Jose Celestino Mutis Encyclopedia Article

Jose Celestino Mutis

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Jose Celestino Mutis

1732-1808

Spanish botanist, physician, astronomer, and priest who spent over 50 years studying and meticulously cataloging the biodiversity of New Granada (Colombia). In 1783 Mutis led a botanical expedition in which over 5,000 plants were illustrated and classified according to the newly developed Linnaeus system of modern scientific nomenclature. Mutis distinguished four species of chinchona, a valuable plant used for anti-malarial and heart medications. The Royal Botanical Gardens in Madrid house most of the Mutis-expedition illustrations.