endsheets dyed



a stunning shade of green that I don't even know how to describe, and *Geraniums* by Henry Charles Andrews (London, 1805) contained illustrations with deep arsenical greens. A fascinating find for educational and historical purposes, but a dangerous one for handling. Luckily for us, we only need to adjust our procedures for two volumes and handling procedures for books with lead remain the same as handling any rare book.

Endpapers dyed a stunning shade of green containing high levels of arsenic.

In This Issue

CBHL Members' West News edited by Beth Brand.....	1
• Poison Books at Denver Botanic Gardens by Angela Naumov	1
CBHL Board Update	3
Calendar of Upcoming Events edited by Rita Hassert.....	4
Book Reviews edited by Gillian Hayward.....	5
• <i>The Rose Book</i> edited by Phaidon Editors reviewed by Ashley Aberg.....	5
• <i>Lichenpedia: A Brief Compendium</i> by Kay Hurley reviewed by Janet Evans.....	6
• <i>Healing Plants of South Asia: A Handbook of the Medicinal Flora of the Indian Subcontinent</i> by John A. Parrotta reviewed by Stephen Sinon.....	7



CBHL Board Update

Advocacy Alert: Save the IMLS

The [CBHL Board](#) recognizes the challenges our members are currently facing and supports the following statements.

On March 14, 2025, President Trump signed an Executive Order (EO), [Continuing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy](#), advancing the elimination of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The IMLS provides critical resources to libraries and museums (including public gardens) in all 50 states and territories while making up only 0.0046% of the overall federal budget. The IMLS board issued [this letter](#) to the new IMLS director, Keith Sonderling, detailing the IMLS statutory requirements for the new director and the American Library Association issued this statement. The [American Public Gardens Association](#) (APGA), of which CBHL is an Allied member, is working with the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and our other coalition partners to assess the full impacts of the Executive Order. AAM will provide updates on their [website](#).

What you can do: (provided by APGA & AAM):

- **Call your members of Congress.** Find their phone numbers and a [draft script here](#). Contact their federal AND district offices.
- **Write to your members of Congress.** Get started with this [template letter](#) and PERSONALIZE it with your stories. These emails have significantly more impact when you customize them and tell YOUR story to YOUR elected officials.
- **Write to your state and local officials** using this [template letter](#).
- **Call your state and local officials.** Find their phone numbers and a [draft script here](#).
- **Get your museum's supporters involved!** You can find template language for your email and social media outreach [here](#).

CBHL @ APGA

The [annual meeting of the American Public Gardens Association](#) will take place at Denver Botanic Gardens June 2-5. On June 5, CBHL members Allaina Wallace (Denver Botanic Gardens & CBHL Past President), Hannah Rutledge (Longwood Gardens) and Anne-Marie Parris (Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden) will present a talk: *Going Beyond Google: How Botanical Libraries Can Help You*.

CBHL Board of Directors, 2025-2026

President

Kristine Paulus
New York Botanical Garden
president@cbhl.net

Past President

Kristen Mastel
Andersen Horticultural Library
University of Minnesota Libraries
pastpresident@cbhl.net

Vice President

Erin Aults
McMaster University
vicepresident@cbhl.net

Treasurer

Gillian Hayward
Longwood Gardens
treasurer@cbhl.net

Secretary

Brandy Watts
Alaska Resources Library
& Information Services
secretary@cbhl.net

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Compiled by Rita M. Hassert
Library Collections Manager
Sterling Morton Library
The Morton Arboretum

June 2-5, 2025

American Public Gardens Association
APGA 2025 Conference
Denver, Colorado
<http://www.publicgardens.org>

June 7-10, 2025

Special Libraries Association
SLA 2025 Annual Conference
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
<https://sla2025.eventscribe.net/>

June 24-27, 2025

Rare Books and Manuscripts Section
RBMS Conference
New Haven, Connecticut
<https://rbms.info/>

June 26-30, 2025

American Library Association (ALA)
Annual Meeting.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
<https://2025.alaannual.org/>

