

**BOTANY FOR BEGINNERS:
AN INTRODUCTION TO
THE STUDY OF PLANTS**

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Botany for Beginners: An Introduction to the Study of Plants by Maxwell T. Masters

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BY

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PREFACE.

FROM the experience of several years as a lecturer, the compiler of the following pages has arrived at the conclusion that one of the greatest difficulties in the way of those beginning to study Botany arises from the profusion of details usually presented to their notice at the outset. The most zealous students not unfrequently chafe at the irksome task of making themselves acquainted with a series of abstract propositions, couched in harsh unfamiliar language, and whose significance they are unable to appreciate. An attempt has therefore been made in the following chapters to correlate these details from the first, and to give the pupil an interest in them, by making manifest to him their importance as illustrations of the principles of plant-construction. The simplest flowers have been chosen as examples in the first instance; afterwards others of more complicated construction have been selected. An effort has been made in each case to show how and why the various modifications have been brought about. The life-history of the several plants has been incidentally touched on, and occasional hints have been furnished with a view to show the real aim and scope of botanical science, concerning which many students hold far too limited views.

Here and there the writer has deviated slightly from the conventional method of describing certain structures met with in plants. He has been impelled to do so from the feeling that it is hopeless to expect any real progress to be made in scientific botany so long as pupils are taught to trust to superficial appearances, rather than to investigate the origin and mode of growth of plants; in other words, to consider the "system" as of more consequence than the plants composing it.

The illustrations selected are all of them easily to be procured in gardens or fields, and they are described with reference to the season of the year; those mentioned in the earlier chapters flowering in spring, those in the following ones at a later period.

It may be added that nothing like original or exhaustive treatment of the subject has been attempted. The object of the writer has been simply to endeavour to smooth the path for the beginner, to suggest to him accurate ideas as to the scope of the science, and to facilitate his use of more important works.

It should be stated in conclusion, that the substance of the following chapters appeared originally in the columns of the "Gardeners' Chronicle." To the proprietors of that journal the writer has to tender his thanks for permission to make use of the illustrative woodcuts prepared by Mr. Worthington Smith. Other cuts have been placed at the writer's disposal by the publishers.

April, 1872.

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