

ART ADVENTURE
SAM DALKILIC-MIESTOWSKI

Botanical illustrations add life to any room

In early 19th century England, a number of artists were producing botanical illustrations.

Botany had become a popular recreation. Flower painting was a prized accomplishment of every young lady in fashion. This created a strong demand for manuals of instruction. This desire for knowledge about flowers has continued through the present day.

There is barely a painter, past or present, who has not rendered flowers in some art form. As long as people love gardens, flowers will flourish in art. They remain a perennial favorite for people from around the world and from all walks of life. Flowers bring the peace and tranquility of nature into the home more than any other subject. Botanicals bring softness and color to even the innermost city apartment, regardless of the season.

Botanicals fit into almost any decorating scheme — traditional, modern, country, or eclectic.

Flowers are a favorite bedroom accessory, but they can also enrich a drawing room, dining room, kitchen or study. Flowers can enhance a traditional chintzy scheme or soften a more modern monochromatic interior. A drab hallway can become an exciting passageway with a creative grouping of flowers. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a room without flowers of some kind.

Few people can afford the wonderful floral still lifes that were available a hundred or even 50 years ago. But it is still possible to find botanical engravings, woodcuts and lithographs by the great names of the 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries.

Everyone has his or her own method of collecting botanical artwork, just as everyone has his or her own vision of what flowers will grace their garden. One exciting way of featuring botanicals is to concentrate on a particular flower. A wall full of geraniums or day lilies can look wonderful.

The sum of all pictures together

is more dramatic than showing each one singly. Actually, the same effect has been used by gardeners for centuries, i.e., planting a bed of one species for high visual impact.

One can also create a very exciting effect by combining the same species family in various colors with the same matting and framing. For instance, the camellia family has colors ranging from white to pink to red. A grouping of the three colors with identical matting and framing will create a harmonious and interesting focal point.

Some of the upper-end decorating magazines mix engravings, watercolors, and oils, for an enchanting nosegay effect. The Steeple Gallery has hundreds of original antiquarian botanicals in its inventory. To view these pieces in person call 219-365-1014, or email Sam at samowner@sbcglobal.net.

— Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski owns and operates The Steeple Gallery, Ltd., 11107 Thiel St., St. John, IN 46373.



These hand-colored prints by Henry Andrews are on display at The Steeple Gallery. | PHOTOS PROVIDED

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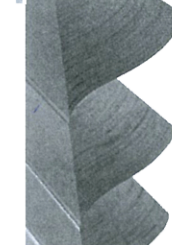
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