July 13-16, 2025

Guild of Natural Science Illustrators
Visual SciComm Conference
Bridgewater, Massachusetts
<https://www.gnsi.org/events>

July 26-30, 2025

Botany 2025
Palm Springs, California
<http://botany.org>

August 24-27, 2025

Society of American Archivists (SAA)
89th Annual Meeting
Anaheim, California
<http://www.archivists.org>

October 7-9, 2025

Visual Resources Association (VRA)
Annual Conference
Portland, Oregon
<http://vraweb.org>

October 9-11, 2025

American Horticultural Therapy Association
Annual Conference
Virtual
<http://www.ahta.org>

October 10-13, 2025

American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)
Conference on Landscape Architecture
New Orleans, Louisiana
<https://www.asla.org/annualmeetingandexpo.aspx>

October 16-18, 2025

American Society of Botanical Artists (ASBA)
31st Annual Meeting & Conference
St. Paul, Minnesota
<https://asba-art.org/>

November 3-7, 2025 (in-person)

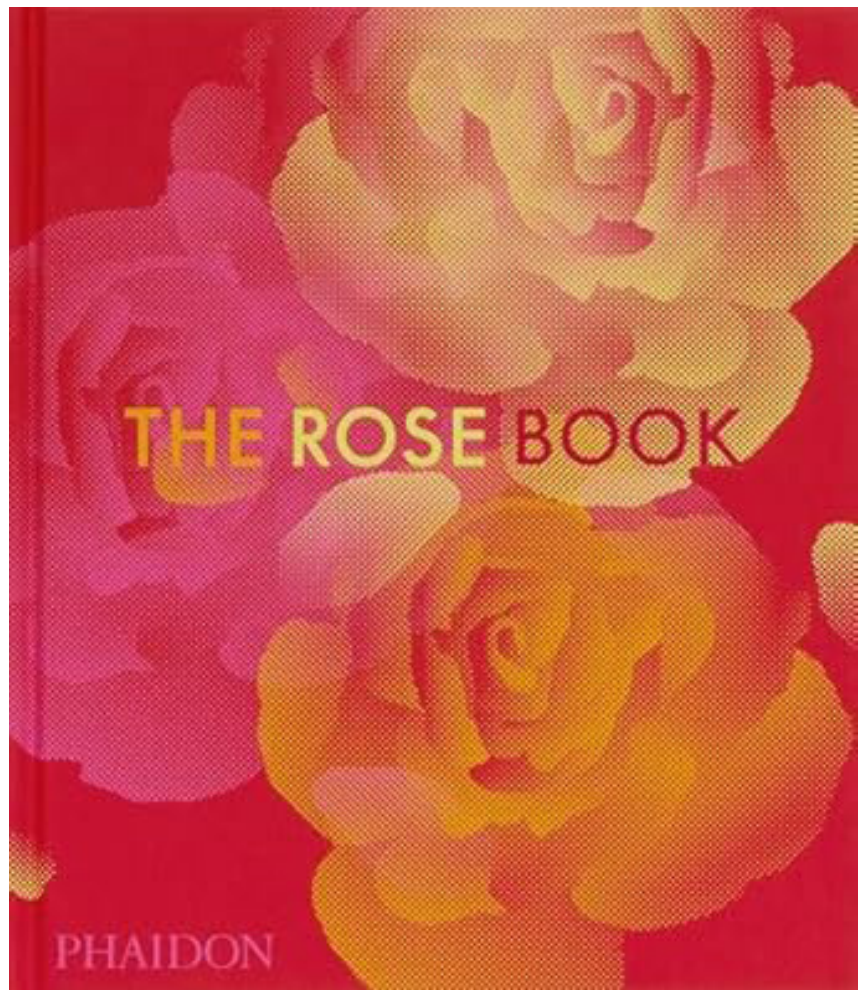
December 17-21, 2025 (online)
Charleston Conference
Charleston, South Carolina
<https://www.charleston-hub.com/the-charleston-conference>

Book Reviews

Edited by Gillian Hayward
Library Manager
Library and Information Services
Longwood Gardens

The Rose Book, by Phaidon Editors,
with essays by Amy de la Haye,
Victoria Gaiger, and Kristine Paulus.
New York, NY: Phaidon Press, Inc.,
2025. 248 pages, color illustrations.
\$49.95. ISBN: 9781838668808.

