

Head office of the Botanical Expedition in Mariquita



# Nature, *intact* in time and space

During the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, drawings were the only way in which scientists could keep a visual record. Correct illustration of plants allowed this information to “travel” from one continent to another in such a way that scientists from both places could have the entire information for their classification and study.

The Royal Botanical Expedition’s images had to meet the following characteristics:

- The plant was shown out of its natural context, with all of its parts.
- The representation of leaf, fruit and flower shapes, which are the “keys” for classification according to the Linnaeus’ method, should be as close to reality as possible.

- The illustrations showed “idealized” forms of the plants found in Nueva Granada. That is why they represent all stages of blooming and appearance of the fruit, which in actual terms is impossible, as they belong to different moments in time.

The elaboration process of each illustration had the following steps: first, a pencil drawing was made, then it was delineated with ink, and finally it was colored using mineral and vegetable pigments found in the surroundings.

Between 35 and 40 draftsmen from the Nueva Granada and Quito participated in the Royal Botanical Expedition. Only a quarter of the illustrations were signed. The *Flora de Bogotá* is a product of the work of american painters, as some of them proudly state by their signature.

*Barrioneuveae*  
F. Xavier Matis  
Tempera on paper  
54 x 38 cm  
Real Jardín Botánico de Madrid  
Illustration 573

