



BOTANICAL ARTISTS of CANADA

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT:
THE BAC EXHIBITION AT TODMORDEN MILLS, NOVEMBER 2009
TREES: FROM ROOTS TO CROWN



The jury awarded First prize to *Juglans nigra*: Black Walnut by Celia Godkin



The *People's Choice* award went to *Quercus borealis*, *Q. alba*, *Q. palustris*, *Q. velutina*, *Q. robur*: Acorns of Red, White, Pin, Black and English Oaks by Joan Burdett-Ness

GALLERY of PRIZE-WINNING ENTRIES

Esther Lovrics' *Ginkgo biloba*: Ginkgo or Maidenhair tree (left) was awarded Second place by the jury and also came in second for the *People's Choice* award.



Nellie Sue Potter's *Betula alleghaniensis*: Yellow Birch (below) received Third place from the jury.



Catalpa speciosa: Northern Catalpa by Raquel Baranyai received an Honourable Mention from the jury and third place *People's Choice* award



Dracaena marginata: Madagascar Dragon Tree by Hannah Levitt received an Honourable Mention from the jury

Pinus resinosa: Red pine by Gerry Jenkison, (featured on the cover of BAC's fall/winter newsletter) received an Honourable Mention.

Together with Raquel Baranyai's *Catalpa*, this painting was given the highest possible score by the jury, based on the digital images they were provided with.

Differences between jury scores (of digital images) and jury awards (for original art) reflect the fact that digital images don't always accurately convey the quality of the original art.

The two paintings shown below received high scores from the jury, but were not given any awards.



Bauhinia blakeana: Hong Kong Orchid by Robert Gait



Malus sp.: Pink Spire Crabapple by Celia Godkin

SUMMARY OF AWARDS:

JUROR AWARDS: 1st place: *Juglans nigra*: Black Walnut by Celia Godkin
2nd place: *Ginkgo biloba*: Ginkgo or Maidenhair tree by Esther Lovrics
3rd place: *Betula alleghaniensis*: Yellow Birch by Nellie Sue Potter

HONOURABLE MENTION: *Catalpa speciosa*: Northern Catalpa by Raquel Baranyai
Pinus resinosa: Red pine by Gerry Jenkison
Dracaena marginata: Madagascar Dragon Tree by Hannah Levitt

PEOPLES CHOICE AWARD (Voted on by visitors to the gallery.) The winner was *Oak Acorns* by Joan Ness, by a clear margin. Joan's acorns got 22 votes. Ester's *Ginkgo* got 17, the only other entry to get a 2-digit sum. The rest of the votes were broadly distributed, with a surprising number of entries having 4-5 votes. Raquel's *Catalpa* led this group with 9 votes.

A total of 74 entries by 24 artists were submitted. Artists were identified by a letter only on the jurying forms, to make them as anonymous as possible. The jury consisted of Kathleen Haushalter, Curator of *Gallery in the Garden* at Sherway Gardens Mall in Etobicoke, Botanist Janet Harrison and two Botanical Artists, Jean Johnson and Margit Koritar.

Here's what the jury had to say: "As jurors we had the pleasure to view extraordinary works of art from a group of very talented artists. Given the limitation of space compared to the total number of entries, we had to make some extremely difficult choices. We know the disappointment some of the artists will have experienced. We would like to congratulate all the artists who submitted work; in every entry we could see evidence of passion for the subject, talent and hard work. We are looking forward to visiting the gallery and seeing your beautiful display."

The jury also made a number of very helpful recommendations that we hope to put into practice the next time we mount a juried show. Their advice on labelling entries is given below and is included here because it's good general advice. There's no time like the present for developing good labelling habits!

Thanks to Todmorden staff and our Exhibition Sitters, everything at the gallery went off without a hitch. It's not possible to get an accurate count of the visitors, as not everyone signed the book, but 77 adults and 4 children were recorded at the opening and the total count was 285 adults, 10 children and one dog. Sundays were the best day of the week for visitors. No surprise there! Of the 52 artworks displayed, 9 were sold.

The Exhibition Sitters recorded suggestions received from the public and the BAC Coordinating Group is in the process of compiling a user's guide for putting a show together. It will list the many things we learned and include more extensive guidelines on how to fill out the entry form, so that the onus to get all those nitpicky details right will fall on those that submit, rather than on the volunteer who's putting it all together. In that vein, I'm adding the following article now, before I forget all this.

- Celia Godkin, Newsletter Editor

A NOTE ON ARTISTS' SUBMISSIONS to *TREES: FROM ROOTS TO CROWN* and THE PITFALLS OF COMMON NAMES and WHY WE USE LATIN INSTEAD by Celia Godkin

When I took on the task of compiling the digital images that BAC members sent me for the tree show into CDs for the jury, I little realized that it would be the forms that would take up most of my time. The CDs and forms took me more than a week to compile, and the bulk of that was spent on the forms. This was due partly to the level of organization required, and partly to the many errors or omissions in the Call for Entries. A small thing like failing to use italics for the Latin name involves only a few seconds of my time to correct, but with over 70 entries, that can add up.

The most common errors, and those that took up the most time, had to do with the identification of subjects. There were a number of incomplete identifications, and I looked them up myself, because it takes less time to identify something correctly than it does to e-mail the artist and get them to do it. Despite my corrections, our scientific expert, Janet Harrison, still found 13 incorrect entries of which at least two, I hasten to add, were typos on my part.