Reviewed by Ashley Aberg
Reference Archivist
The LuEsther T. Mertz Library
New York Botanical Garden



The rose is an iconic flower. From antiquity to modern day, rose species and cultivars are arguably the most recognized plants in the world. If there's a feeling, there's likely a rose or color that's symbolically linked; if there's a celebration, it's likely that some rose breed or another will be present in a floral arrangement. The rose as a flower is such an icon that Elizabeth Britton even proposed the rose as the national flower of the United States in 1929. As our own Kristine Paulus puts it in the introduction, "there is a rose for every person and every purpose" (p.4), and this book does its best to present some of the most artistic, influential, and beautiful depictions of the rose as have ever been made by human hands.

Every page of *The Rose Book* is as beautiful as the last. Each one is illustrated with richly colored images of artworks, ancient mosaics, gardens, fashion, photographs, manuscript illuminations, and more. If there's a way in which a rose has been used or depicted in creative endeavors, there is some representation of it present in this book. Each image is also then described, discussing the history of the artist or creator when applicable, or the surrounding time period's history for things such as medieval manuscript illuminations or Roman mosaics. There are discussions of representation, meaning, and significance that go with each depiction, although the text tends to be on the shorter side for the sake of limited space or in order to give the pictures their center stage. There is not a single page, outside of the introductory essays, that does not contain an incredibly beautiful image that can be opened to and learned about, or used as inspiration to further one's own creative endeavors. It flows wonderfully, with each image leading into the next in a way that allows them to breathe and speak for themselves, without creating jarring transitions.

It is important to note, though, that *The Rose Book* is not all images. It contains a wealth of information that could easily lead to deeper exploration of themes and artists. None of the text is exhaustive but it

is all well researched and written clearly and concisely. Many of the pieces will spark curiosity not only about the depiction of the rose present on the page, but about how that specific piece is situated more broadly within history. The visual language that the book pulls from draws the reader in, and the writing will keep the reader engaged with the work long past the length of the words themselves.

The Rose Book is a worthwhile addition to any collection, perhaps especially to collections with a public-facing component. It is not only a gorgeously artistic representation of the history of the visual language of the rose, but also a wonderfully researched entrance into this history. The textual components, while not the central focus of this work, add a historical background to the works being presented that allows a reader to not only enjoy the beauty of the art but gain a deeper understanding of the context surrounding each carefully curated piece.



Lichenpedia: A Brief Compendium by Kay Hurley, illustrations by Susan Adele Edwards. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2024. 178 pages, illustrations. \$17.95. ISBN 9780691239903 (hardcover).

