



TO FIND A USE FOR EVERY PLANT

A History of the Illuminated Western Herbals

WHAT IS AN HERBAL?

According to the Oxford English Dictionary it is 'a book containing the names and descriptions of herbs, or of plants in general, with their properties and virtues'

A herbal is a book of plants, describing their appearance, their properties and how they may be used for preparing ointments and medicines.
British Library - A Curious Herbal

Notice emphasis on medicinal properties, not culinary



HOW WERE THEY MADE?

The media used

- Clay tablets
- Papyrus
- Parchment/vellum
 - Stretched animal skin, usually calf, goat or sheep. Vellum refers specifically to a parchment made from calf skin
- Paper
- They were fragile and only a small number were preserved.





HOW WERE THE ILLUSTRATIONS MADE? THE TECHNIQUES

- Block printing - using woodcuts (relief carvings)
- Copper Plate Engraving (grooves in metal plates)
- Printed (> 1448 AD) Gutenberg press



THE DOCTRINE OF SIGNATURES

Physical characteristics of plants including shape, color, texture, and smell reveal their therapeutic value.

- Eyebright, *Euphrasia* --used for eye infections
- Hedge woundwort, *Stachys*-- antiseptic qualities
- Liverwort, *Hepatica* – used to treat the liver
- Lungwort – *Pulmonaria* used for pulmonary infections
- Spleenwort, *Asplenium* – used to treat the spleen
- Toothwort, *Dentaria* – used for tooth ailments



Astrological Botany

If plants or seeds are to be used for medicinal purposes then their planting and collection must be carried out with regard to the positions of the planets and other heavenly bodies (Zodiac), which are at the heart of the disease process. Example: there were plants specifically intended to treat male and female disorders and they should be harvested during male u female zodiac signs, respectively.

Of Greek origin, persisted among many herbalists until Renaissance Period.

However, the herbalist Nicholas Culpepper was an advocate of this idea even in the 1600's in his English Physician Herbal (Culpepper's Complete Herbal)



THE FOUR HUMOURS



According to humoralism, four bodily fluids—blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm—determined a person's temperament and an imbalance led to certain sicknesses dependent upon which humors were in excess or deficit. The humors were connected to celestial bodies, seasons, body parts, and stages of life.

Four Natural Elements

- Air (Blood, red, hot & moist)— need hot or cold herbs to regulate body temperature
- Water (Phlegm, blue, cool & moist) –pungent and aromatic herbs to treat sleepiness and passivity
- Fire (Yellow Bile, yellow, hot & dry) -apply bitter plants to lessen irritation and bad tempermant
- Earth (Black Bile, black, cold and dry)—plants to treat sadness and grief

Four Energetics

- Hot
- Cold
- Wet
- Dry

PHYSIC GARDENS

APOTHECARY OR HERB GARDENS CONTAINING MEDICINAL PLANTS.

PHYSIC-- MEANING SCIENCE OR STUDY GARDEN PLANTS
ALSO CALLED "GARDEN OF SIMPLES"

OUR BOTANICAL GARDENS DEVELOPED FROM THEM

SOMETIMES ASSOCIATED WITH HERBALISTS



CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN



ESTABLISHED
1673
LONDON



Second oldest Physic Garden in England

4 acres of medicinal herbs

OTHER PHYSIC GARDENS

Orto Botanica
Padua, Italy
1545
UNESCO site



Oxford Botanical Garden
England
1621



European Monasteries

Giardino dei Semplici
University of Florence,
Italy
A semplici means a
medicinal plant
1547

