

Carolus Linnaeus

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Carolus Linnaeus created the two-name system for naming all living things.

Courtesy of the Svenska Porträttarkivet, Stockholm



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Introduction



Carolus Linnaeus was a Swedish naturalist. He created two scientific systems: the system for classifying plants and animals and the system for naming all living things. Linnaeus is also called the Father of Systematic Botany. **Botany** is the study of plants.

Early Life



Carl Linnaeus was born on May 23, 1707, in Rashult, Sweden. He later adopted the Latin form of his first name. Linnaeus developed an interest in plants and animals at a young age. He was nicknamed “the little botanist” when he was 8 years old. In 1727 he began studying medicine. From 1730 to 1732 he was able to pay for his classes at Uppsala University by teaching botany in the university garden.

In 1732 he was sent on a 5,000-mile (8,000-kilometer) botanical survey of Lapland (a region of northern Europe mostly within the **Arctic Circle**). The results of this journey were published in *Flora Lapponica* in 1737.

Career



Linnaeus earned a medical degree in 1735 at a university in Holland. In Holland, Linnaeus was made director of a large botanical garden. Over the next few years he published *System Naturae* ("System of Nature") and *Genera Plantarum* ("Species of Plants"). There were many editions of both works.

In *Systema Naturae* Linnaeus presented a classification of three kingdoms of nature: stones, plants, and animals. Each kingdom was subdivided into classes, orders, genera, species, and varieties. This system is still used in **biology**, though it has been revised over the years. In *Genera Plantarum* Linnaeus presented a system that classified plants based on the form and structure of the plants.

Linnaeus's most-lasting achievement was the creation of the binomial (two-name) **classification system**. In this system, each living thing is assigned a name consisting of two Latin words. The first word is the genus to which the subject belongs. The second name is the specific species within that genus. For example, the human species is known as *Homo sapiens*.

Linnaeus returned to Stockholm in 1738. In 1742 he was appointed to a position in the botany department at Uppsala. He spent the rest of his career there.

Later Life



Linnaeus was granted a title of Swedish nobility in 1761. He then became known as Carl von Linné. He established a stone museum for his collections after a massive fire destroyed much of Uppsala in 1766. Linnaeus died on January 10, 1778, in Uppsala.