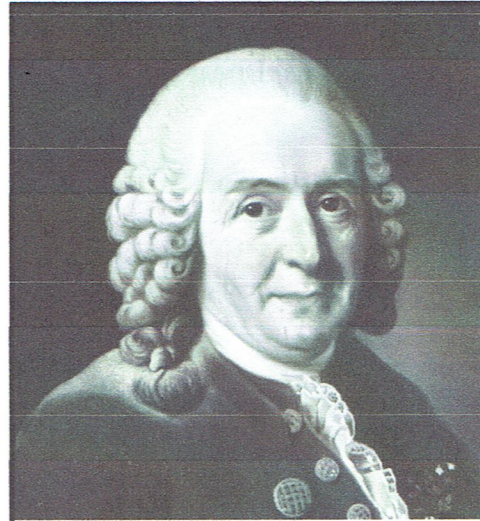


CARL LINNAEUS

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(1) I am known as “The Father of Taxonomy”. Taxonomy is the classification and naming of living organisms. Familiar names like *E. coli*, *Tyrannosaurus rex* and *Homo sapien* have come from my system of naming organisms which is called binomial nomenclature, which means “two part naming system”. This may seem unremarkable, but in my day, this type of naming system was revolutionary. In the 18th century, new organisms were being discovered every day and scientists were naming them any way they liked with no sense of organization. The same plant would be given several different names and some names were ridiculously long. For example, a common flower, the carnation, was called the *dianthus, floribus solitariis, sqamis calycinis subovatis brevissimus, corollis crenatis*. I decided that I couldn't let things continue this way so I set a goal to change how ALL scientists around the world named and classified living things. I succeeded and that's why I'm written about in every biology textbook.



Carl Linnaeus
Botanist, Zoologist (1707-1778)

(2) I was born on May 23rd 1707 in Sweden. I lived in the countryside of Småland. I credit my parents for fostering in me a love of plants. As a child, when I was upset, they would give me a flower which immediately calmed me right down. My father was an amateur botanist and had an extensive garden which we would spend many happy days exploring. My father noticed that I had a strong interest in plants so I was given my own precious patch of land to garden. He believed I was bright so he began teaching me geography, religion and Latin at a young age. My parents told me I could speak Latin even before I could walk!

(3) At 10, I was sent to school but I disliked the classes which consisted of learning Greek, Hebrew, theology and math. I didn't study and preferred instead to go to the countryside to look for plants. My father was shocked when my teachers told him that I would never make it to university. They didn't think I was very intelligent, except for one teacher, Johan Rothman, who was also a botanist and a doctor. He saw potential in my love and extensive knowledge of plants. Rothman convinced my father that I should live with his family and be privately taught until I was ready for university. My father agreed. I bloomed under the teachings of Rothman and eventually made it to the University of Uppsala.

(4) Unfortunately, the school was not a very good school, however, because of this, I was

asked to teach some of the courses. I was only 23 and a second year student, but my passion and interest in plants had already been noticed by my superiors. It turned out that I was a very good instructor and my courses were always packed with students who were captivated by my love of plants and how I talked about them.

(5) In 1732, I went on my first expedition to research plants and animals. On my 6 month journey to Lapland, in the north of Sweden, I travelled alone by foot and horse. I carried with me a journal for observations, a few writings about plants and birds and sheets of paper for pressing plants. My expeditions would later inspire the Journey of Charles Darwin on the *HMS Beagle*. When I came back, I wrote a book, called *Flora Lapponica*, about the 534 plant specimens I found on my expedition. In my book, I used my binomial nomenclature to name and classify the organisms. In 1737, I published a groundbreaking book called *Systema Naturae* in which I attempted to classify all the known plants and animals using my system of classification. My book was very popular as it helped put sense and order to naming and classifying organisms.

(6) In 1741, I was 34 and returned to Uppsala University to teach again. This time I was more popular than ever and I gained a lot of devoted and passionate students who were enthralled by my boundless enthusiasm for plants. 17 of

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my students proved to be remarkable. They were very dedicated to me and were nicknamed *The Apostles*. I sent them on missions to remote areas of the Earth to find new species for classification. Sadly, 7 of them died on their journeys and never returned. Those who did brought back incredible specimens, many of which made it into another book I wrote in 1753 called *Species Plantarum*, which was my big masterpiece on plants.

(7) In 1758, I came out with the tenth edition of my book *Systema Naturae*. This edition contained a very comprehensive taxonomy of animals. It was the first time anyone had classified humans alongside primates. I got a lot of criticism for this grouping as many felt my classification lowered the value of humans and threatened religious thinking. Based solely

on shared characteristics of anatomy, I observed that humans were most similar to the great apes. Of this I was very certain, though it did not threaten my strong religious beliefs. I approached all of my classification of plants and animals based on their structural similarities. Using this criteria, I reclassified many organisms, including bats which had previously been classified as birds. In my book, I grouped them under mammals.

(8) In my day, I only developed two kingdoms of life, plants and animals and my taxonomy included only the following levels: kingdom, order, genus and species. Since then, taxonomy has continued to develop and more groupings have been added to my system to improve it. Despite this, my legacy is a lasting one that will remain forever stamped in natural history.