These days, it's a very simple matter to look up the correct scientific name or to check on the common name of your subject on the internet. (See the juror comments below for advice on where to go.) It's also easy to check the web to see whether or not it fits the criteria for entry to the show - in the case of our last show, whether or not it's a tree. But beware! Common names are often downright misleading because they pre-date scientific classification. A familiar example of this is the use of the word "fish" as a general term to designate an aquatic animal. Scientifically speaking, a fish is a member of the sub-phylum Vertebrata, superclass Pisces. Yet in common parlance we have jellyfish, starfish and shellfish, none of which are remotely like true fish.

Similarly, the word "tree" is an old word that merely signifies a large plant. The scientific definition of the word was outlined in BAC's Call for Entries, and like many scientific definitions, it turned out to be a slippery customer. One feature of trees is the woody stem. Ok, we all know what wood is, or think we do, but go look up a definition of wood and you will get "Wood: Xylem. Vascular tissue that conducts water and mineral salts throughout the plant and provides it with mechanical support." I'm sure you will agree that this is not very helpful. A much better explanation came from Dick Rauh, during the plant morphology course he gave in November. Dick explained that most shoots grow from the apical meristem, what most of us would call the growing point, on the tip of the shoot. Trees, in addition to growing from the tip also grow laterally (outwards). The result is bark; something we can all recognize. Trees have bark.

In the BAC tree show we had two entries, the Banana Tree and the Banana Shrub. Right, you say, the Banana Tree is acceptable, the Banana Shrub is not. Wrong. The Banana Tree is what we think of as a banana, the fruit that comes in big bunches in the grocery store and is a member of the genus *Musa*. The Genus *Musa* is described as "tree-like herbs, 2 - 9 m. tall". That's certainly tall enough to be a tree, but: "its aerial stem is actually composed of the overlapping bases of the leaves above and is known as a 'pseudostem'." In other words, it's not a proper tree because it lacks wood. The Banana Shrub, on the other hand, is *Michelia figo*, a member of the Magnolia family, which does have a woody stem, and is so called because of the distinctive smell of its flowers. Though the common name indicates it's a shrub, it does grow to the height of a tree (4 m.) and so it qualifies as one - just barely.

The muddle caused by the use of common names is the reason that Latin names were developed in the first place. The system of assigning two Latin names was developed by the Swedish botanist, Carl Linneus. In 1735, he published *Systema Naturae* a classification of plants based on their flower parts, in which he proposed the binomial system of classification. He assigned each plant a first name denoting the group or Genus to which it belongs and a second name denoting its species. It's not much different from the way we name ourselves, if you think about it, except that our family name - equivalent to the Genus - comes second. Linnaeus's scheme was quickly adopted, as the existing method of naming plants purely on description was becoming unworkable with the multitude of new species being discovered at that time. Linnaeus honed his system and extended it to the animal kingdom in later publications and the tenth edition of *Systema Naturae*, published in 1758, is now accepted as the official starting point for zoological nomenclature in use today. The universal adoption of the binomial system by both botanists and zoologists eliminated the chaos of conflicting classifications and helped to advance progress in the natural sciences.

Latin names may transcend languages, national borders and ethnic cultures, but they are not permanently fixed in time. With advances in science, sometimes a whole Genus gets renamed or divided. Recently, for example, the Genus *Chrysanthemum* was reorganized, with many members being reallocated to *Leucanthemum*, *Agyranthemum*, *Leucanthemopsis* and *Tanacetum*. So, while it's good to get comfortable with Latin names, don't make the mistake of thinking that even the best system we have is not subject to change.

JUROR COMMENTS ON LABELLING, AND SOME HELPFUL WEBSITES

"Artists used a variety of approaches in the titles of their artworks. If artworks are to meet specific botanical standards, the Latin name, and not the common name, should be used to avoid misidentifying a specimen as sometimes a common name is used for two or three species that are not even related. The binomial name leaves no room for error. Where both the binomial and common names are used, international standards give the binomial name priority over the common name, so it must always be the first part of the title.

Janet Harrison suggests these initial resources

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Code_of_Botanical_Nomenclature

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Species> to spell out the strict rules that must be followed when using the binomial name /species name. For example: the first letter of the first part of the binomial name (which identifies it is a member of a certain Genus) is always capitalized. The first letter of the second part of the binomial name is always lower case. If the species name is in question use 'sp.' after the Genus name. If there are representatives of a number of species in the same Genus, use 'spp.' Both names in the species must be italicized. The sp. or spp. is never italicized. Cultivars have their own set of rules:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Code_of_Nomenclature_for_Cultivated_Plants and <http://www.ishs.org/icra/index.htm>."



An Exhibition of Botanical Paintings & Drawings

TREES:

FROM ROOTS TO CROWN

Todmorden Mills
Heritage Museum and Art Centre
Papermill Gallery

NOVEMBER 4TH TO 15TH, 2009

Gallery hours: Wed to Fri, 12:00 noon to 4:30 pm
Sat and Sun, 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm

OPENING RECEPTION

Please join us at the Papermill Gallery
67 Pottery Road, Toronto, Ontario
(between Bayview and Broadview Avenues)
on Saturday, November 7th, 2009
12:00 noon - 4:00 pm

www.botanicalartistsofcanada.org

PHOTO GALLERY



Dick Rauh, Nellie Sue Potter, Kerri Weller; visitors admiring the artwork;



a budding botanical artist?



Visitor admiring Dick Rauh's painting;



Nellie Sue Potter and Dick Rauh;



a long shot of the gallery with visitors



Two views of the gallery at the opening reception;



Dick Rauh addresses the audience



Nellie Sue addresses the audience and presents 1st prize to Celia Godkin;



Kathleen Haushalter explains their choice



Dick Rauh in conversation with Janet Harrison



two views of the gallery