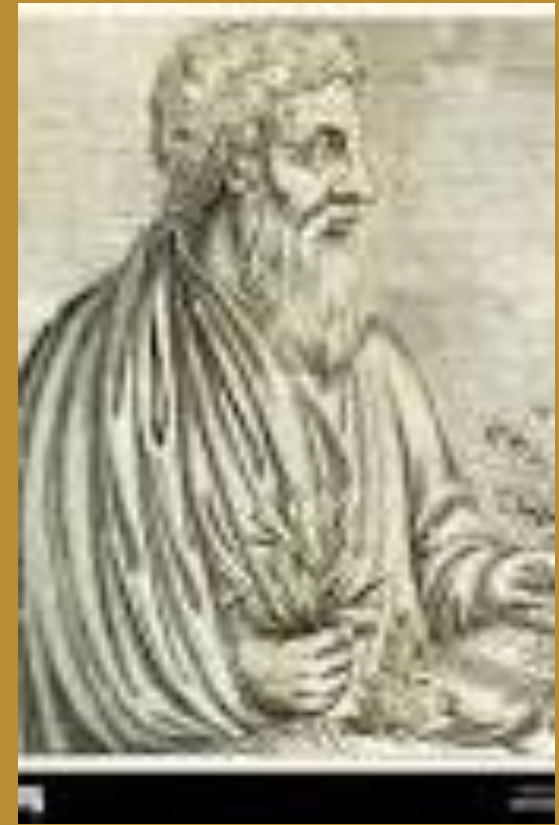


A SHORT LIST OF THE IMPORTANT HERBALISTS

PEDANIUS DIOSCORIDES

(1ST CENTURY CE)

- Greek
- De Materia Medica (On Medicinal Material)
- 5 volume work dated 50 to 70 CE
- Described drugs such as aconite, aloes, henbane, opium and scilla and others
- Covered 600 plants
- Oldest surviving manuscript dates to 6th century—Codex Vindobonensis



DE MATERIA MEDICA



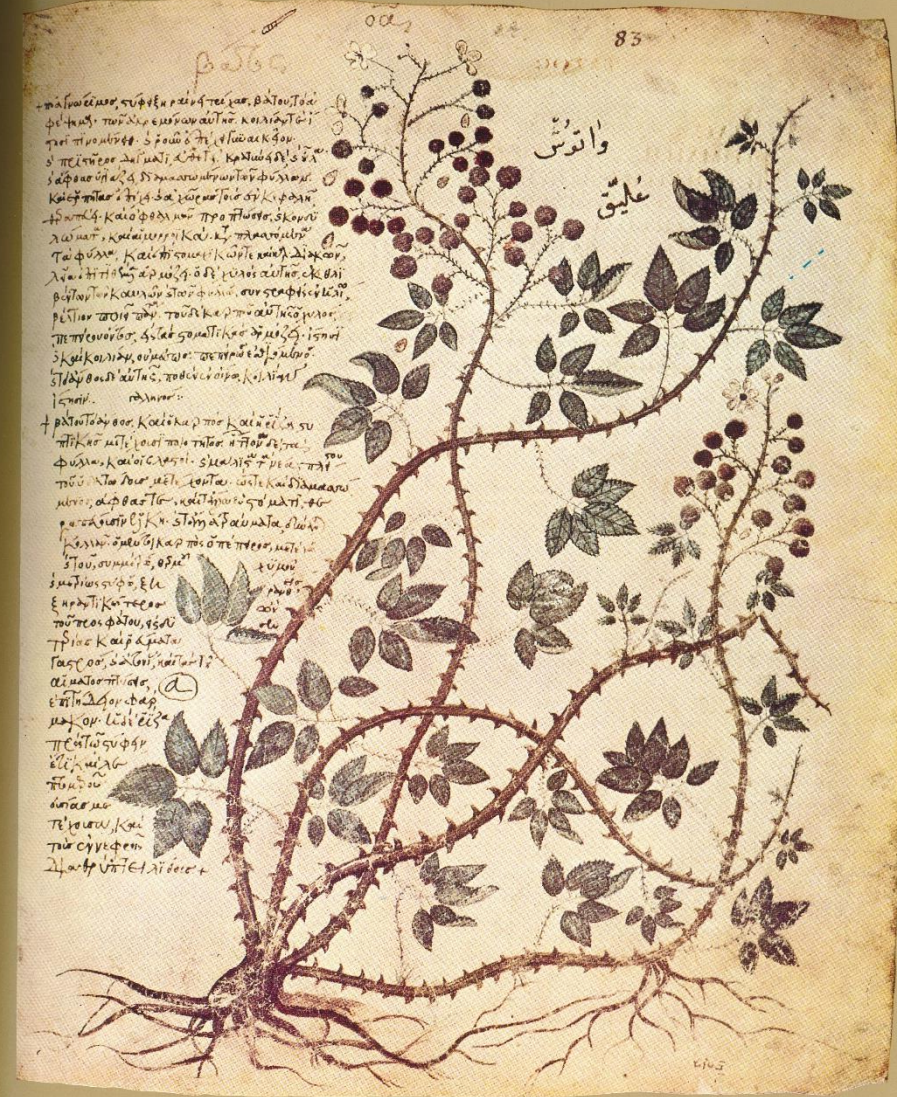
The primary work referred to by all herbalists for over 1400 years

