Robert Brown Encyclopedia Article

Robert Brown

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Contents

Robert Brown Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Robert Brown.....3

Robert Brown

1773-1858

Scottish botanist Robert Brown revolutionized cell theory with his discovery of the nuclei in many different types of plant tissue. He observed one "nucleus" in each cell. He also made substantial contributions to the field of plant taxonomy, the classification of plants based on physical characteristics. Brown's description of the lack of ovary around the ovule in conifers and other similar plants provided a fundamental distinction between gymnosperms and angiosperms. Brown, who shared his fascination of plants with the British public, was the first to secure a nationally owned botanical collection available for public viewing.