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### THE MORTON ARBORETUM LIBRARY ACQUIRES RARE BOOK OF FRENCH BOTANICAL ART

- *The Sterling Morton Library's Special Collections vault now contains Pancrace Bessa's Flore des Jardiniers, Amateurs et Manufacturiers, a 19<sup>th</sup> century botanical work* -

LISLE, Ill. (March 6, 2014) – The Sterling Morton Library at The Morton Arboretum has obtained a rare botanical work, *Flore des Jardiniers, Amateurs et Manufacturiers*. Published in Paris in 1836, the book contains hand-colored engravings based on illustrations created by Pancrace Bessa, a French natural history artist. Best known for his botanical artwork, worldwide less than 15 copies of this work can be found in library catalogs.

The Morton Arboretum not only has an original watercolor created by Bessa, but within these newly acquired volumes is the plate depicting this same plant. This engraving is part of a rare two-volume set which contains 389 plates illustrating ornamental plants from all parts of the world with names in Latin and French, the country of origin and their month of flowering. The book was obtained by the Sterling Morton Library as part of its 50th anniversary celebration.

"It fills a gap in our collection of 19th century French botanical art," Library Collections Manager Rita Hassert, said. "Pancrace Bessa was one of the most important French Romantic botanical artists. He was believed to be a pupil of both Gérard van Spaendonck and Pierre Redouté. Our collections already contain works by these renowned artists including van Spaendonck's *Fleurs Dessinées d'après Nature* and Redouté's *Les Roses*."

Bessa's affiliation in 1793 with the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris led to him to contribute illustrations to some of the most important scientific and horticultural publications of the day. Whether solely illustrating a work or in conjunction with other renowned artists, many recognize this to be the golden age of French botanical illustration.

The Arboretum has been collecting rare botanical books and artwork since it was established in 1922. Botanical art, the Sterling Morton Library and the Arboretum were great interests to the Arboretum's former Board of Trustees chair, Suzette Morton Davidson, granddaughter of Arboretum founder Joy Morton. She was instrumental to the development and growth of the library's special collections including the acquisition of significant botanical art and rare publications. The Suzette Morton Davidson Special Collections were named to honor her remarkable contributions.

The book will be kept in the library's Special Collections vault and can be viewed by appointment. Hassert said it will be especially valuable to students in the Arboretum's botanical art and illustration education programs, but she encourages all members of the community to use these notable resources.

The Sterling Morton Library at The Morton Arboretum is open to students, researchers, gardeners, natural history enthusiasts and anyone who wishes to use it. Designed by noted Chicago architect Harry Weese, the library provides significant resources of scientific, artistic and historical value in support of the Arboretum's mission. The collections explore botany, horticulture, urban forestry, natural history, botanical art, conservation and landscape design. Together, they provide a unique resource in the Chicago area and feature information on trees and shrubs that can be grown in northern Illinois.

### **About The Morton Arboretum**

The Morton Arboretum is an internationally recognized outdoor tree museum on 1,700 acres. Plant collections, scientific research and education programs support the mission to plant and conserve trees and other plants for a greener, healthier and more beautiful world. Designed with natural landscapes, the grounds include the award-winning, four-acre interactive Children's Garden, the one-acre Maze Garden, plus specialty gardens, 16 miles of trails and nine miles of roads. Visitor experiences include the open-air tram ride, guided walks, Arbor Day celebrations, concerts, art shows, Fall Color Festival and special exhibits. The Arboretum welcomes more than 800,000 visitors annually and serves more than 35,600 members. Located 25 miles west of Chicago in Lisle, Illinois, the Arboretum is open daily 7 a.m. until sunset. Learn more at [mortonarb.org](http://mortonarb.org).

### **Admission Rate**

Nonmember admission rates to The Morton Arboretum are \$12 for adults ages 18-64 (\$8 on Wednesday), \$11 for seniors ages 65 and over (\$7 on Wednesday), \$9 for children ages 2-17 (\$6 on Wednesday) and free for children under age 2. Parking is free with admission.

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