

HUNTIA

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Publication of Macself's «Plant Portraits» 1939

ALBERT JAMES MACSELF'S *Plant portraits and plant names* has long been considered a useful reference book, and it seems possible that difficulty may have arisen in establishing the dates of publication of the two series comprising this useful encyclopaedia.

The work was not issued in the usual way, *i.e.*, through booksellers, and this perhaps is the reason that it does not appear in the *English catalogue*. *Plant portraits* was obtainable direct from the publishers of the periodical *Amateur gardening* and the First Series, A-K, was originally offered in that journal in the issue of March 18th, 1939: readers were invited to cut out the order form and send it with gift tokens, which had been sent with the three previous consecutive issues, together with three shillings (or, for the deluxe edition, four and sixpence) to cover such matters as packing and postage. The editor explained later that heavy outlay in producing this work precluded the possibility of issuing the two volumes simultaneously. The Second Series, L-Z, was promised for autumn of the same year, 1939, but, to quote the editor of *Amateur gardening*, publication was delayed for causes "which are too familiar to require detailed mention."

The issue of *Amateur gardening* of April 6th, 1940, contained the first indication that the Second Series was available and contained a double-spread advertisement inviting readers to apply (with instructions to enclose three gift tokens from previous issues, together with a remittance) for the second volume of the two series.

The work measures $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches high, and $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and contains over 1,000 photographs of plants, trees, and shrubs, the everyday names of plants, scientific names and their pronunciation, and derivations for the plant names.

The nomenclature and classification of this work were based on the systems adopted in Sanders' *Encyclopaedia of gardening* [which in turn were based on the handlists published by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, *Ed.*], and it was recommended that *Plant portraits* be used in conjunction with Sanders' *encyclopaedia*, which Macself edited after Sanders' death in 1926.

Albert James Macself was then, in fact, editor of *Amateur gardening*. He succeeded T. W. Sanders in the Chair for this office in 1926 and continued in office for twenty years. The present work is one of thirty-one gardening books written or compiled by him. In recognition of his services to horticulture he was honoured by The Royal Horticultural Society in 1950 by their highest award, the Victoria Medal of Honour in Horticulture. A. J. Macself died on March 6th, 1952, aged 73.

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