Poppy (*Papaver somniferum*)

Codex
Vindobonensis



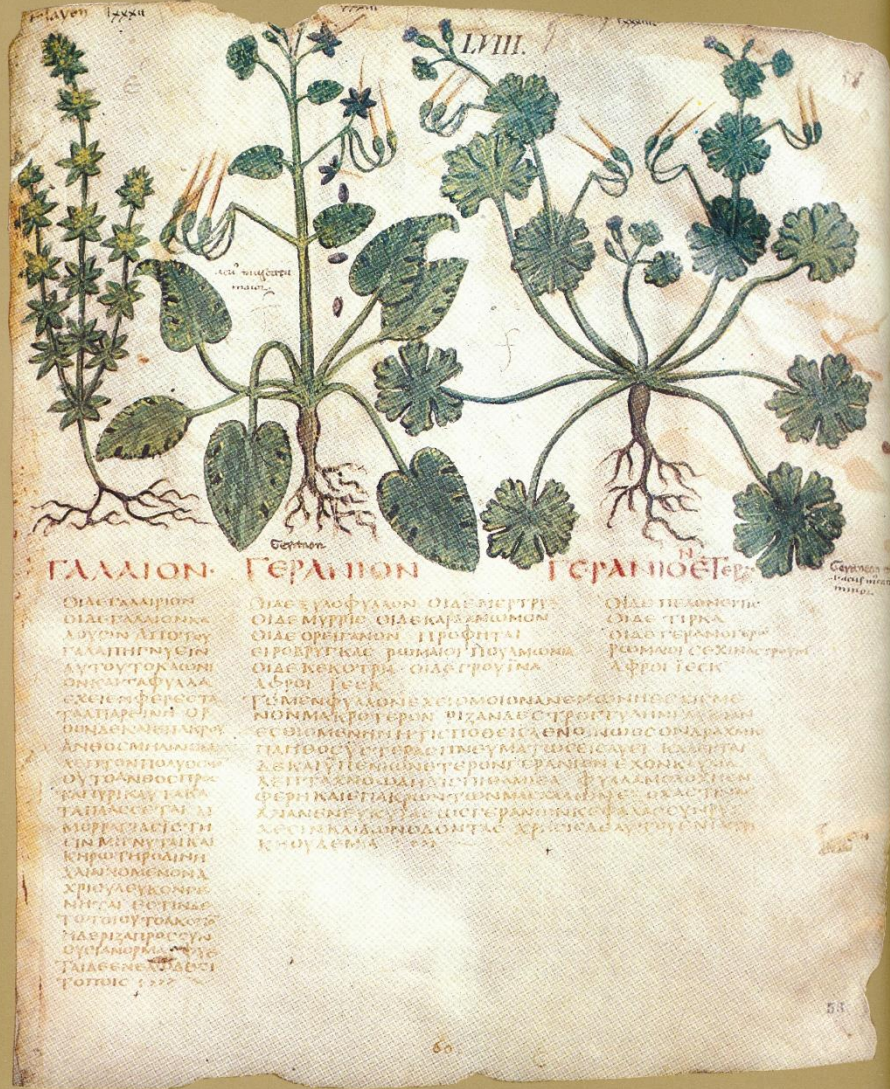
Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*)



Lady's bedstraw, Cranesbill, Geranium

Winter cherry, and 2 mulleins

Codex Neapolitanus



CLASSICAL LITERATURE

Grape hyacinth (Muscari) and Poppy

9th century manuscripts



Caraway (Carum) and Nut Grass (Cyperus)



EARLY EUROPEAN HERBALISTS



OTTO BRUNFELS

(1489-1534)