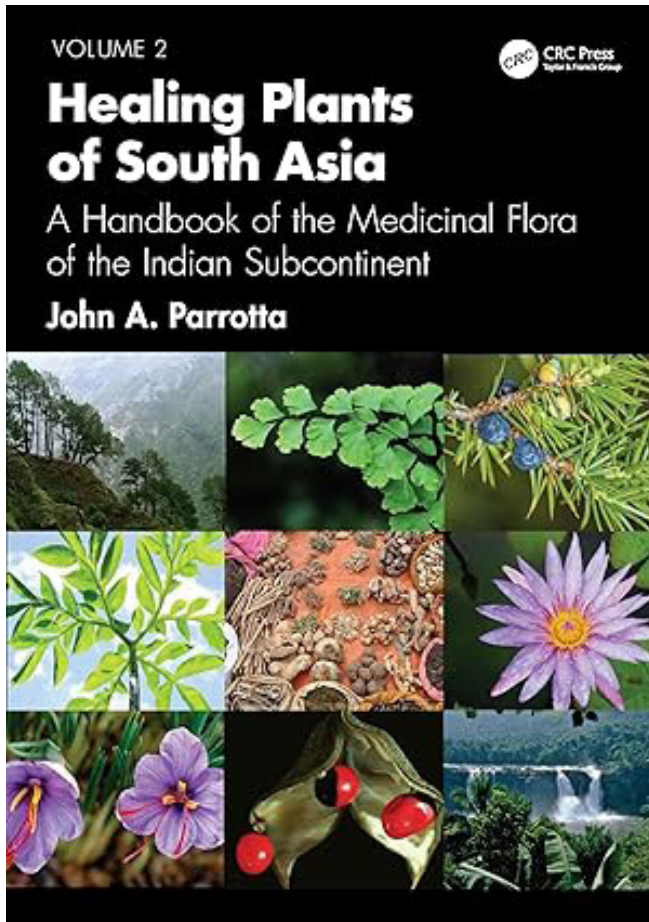
Reviewed by Janet Evans
Associate Director, McLean Library
Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

Lichenpedia: A Brief Compendium, is part of Princeton University Press's popular Pedia Books series (recent additions include *Fungipedia*; *Florapedia*; *Treepedia*). These are pocket-sized books on the natural world that are "encyclopedic in nature and miniature in form," written by experts for the curious generalist. Pedia Books are designed to be dipped into randomly but are short enough to read from entries A (in this case Acharius, Erik) to Z (Zone of Inhibition) and are similar in intent to Oxford University Press's Very Short Introductions series.

Lichens are composite organisms made up of a fungus (the mycobiont) and at least one photobiont (algae or cyanobacteria). They are found all over the world, in all habitats, often in a vibrant range of colors, and live on substrates as various as stone, wood, trees, soil, abandoned cars, bones and even on the carapace of Galapagos tortoises. Lichens have been used as dyes, as fibers, as fixatives in perfumes and as food for humans and animals. Indigenous peoples have relied on the medicinal value of some lichens to treat burns and wounds, due to their antibiotic properties. Lichens are bio-indicators of air quality; birds use lichens to line their nests; and many animals rely on lichens as camouflage.

These are some of the factoids I've gleaned from *Lichenpedia*, along with biographical information on aficionados fascinated by lichens, such as Simon Schwendener (1829-1919) who shook the botanical world by theorizing that lichens were indeed composite entities, a notion that was not initially accepted by scientists of his day. John Ruskin was a fan of lichens, as was Henry David Thoreau, who often had what he chose to call "a lichen day, a good lichen day, or somewhat of a lichen day." Poets and visual artists have

been and continue to be inspired and bewitched by lichens, marveling at the capacity to, in the words of William Blake “see a World in a Grain of Sand.” I could go on and on, but I don’t want to deny you the pleasure of reading this charming compendium of all things lichen. While it includes wonderful illustrations by Susan Adele Edwards, you may also find googling for images can add to your enjoyment in making your way through this book. *Lichenpedia* is available in print and eBook formats and is recommended for all plant and public libraries.



Healing Plants of South Asia: A Handbook of the Medicinal Flora of the Indian Subcontinent, by John A. Parrotta. CRC Press, 2024. 1,956 pages, color illustrations. \$600 (Two-volume set). ISBN 9781032896151.

Reviewed by Stephen Sinon
William B. O'Connor Curator of
Special Collections, Research and Archives
New York Botanical Garden

The title alone would indicate a regional coverage much broader than that of its subtitle, which clearly indicates the subject of this work is limited to the plants of the Indian Subcontinent, but it also covers the regions of Afghanistan and Myanmar.

The first of the two volumes in this work begins with a review of the floristic wealth of the region discussing the main types of traditional medicine, of which Ayurveda is the best known. Nearly 2,000 species are treated and

described in the main text of this work, however, this number represents less than 25% of all documented medicinal plants in the region. Species selected for inclusion constitute those most widely represented in traditional medicine of the region.

