

Bobbi Angell

The ASBA has a botanical treasure in its midst.

BY MYRA SOURKES

THE ASBA IS PRIVILEGED to have renowned botanical illustrator and artist Bobbi Angell of Vermont on the Board. Her accomplishments are too diverse and her output too prolific to address adequately in a short profile here – we could devote a whole issue of *The Botanical Artist* to her! Fortunately, other people have written about Bobbi. Reporter Andrew Nemethy, in a syndicated column about innovative Vermont people and ideas - <http://vt.digger.org/2012/11/23/in-this-state-for-botanical-artist-bobbi-angell-the-beauty-is-in-the-details/> - provides a delightful glimpse of the adventures of a scientific illustrator and also insights into the early influences which set her on this path. Dr. Scott Mori, NYBG botanist, pays her tribute <http://www.nybg.org/plant-talk/category/people/>. Tovah Martin will highlight the relationship of her gardens to her art in the August 2013 issue of *Country Gardens* magazine. And Bobbi herself has written evocatively about her work in this Journal: Tropical Flora in Spring 2004, New York Times weekly gardening column in June 2008, and Copper Etchings* in March 2010, all available to read on the ASBA website. Her website www.bobbiangell.com mentions some of her awards and publications, and has images of her beautiful work.

Bobbi chose to make her living as a freelance botanical illustrator. This has resulted in a tremendous range of collaborators worldwide - scientists, businesspeople, artists, writers - a favorite aspect of her career. She has had great relationships with people, some of whom she has never met! This collaborative style comes alive in her Journal article about the NYT column. The column, *Garden Q&A*, also gave her the opportunity to meet locals; she has kept an inventory in her head of who grows certain plants, and would unabashedly walk up to someone's door to ask for a cutting to draw for the column, for instance a Dutchman's Pipe in bloom, and they would always happily agree. The NYT work gave her more recognition and credibility than any other work she has done; strangers would come up to her and tell her that they looked for the column every Thursday. Other collaborators have been the gardeners Joe Eck and the late Wayne Winterrowd of magnificent North Hill, for whom she has just finished illustrating a second book, *To Eat*, and from whom she has learned so much about the sustenance of plants, food and friendship.

Bobbi took up copper etching several years ago, when a local printmaker, attending a lecture she gave about her illustration work, suggested it. She loves this technique because it is tedious and labor intensive! She takes patient

*with fellow printmaker Monika deVries Gohlke



TOP *Gentianopsis crinita*, Fringed Gentian, copper etching, 4"x6", ©Bobbi Angell 2013 BOTTOM. Bobbi in Ecuador, drawing tree gentians (*Macrocarpaea* spp.) for botanist Jason Grant.




Myra Sourkes captures her love for color, flowers and gardening in her botanical painting. As a neurologist, she has interviewed many people, and she is happy to use this skill in conversations with and in writing about botanical art lovers.

