



Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World

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In the early modern world, botany was big science and big business, critical to Europe's national and trade ambitions. Tracing the dynamic relationships among plants, peoples, states, and economies over the course of three centuries, this collection of essays offers a lively challenge to a historiography that has emphasized the rise of modern botany as a story of taxonomies and "pure" systems of classification. Charting a new map of botany along colonial coordinates, reaching from Europe to the New World, India, Asia, and other points on the globe, *Colonial Botany* explores how the study, naming, cultivation, and marketing of rare and beautiful plants resulted from and shaped European voyages, conquests, global trade, and scientific exploration.

From the earliest voyages of discovery, naturalists sought profitable plants for king and country, personal and corporate gain. Costly spices and valuable medicinal plants such as nutmeg, tobacco, sugar, Peruvian bark, peppers, cloves, cinnamon, and tea ranked prominently among the motivations for European voyages of discovery. At the same time, colonial profits depended largely on natural historical exploration and the precise identification and effective cultivation of profitable plants. This volume breaks new ground by treating the development of the science of botany in its colonial context and situating the early modern exploration of the plant world at the volatile nexus of science, commerce, and state politics.

Written by scholars as international as their subjects, *Colonial Botany* uncovers an emerging cultural history of plants and botanical practices in Europe and its possessions.

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