- German

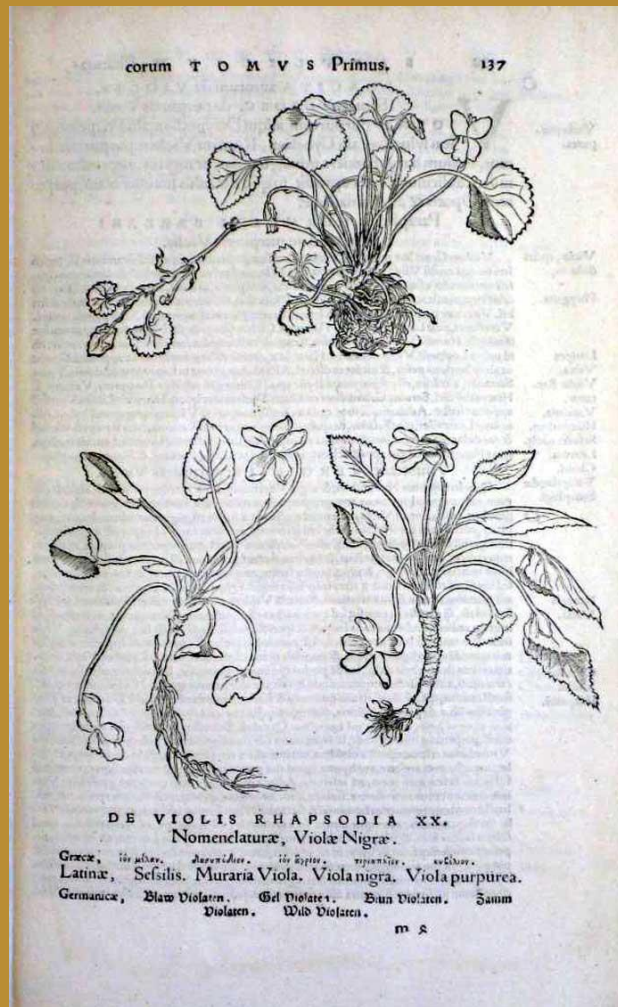
**HERBARUM
VIVAE
EICONES
1532**

-
- Beginning of modern botany
 - Exquisite woodcuts by Hans von Weiditz
 - Problems with text

HERBARUM VIVAE EICONE



Cowslip



Violets



Pasque-flower

Purple orchids (*Orchis*)



Daffodil and Spring snowflake (*Leucoium*)



Water lilies



Violets





LEONART FUCHS

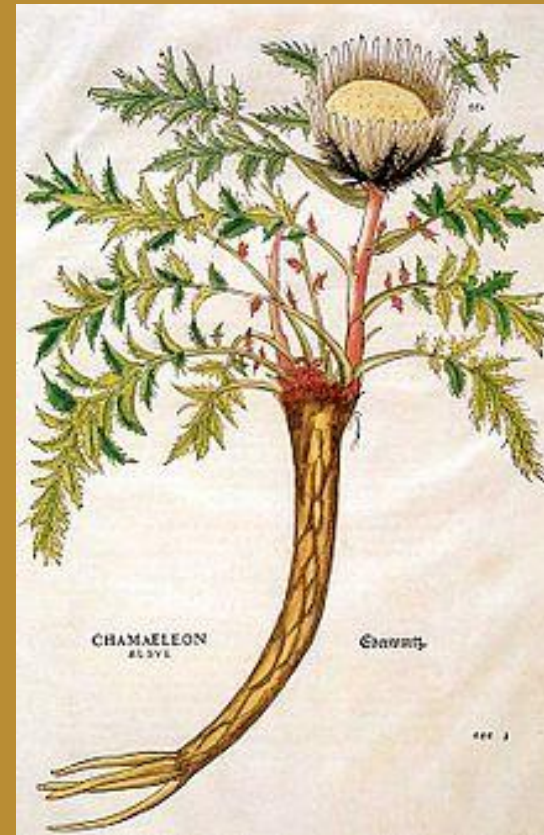
(1501-1566)

- Tübingen, Germany

**DE HISTORIA
STIRPUM
1542**

-
- Superior Woodcuts by Albrecht Meyer, Heinrich Fullmaurer and Veit Rudolf Speckle
 - Scholarly text
 - Plants arranged **systematically** by Greek alphabet letters

DE HISTORIA STIRPUM



Stemless thistle (Carlina)

