

INTERNATIONAL BOTANICAL CONGRESSES 1900–2017

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[*Ed. Note: This is the second installment of a three-part article on the history of the International Botanical Congresses. See Vol. 66 (3) for first part of this article. The article will continue in the next edition. Dr. Gray is a retired professor of plant molecular biology at the University of Cambridge, England, and has collected stamps of Great Britain since boyhood. He has written articles on Post & Go stamps and Smilers Sheets for magazines such as Gibbons Stamp Monthly. He started thematic collections on topics related to his work interests in 2006, and for the past ten years he has collected philatelic items related to Charles Darwin, plant genetics, photosynthesis, and the history of molecular biology. He has attended several International Botanical Congresses and has accumulated relevant philatelic items. He joined ATA in 2010, and the Biology Unit in 2013.*]

9th Through 12th Congresses

The 9th International Botanical Congress was held in Montreal, Canada, on 19–29 August 1959 and a mechanised slogan postmark reading “IX CONGRES INTERNATIONAL DE BOTANIQUE 19–29 AOUT” was applied to mail throughout the period 12–28 August 1959 (Fig. 8). An English version of the slogan, reading “IX INTERNATIONAL BOTANICAL CONGRESS 19-29 AUGUST,” was also used, but the period of its use is unclear.

The Congress Organizing Committee used printed envelopes with the Congress emblem, a green and white maple leaf with “1959” in green, located in the center of the name of the Congress in English and French. A cover used in 1957 as part of the organization of the Congress is shown in Fig. 9.



Fig. 8. Slogan postmark from the 9th International Botanical Congress, Montreal, in French.

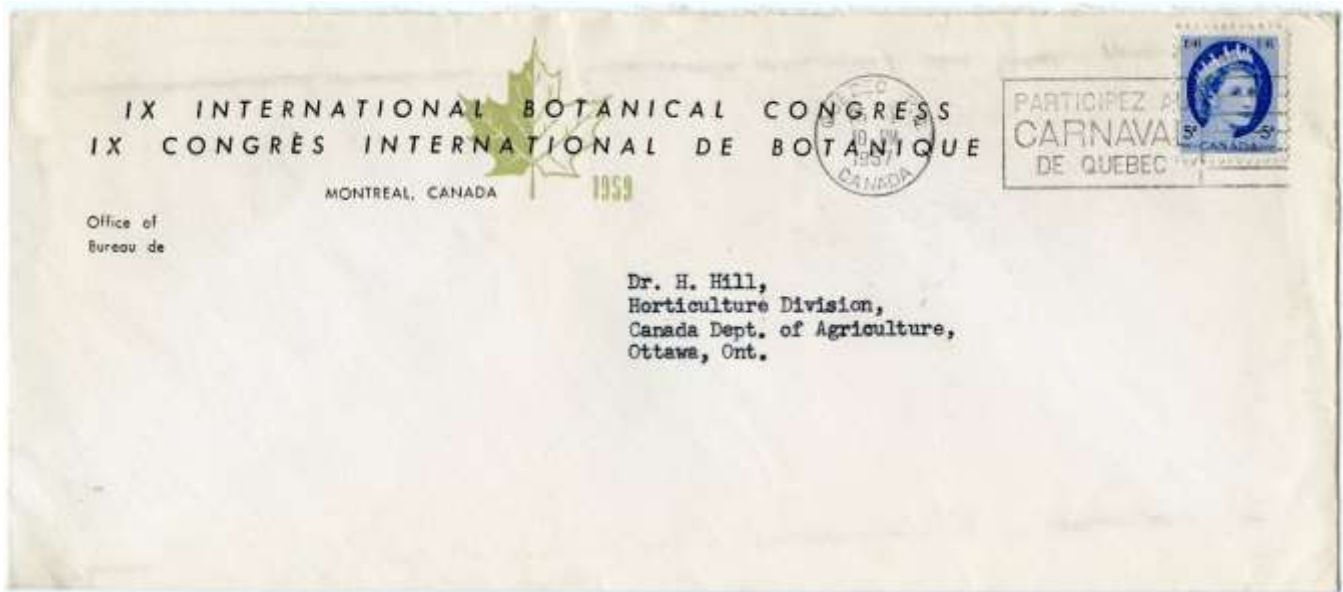


Fig. 9. Cover from the organizers of the 9th International Botanical Congress, Montreal.

The 10th International Botanical Congress, held at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, on 4–11 August 1964, was the first Congress to have special stamps issued. A set of four stamps depicting native British flowers, designed by Michael and Sylvia Goaman, was issued on 5 August 1964.

