

Plainfield Historical Society
c/o Judy Williams,
525 West Main Street
Plainfield, MA 01070

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Contact Information for this exhibit:

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Plants on Paper: Two Centuries of Collecting, Studying and the Art of the Flora in Plainfield

June 1- July 31, 2019

Shaw Memorial Library
312 Main Street
Plainfield, MA, 01070

Plainfield, MA (May 20, 2019) The Plainfield Historical Society presents a two month-long exhibit of a nineteenth-century botanical collection of pressed plants and flowers, manuscripts, books, , photographs, and other items from its collection, complemented by botany-themed art by Plainfield residents, from June 1-July 31, at the Shaw Memorial Library.

Join us for the festive opening on Saturday June 1, 9:30 am-12:00 pm, including a formal opening at 10:00 am followed by a nature walk with Nan Childs (rain or shine). Flower-themed refreshments will be served.

Did you go botanizing as a child? Dry your flowers in a book? The fields and woods of Plainfield have inspired residents since settlement to collect and dry flowers and leaves, study botany, and make art. These activities have deep roots. The study of Massachusetts and United States botany flourished from the late eighteenth century, when botanizing became a scientific pursuit, as well as an abiding hobby for many.

Plainfield 's first doctor, Dr. Jacob Porter, was an avid botanist in close contact with the era's leading scientists. The Plainfield Historical Society was recently given an "herbarium," a collection of dried plants and flowers labeled with their scientific names, created in 1854 by Samuel Francis Shaw, Porter's neighbor and a doctor in the U.S. navy, in the center of Plainfield for a class at Williams College (Shaw grew up in the Shaw Hudson House). The herbarium was lost, saved fortuitously, and found its way to the PHS thanks to Robin Sauve of Longmeadow.

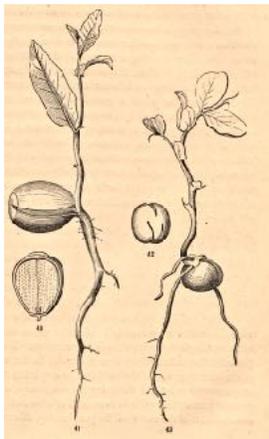
The exhibit is built around the herbarium, with materials on and by Dr. Porter, including a floral calendar of Plainfield, the Shaw family's pursuit of wildflowers, and art and poetry by later and current Plainfield residents.

The exhibit will be accompanied by a number of programs :

- ❖ June 1, 2019 - Saturday @ Shaw Memorial Library - 9:30 am-12:00 pm - opening at 10 am followed by a wildflower walk with naturalist Nan Childs (rain or shine). Flower-themed refreshments will be served.
- ❖ June 8, 2019 - Saturday @ Shaw Memorial Library - Talk on 19th-century botanicals by Pamela Weatherbee, author of *Flora of Berkshire County*: 10 am - 12pm
- ❖ June 15, 2019 - Saturday @ Shaw Memorial Library - Botanical Painting with local artist, Beverly Duncan 9:30 am - 11:30 pm. Open fundraising event.
- ❖ June 27, 2019 - Thursday @ Shaw Memorial Library - 6:30 pm to 7:45 pm Presentation on nineteenth-century scientific illustrator and botanical artist Orra White Hitchcock by Reba-Jean Pichette, curator of the Shelburne Historical Society.
- ❖ July events, dates tba, will include a fern-focused nature walk, a program on gardening and field management for pollinators (including monarchs), and a walk-in participatory poetry-in your -pocket reading (bring your favorite or own flower or botanical-themed poem)

The exhibit and events are free and open to the public. Donations to fund care of the PHS and Shaw Hudson House collections will be accepted. This program is funded in part by the Plainfield Cultural Council, which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council

For more information, contact PHS curator Pleun Bouricius, pleunbouricius@gmail.com, 413-634-2250.



"Pea and Acorn.," Asa Gray, M.D., *How Plants Grow* (New York, 1858), p. 19. Owned by Laura A Shaw. Collection PHS