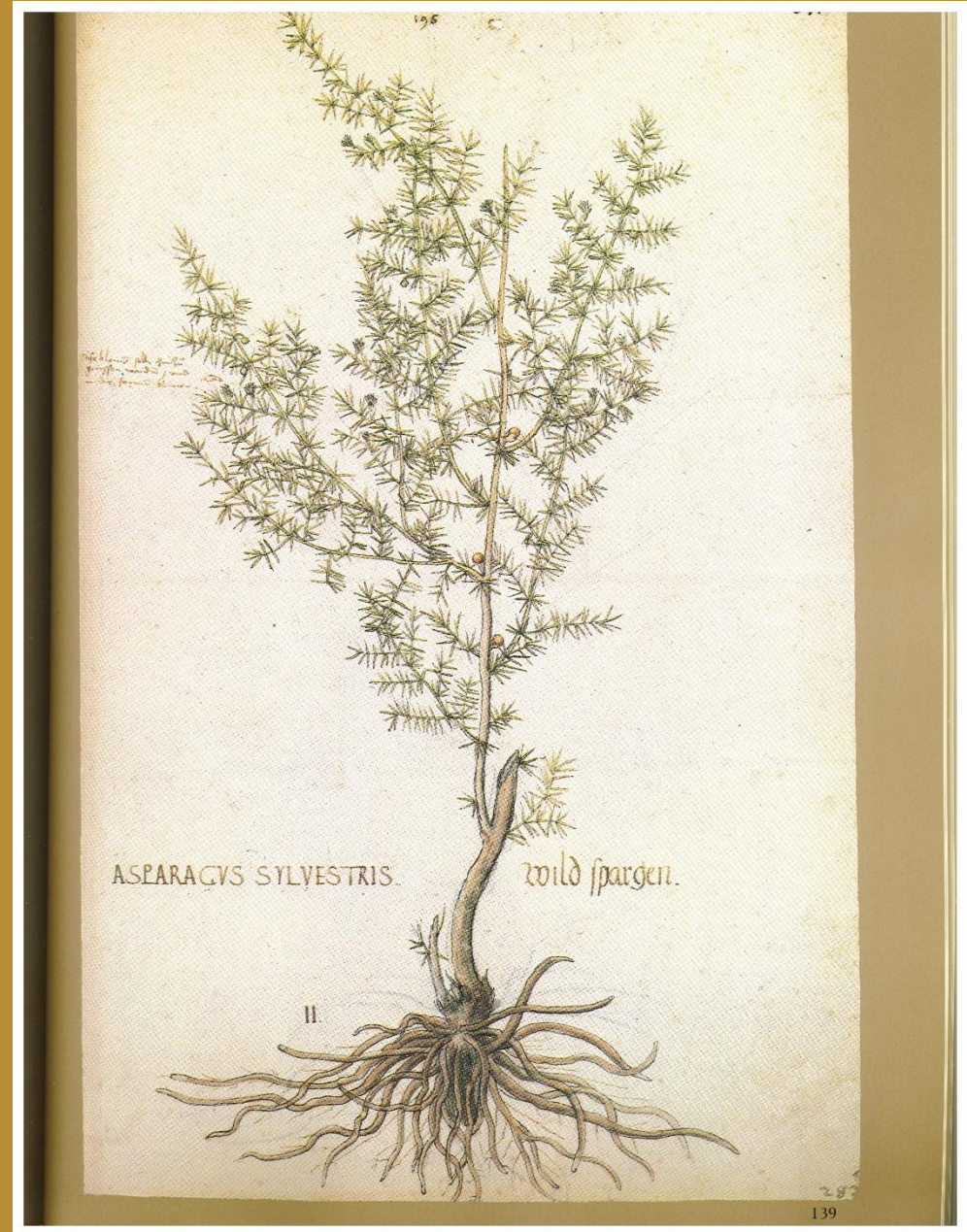


Columbine

Greater celandine (*Chelidonium*)