The stamps showed Spring Gentian (*Gentiana verna* L.) on the 3d stamp, Dog Rose (*Rosa canina* L.) on the 6d stamp, Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum* L.) on the 9d stamp, and Fringed Water Lily [*Nymphoides peltata* (S.G. Gmel.) Kuntze] on the 1s3d stamp (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10. Set of stamps for the 10th International Botanical Congress on the printers, Harrison & Sons, presentation card. Insert, official Congress handstamp from 31 July 1964.



A small proportion (about four percent) of each of these stamps was overprinted with three phosphor bars to aid mechanised sorting of the mail. A special handstamp with a stylized thistle head labeled "TENTH INTERNATIONAL BOTANICAL CONGRESS EDINBURGH" together with the date of posting was used from 31 July to 12 August 1964 (Fig. 10). A large number of philatelic items, including presentation packs and first day covers, were produced for this stamp issue. Special stamps were also produced for the 11th International Botanical Congress held in Seattle, Washington on 24 August–2 September 1969. Four 6c stamps, depicting plants from the four corners of the USA, were designed by Stanley Galli of Kentfield, California and issued on 23 August 1969.

The set-tenant stamps show Douglas Fir [*Pseudotsuga menziesii* (Mirb.) Franco] from the northwest, Ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens* Engelm.) from the southwest, Showy Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium reginae* Walter) from the northeast, and Franklin tree (*Franklinia alatamaha* W. Bartram ex Marshall) from the southeast (Fig. 11). *Franklinia alatamaha* is unfortunately now extinct in the wild, but it survives as a cultivated ornamental tree.



Fig. 11. Set of stamps for the 11th International Botanical Congress in Seattle.

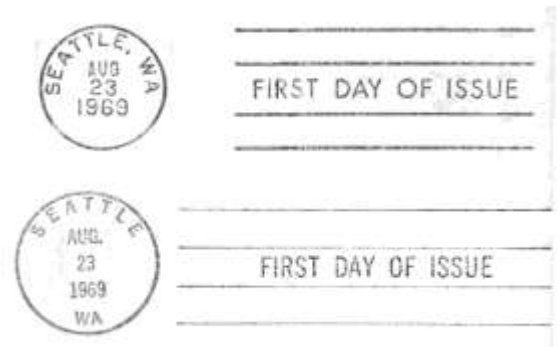


Fig. 12. First day of issue postmarks for the 11th International Botanical Congress stamps.

Two distinct First Day of Issue postmarks, differing in size, font, and the position of the state abbreviation in the circular date stamp, were used on first day covers (Fig. 12). A large quantity of first day covers with different catchets were produced for the stamp issue.

Labels inscribed XITH INTERNATIONAL BOTANICAL CONGRESS were produced and used by Cadillac Post on mail predating the Congress in Seattle (Fig. 13).



Fig. 13. Cadillac Post stamps for the 11th International Botanical Congress.

The 12th International Botanical Congress was held in the Komarov Botanical Institute, Leningrad (now St Petersburg), USSR on 3–10 July 1975, and a special stamp, designed by Leo Sharov, was issued on 20 June 1975 (Fig. 13).

The 6k stamp has a central region showing the Congress symbol of a birch leaf with a globe and the Roman figure XII surrounded with “COLLOQUIA BOTANICORUM LENINGRAD 1975.”

The congress symbol is itself surrounded by five sectors showing different images of Russian flora, and the text “XII International Botanical Congress · Post · USSR” in Cyrillic.



Fig. 14. Stamp issued for the 12th International Botanical Congress, Leningrad.

The sectors contain images of a fossil plant (*Livistona palibinii* Takht.), the Bellflower (*Campanula mirabilis* Albov) described as probably the most beautiful of all *Campanula* species, a fungus [*Cordyceps militaris* (L. ex St Amans) Link], the Red Alga [*Delesseria sanguinea* (Huds.) Lamour.], and the Giant Bellflower (*Ostrowskia magnifica* Regel).

Congress members received a stamp and pre-stamped postcard and envelope, each with different stamp-like impressions (Fig. 15).



Fig. 15. Pre-stamped postcard and envelope produced for the 12th International Botanical Congress.

A special postmark showing the Congress symbol and dated 3–10.VIII.1975 was used throughout the Congress (Fig. 16).

[to be continued in next edition]



Fig. 16. Postmarks used on the 12th International Botanical Congress stamp. Left, first day of issue 20 June 1975. Right, Congress mail 3–10 August 1975.