



**A CODE OF ETHICS FOR THE BOTANICAL ARTIST
WORKING IN THE FIELD**

American Society of Botanical Artists
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Objective: To establish a set of standards, protocols and guidelines to ensure ethical behavior when working with native flora (common, rare and endangered) in the field. These protocols shall be the recognized professional procedure to which all members must agree to adhere, as a prerequisite to membership.

Justification: With the growing interest in native flora it is prudent that recognized ethical standards be established for the botanical artist to follow when working in the field.

Given that the overwhelming majority of botanical artists are concerned about the conservation of the native flora that are their subjects, but that the training of a botanical artist does not necessarily involve learning the principals of conservation science, guidance in how to practice botanical art without causing ecological damage is needed.

People knowledgeable of the locations of certain plant species may have legitimate conservation-related reasons for keeping those locations from becoming known to the general public. This can complicate the needs of botanical artists who have legitimate reasons to ask for access to those species in their natural habitats, for effective documentation.

Such a set of protocols offers assurance to botanical institutions and botanical curators of all kinds that the botanical artist has knowledge of and will adhere to approved and recognized processes and procedures. Artists will consent to follow the guidelines that the host institution (botanic garden, conservation area, etc.), or program director (botanical curator, botanist, conservation scientist, etc.) may impose upon them.

Importantly, such a set of protocols serves to recognize the need to cultivate partnerships with botanists, conservation scientists, environmentalists and their parent organizations. It further demonstrates a desire to embrace and share their concern for the common, rare and endangered native plant species. A nuanced understanding of wild plants and their habitats, and best practices when interacting with them, is an educational goal to be achieved by these partnerships.

Articles:

The American Society of Botanical Artists recognizes the growing interest by members of the Society in the common, rare, and endangered native flora and has implemented the following set of protocols to be adhered to. They aim to establish "best practices" in situ that serve well the interests of conservation science, botany and botanical art.

1. If a plant is growing in a botanic garden or conservation area, an artist wishes to observe that plant, and possibly bring necessary equipment, they must be willing to be placed under the complete guidance of the person or persons responsible for stewardship of the collection or conservation area, and will follow all restrictions and requirements that may be imposed.
2. Seek least impact sources. If a plant can be found in a cultivated situation, for example a botanical garden or demonstration garden, this is a preferred source for material, as permission can be gained and often cuttings will be provided. These sources limit impact on native plant communities and habitats and build relationships between artists and plant curators/scientists/conservationists.
3. If directed to a plant growing in the wild, the artist will not dig it up, handle, touch, or pick any part of the species but only take notes, photograph, sketch, or paint it in situ. Please note: in exceptional cases, taking a cutting (minus roots) for identification or for microscopic drawing studies

could be allowed but only at the discretion of the land owner/conservation manager or curator.

4. The artist will take the utmost care in treading in the area of common, rare and endangered plants so there is no accidental damage to newly sprouted seedlings or the roots of the plants or to the associated ecosystem. If using a sketching stool or other equipment, such as a tripod, care will be taken to minimize any disturbance to the habitat.

5. Artists recognize that many rare species grow in sensitive areas; either the habitat itself is a rare type or the area has had minimal disturbance. These areas may contain more than one rare or endangered species. Artists will try to minimize their impact and footprint as a result of their studies and minimize any disturbance to the site.

6. If displacement of any natural features is observed, artist's contact will be informed.

7. The artist will not divulge protected area locations to anyone. If someone requests the location, artist will refer them to the person or organization that facilitated the artist's finding the site.

8. Artists should determine ownership of property where plant(s) are located, and secure permission for access. Types of properties may include: government agency managed, conservation organization managed, or private property. Artists will follow stated policies regarding on-site behavior. For example, while sometimes gathering forest detritus is of no concern, some properties contravene any plant material removal whatsoever.

9. Effort should be made by the artist to become cognizant of which plants are protected and rare. Consult the USDA website at plants.sc.egov.usda.gov for information about native plant protection status by Federal and State agencies.

Addendum: It should be noted that while the foregoing specifically relates to protocols for botanical artists working with native flora in the field (in situ) such basic protocols and commitments also pertain to the practice of working with all forms of plant life.

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