Asparagus



Cherry



Rose





WILLIAM TURNER

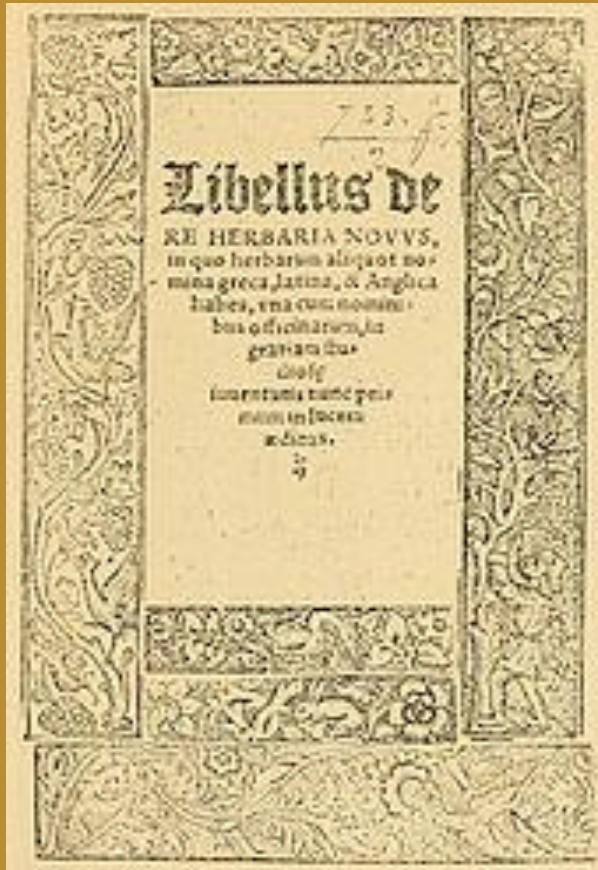
(1509-1568)

**LIBELLUS DE
RE HERBARIA
1551-1568
THE NEW
HERBALL**

English physician and divine
“Father of English Botany”

- Published 1st illuminated herbal in English language
- Arranged plants alphabetically
- Religious views hampered his productivity

NEW HERBALL



Mandrake

JOHN GERARD

(1545-1612)

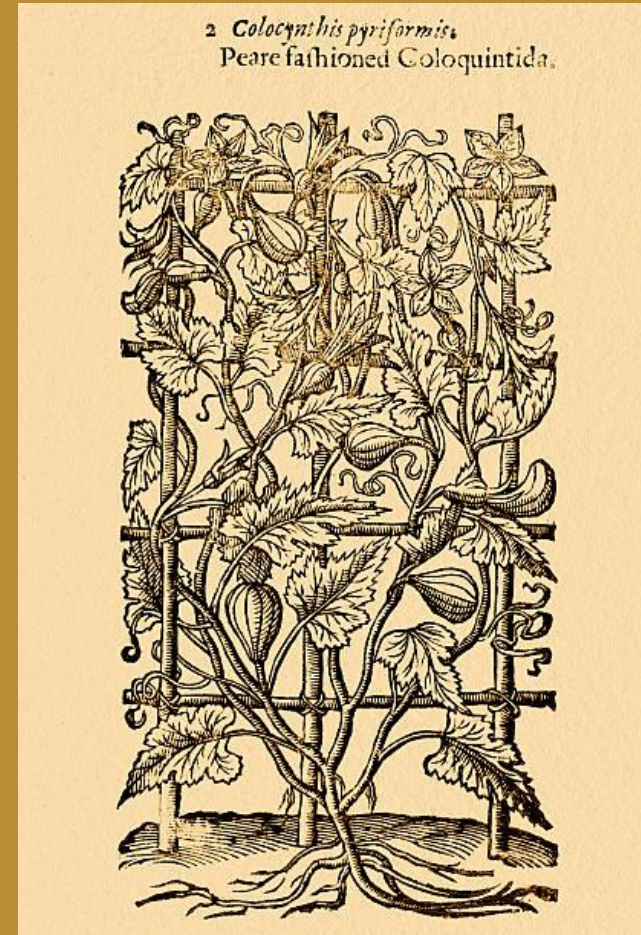
ENGLISH

- THE HERBALL, or GENERALL HISTORIE OF PLANTES (1597)
- WOODCUTS
- > 1000 SPECIES including many British plants
- EXTREMELY POPULAR ALTHOUGH LARGELY PLAGIARIZED OTHER WORKS
- INCLUDED PLANTS FROM THE AMERICAS IN HIS CATALOG