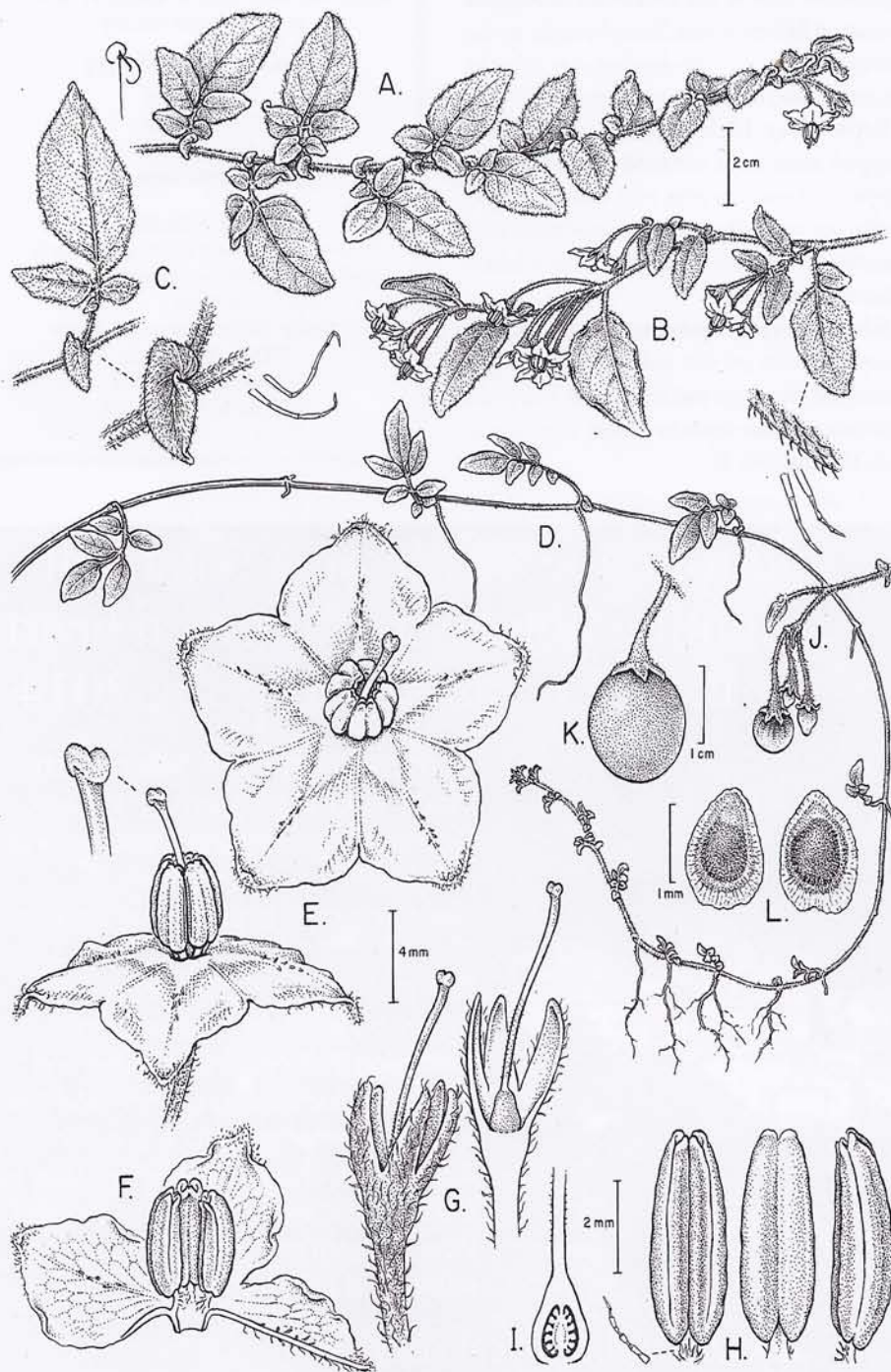
pleasure in the multi-step process - starting with a sketch, which is transferred onto a plate covered with waxy ground and redrawn under a microscope with an etching needle, then etched with acid and printed, and then often followed by a few more rounds to add more detail. She also likes the unknown factor, the challenge of whether a print will succeed after weeks of work. She always chooses subjects she cares about, inspiration often coming from her huge flower and vegetable gardens, where she

grows plants as actively as she draws them. A Shooting Star waited four years in her garden to be immortalized in an etching, now in the Bartram exhibition.

She enjoys the collaborative aspect of her ASBA work as well. She sees one of her roles as ensuring a voice for scientific illustration in the organization, and also for commercial work, which helps expose the general public to great botanical art. She is grateful to Libby Kyer for volunteering her to coordinate the Journal column *Botanica Collected*, about

historical collections of botanical art, as she has always been interested in this topic. When she contacts potential columnists for it, she sends them the Journal and links to the ASBA website - and they are impressed. She appreciates the support, encouragement and fellowship which the ASBA community provides to her and other botanical artists.

And, despite having drawn thousands of plants over the years, she has never tired of looking at them and has never stopped being amazed at what she sees. 



John Scheepers Kitchen Garden Seeds

Pumpkins *Wee Be Little* 120 days



LEFT. *Solanum baretiae*, a new species from South America, was named after Jeanne Baret, the first woman to circumnavigate the globe. Baret began the expedition in 1766 as an assistant to a botanist and she made remarkable contributions to botany. ©Bobbi Angell 2011

TOP. Bobbi in the print studio.

BOTTOM. Bobbi has illustrated more than 200 vegetables and flowers for John Scheepers Kitchen Garden Seed Catalogs since 2002.