

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06968-7 - Hortus Kewensis: Or, a Catalogue of the Plants Cultivated in the Royal Botanic Garden at Kew: Volume 2: Octandria to Monadelphia

William Aiton

Frontmatter

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Until the nineteenth century, the investigation of natural phenomena, plants and animals was considered either the preserve of elite scholars or a pastime for the leisured upper classes. As increasing academic rigour and systematisation was brought to the study of 'natural history', its subdisciplines were adopted into university curricula, and learned societies (such as the Royal Horticultural Society, founded in 1804) were established to support research in these areas. A related development was strong enthusiasm for exotic garden plants, which resulted in plant collecting expeditions to every corner of the globe, sometimes with tragic consequences. This series includes accounts of some of those expeditions, detailed reference works on the flora of different regions, and practical advice for amateur and professional gardeners.

Hortus Kewensis

Trained as a gardener in his native Scotland, William Aiton (1731–93) had worked in the Chelsea Physic Garden prior to coming to Kew in 1759. He met Joseph Banks in 1764, and the pair worked together to develop the scientific and horticultural status of the gardens. Aiton had become superintendent of the entire Kew estate by 1783. This important three-volume work, first published in 1789, took as its starting point the plant catalogue begun in 1773. In its compilation, Aiton was greatly assisted with the identification and scientific description of species, according to the Linnaean system, by the botanists Daniel Solander and Jonas Dryander (the latter contributed most of the third volume). Aiton added dates of introduction and horticultural information. An important historical resource, it covers some 5,600 species and features a selection of engravings. Volume 2 continues to catalogue the plants, covering Octandria to Monadelphia.

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O R, A

C A T A L O G U E

O F T H E

P L A N T S

CULTIVATED IN THE

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN AT KEW.

BY WILLIAM AITON,

GARDENER TO

H I S M A J E S T Y.

I N T H R E E V O L U M E S.

V O L. II.

O C T A N D R I A — M O N A D E L P H I A.

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