Plant descriptions are organized into three broad chapters covering Pteridophytes, Gymnosperms, and Angiosperms. Within each chapter plant descriptions are arranged by family, genus, and species. The author has thoughtfully included many useful indexes, including common name, scientific name, medical uses, and glossaries of medical and botanical terms. Tables are compiled for native and naturalized species, soils, biomes, and principal languages. The last table reflects the incredibly diverse linguistics of this broad region which have complicated identification and conservation.

The author's background is in conservation, ecology, restoration and management of forests worldwide. He is the author of *Healing Plants of Peninsular India* (2001) and co-editor of *Traditional Forest-Related Knowledge* (2012) and holds a PhD from Yale University's School of Forestry & Environmental Studies (now School of the Environment, founded in 1900 as the Yale Forest School by Gifford Pinchot and Henry S. Graves).

Each plant entry is comprised of common names, synonyms, botanical description, distribution, conservation status, brief publication references, and usage warnings where applicable. It is understandable that a publication of such scope could easily become unwieldy, yet the entries for each plant are rather brief, averaging two plants per page. One wonders, What does this work add to the existing body of literature on the subject? How do the entries assist researchers when they address plants that are widely known and used?

Comparable recent works include *Bibliography of medicinal plants of India* (2009); *Compendium of Indian medicinal plants* (1990-98); *Indian medicinal plants: an illustrated dictionary* (2007); *Database on Indian medicinal plants used in Ayurveda* (2000-05); *Common medicinal plants of India* (2000), and *Ayurvedic medicinal plants of India* (2011).

This reviewer requested a printed copy of the two volume publication (running 1,956 pages) but was offered a link to the online version. It was easy to navigate through the online version but I suspect that much of the information offered for each plant entry can be found online. It is also stated in the work that the author relied upon content found in major online databases. This might well be a reference book valued for use by pharmacologists, ethnobotanists and conservationists but researchers interested in each plant may need to consult more sources to round out their information needs.

CBHL Newsletter, Issue 177, June 2025

Newsletter Team

Judy Stevenson, Editor, newsletter@cbhl.net
Beth Brand, Members' West News Editor, bbrand@dbg.org
Shelly Kilroy, Members' East News Editor, skilroy@meijergardens.org
Gillian Hayward, Book Review Editor, ghayward@longwoodgardens.org
Rita Hassert, Calendar of Events Editor, rhassert@mortonarb.org
Kathy Allen, Proofreader, katrina.adina@gmail.com
Staci Catron, Proofreader, scatron@atlantahistorycenter.com
Jennie Oldfield, Proofreader, joldfield@atlantahistorycenter.com
Jodi Shippee, Proofreader, jodi.shippee@gmail.com



Contributors to this Issue

Ashley Aberg
Janet Evans
Angela Naumov
Stephen Sinon

Submissions Welcome!

Articles may be submitted to Judy Stevenson, Editor, newsletter@cbhl.net.
Issues published quarterly in March, June, September, and December.

The Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries, Inc., Newsletter is an official publication of CBHL, an international organization of botany and horticulture libraries and others supportive of CBHL's goals. ISSN 1543-2653 (print version, to June 2019); ISSN 1545-5734 (electronic version); published on the Council's website: <http://www.cbhl.net/>. The CBHL LibGuide is <http://cbhl.libguides.com>.

Join us!

Receive the CBHL Newsletter, Membership Directory, email discussion list, members-only web pages, and annual meeting materials.

Join online at:

<https://www.cbhl.net/become-cbhl-member>

Questions?

Contact CBHL Membership Manager
Robin Everly, membership@cbhl.net

Please use the subject line "CBHL Membership."

Student.....	\$50
Regular Individual.....	\$80
Retired.....	\$50
Institutional.....	\$130
Additional Institutional Member.....	\$75
Commercial.....	\$175

