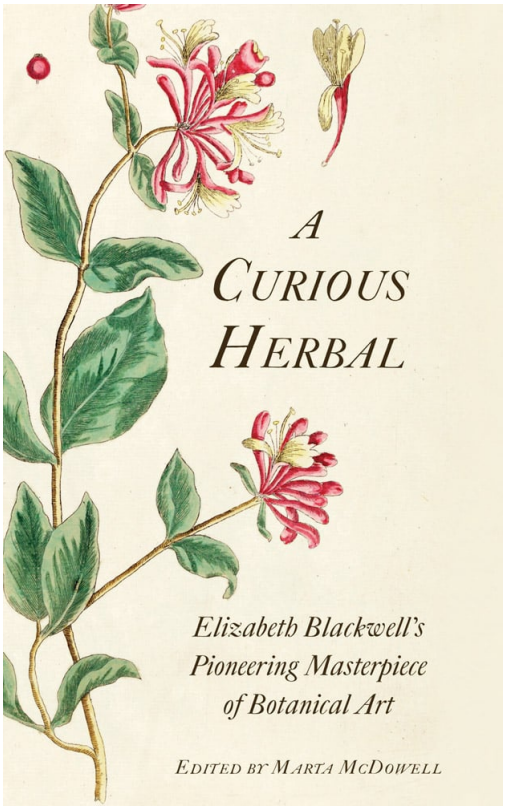
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Tel: +44 (0) 1394 389950
Email: uksales@accartbooks.com
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A Curious Herbal

Elizabeth Blackwell's Pioneering Masterpiece of Botanical Art

Edited by Marta McDowell

Contributions by Janet Stiles Tyson

ISBN	9780789214539
Publisher	Abbeville Press
Binding	Hardback
Territory	World excluding USA, Canada, Puerto Rico, and Australia
Size	330 mm x 203 mm
Pages	552 Pages
Illustrations	500 color
Price	£60.00

- A masterpiece of botanical illustration by a pioneering 18th century British woman artist - available in bookstores for the first time in centuries!
- A dramatic backstory: Elizabeth Blackwell undertook this work to get her husband out of debtor's prison in London. (It worked, but he was later beheaded for treason by the Swedish crown.)
- A text by leading authorities recounts this backstory and illuminates the artistic and scientific significance of Elizabeth Blackwell's herbal
- A spectacular physical package, with a trim size 13 inches tall
- Winner in the CBHL 2024 Annual Literature Awards – Award of Excellence in History

"This gorgeous book has the heft of an ancient herbal. It is a treasure for anyone interested in the healing properties of plants. Blackwell's precise depictions… are beautifully reproduced. It is a joy to turn every page." — **Susan Fraser, Director Emerita of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library, New York Botanical Garden**

"The [text], so carefully researched, for the first time provides what feels to be a factual and fascinating insight into Blackwell's life and the depth of her endeavor, in a world dominated by men, whilst dispelling some of the myths and misinformation that surrounded her." — **Sue Medway, Director and Curator of the Chelsea Physic Garden, London**

"Magnificent and long-overdue, it will surely become an essential reference for scholars of Blackwell, and anyone interested in 18th century botany." — **Will Beharrell, Librarian of the Linnean Society of London**

"As a wife and mother excluded from the male institutions of eighteenth-century British botany and medicine, Elizabeth Blackwell created her Curious Herbal against tremendous odds. In this new edition, Blackwell's gorgeous plates bloom afresh, while two engaging essays—by Martha McDowell and Janet Stiles Tyson—vividly capture the life and times of this brave, talented woman. Almost three centuries on, this stunning volume does justice to Blackwell's great achievement in medical botany." – **Victoria Johnson, National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize finalist for *American Eden***

A complete edition of the first herbal published by a woman artist—which has a remarkable backstory

In the 1730s, Elizabeth Blackwell (1699–c. 1758) found herself penniless, with her ne'er-do-well husband confined to a London debtor's prison. A talented artist, she came up with a unique and ambitious moneymaking scheme: the publication of a new illustrated guide to medicinal plants, including many New World species not depicted in earlier books. Blackwell's ***Curious Herbal***, published between 1737 and 1739, was hailed for its usefulness to doctors and apothecaries and met with considerable financial success.

This magnificent volume—the first modern edition of Blackwell's herbal—reproduces all 500 of her exquisite plates. Blackwell not only made the drawings, but prepared the copper plates and personally hand-coloured them. Her handwritten descriptions of the plants, which she creatively adapted (with permission) from Joseph Miller's Botanicum Officinale, retain considerable interest. This book features a previously unknown preface by Blackwell, in which she reveals her passion for art and nature, and her vision for the herbal. Two introductory texts contextualise Blackwell's achievement: the noted garden writer Marta McDowell explores the history of herbals as a genre, and the state of botanical knowledge in Blackwell's time; and the historian Janet Stiles Tyson relates the artist's rather extraordinary biography.

A Curious Herbal will be essential for all lovers of botanical art, and for anyone interested in women's history and the history of science.

Marta McDowell teaches landscape history and horticulture at the New York Botanical Garden. She has authored several books, including *Unearthing "The Secret Garden"* and *All the Presidents' Gardens*. **Janet Stiles Tyson**, an independent scholar, wrote her doctoral dissertation on Elizabeth Blackwell's *A Curious Herbal*.







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