Virginia potato



Bitter cucumber



BASILIVS BESLER

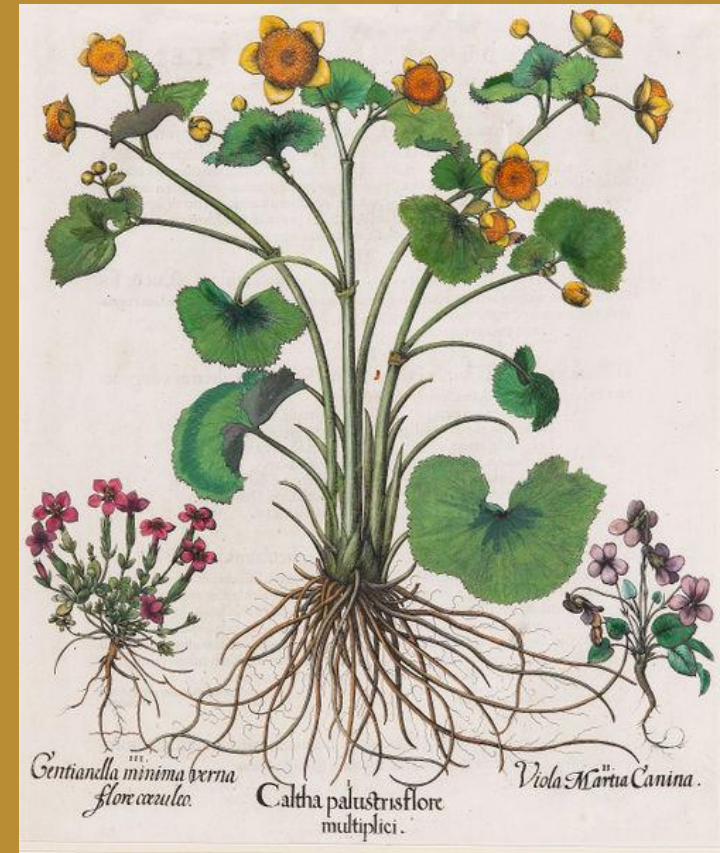
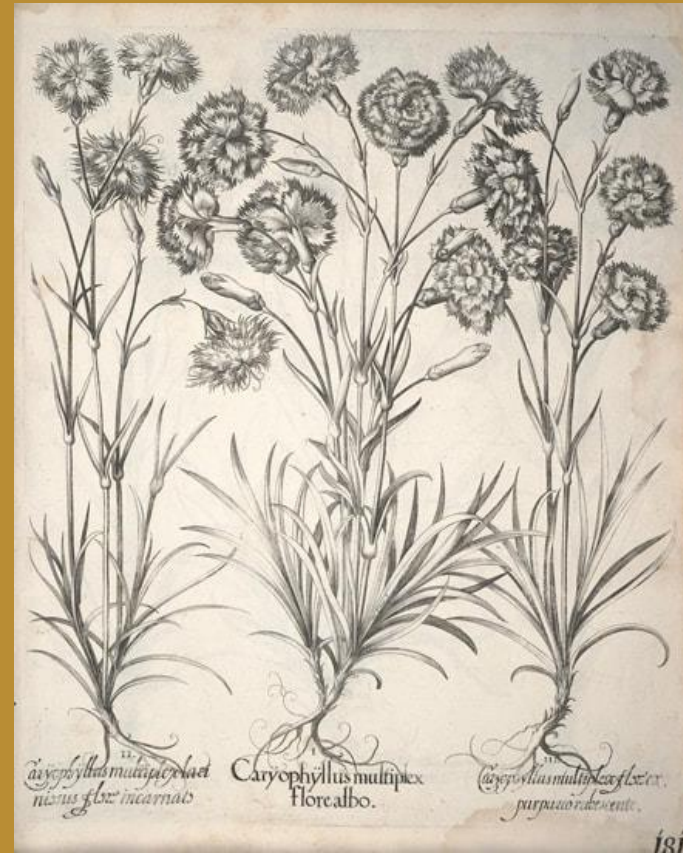
(1561-1629)

HORTUS EYSTETTENSIS

1613

- very large plates (took 10 engravers 16 years to finish work)
- Plants arranged by season
- was the first botanical book that portrayed flowering plants as objects of beauty
- changed the emphasis away from medicinal herbs towards botanical illustration

HORTUS EYSTETTENSIS



The place of the herbals in modern botanical science

