

Mrs. Carol Gokce
Natural History Librarian
General Library
Natural History Museum
Cromwell Road
London SW7 5BD
Great Britain

Dear Mrs. Gokce:

It is great pleasure to send you this letter from the International Association for Plant Taxonomy (IAPT) in support of the Linnaeus Link Project.

Works by Carolus Linnaeus are fundamental to plant systematics and having them available in any form on-line will be extremely valuable. As you know, botanical nomenclature begins with Linnaeus' *Species Plantarum*, published in 1753. It begins at this point, simply because this is the first book that contains binomials used consistently throughout. The number of known species had reached a level (more than 7,000) where it was becoming too burdensome to remember the descriptive phrases, however more rich in detail they might have been. This shorthand proved to be very useful and popular and was quickly adopted by other authors. Even if Linnaeus had not published any other work, this alone would have been sufficient to fix his place in botanical history.

But Linnaeus did publish much more than *Species Plantarum*. He published books prior to this time (beginning in 1735 with *Systema Naturae*) and afterward, with many editions of his works being continued even after his death in 1778 by collaborating authors. He was a prolific publisher, not only by himself, but also in collaboration with students, who defended their dissertations under his guidance, and which were largely written by him (the custom of the time). There is a large literature, therefore, to be presented regarding contributions of Linnaeus (and also about him). His genius was in providing an encyclopedic view of the botanical sciences, covering structures, systems, nomenclature, history, workers in the field, and bibliography. As has been said: "God created, and Linnaeus ordered."

Although the major works of Linnaeus have been reprinted and are largely available in larger institutions, at least, there are many lesser works not so readily available, especially the dissertations. And for workers in developing countries, who do not have ready access to major libraries with such holdings, electronic versions would do much to stimulate scholarship on Linnaeus world-wide.

You may know that the IAPT is sponsoring in collaboration with the Linnean Society of London and the University of Uppsala a symposium this coming 22-24 August, 2003, dealing with "*Species Plantarum*: a 250-year celebration." This indicates directly our interest in Linnaeus and his works and gives more specific weight to our support of your Linnaeus Link Project.

The IAPT wishes you every success with this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

Tod F. Stuessy

Secretary, IAPT
Professor, Institute of Botany
University of Vienna
Rennweg 14, A-1030
Vienna, Austria