

Art of Horticulture, Hort 201
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Sample journal article

When I think back to my earliest experiences with the overlap between art and horticulture, it surely began as a child. I enjoyed drawing more than just about anything, and while my parents gardened intensively, it was primarily a beautiful backdrop in my childhood, produced some incredible food, and was not something I thought very much about at the time. It's a little bit of an irony to me that I chose horticulture, not art, as a college major. The real blending of art and horticulture began to take a more serious shape when I began to take art classes while in college. Gardens, landscapes, florals and such were the most appealing to me, whereas I noticed that the other students in my class were interested in a much broader range of topics.

I will admit to myself now that I was constantly comparing myself to others, stealing glances at paintings that I was certain were much "better" than my own. I coveted the ability of some to simply take off and paint anything, it seemed, with a flourish. I also felt inadequate because the other students who were interested in horticulture painted incredibly elaborate, painstakingly detailed botanical illustrations, which I quickly tired of, preferring to paint in broader strokes. Objectively, I had only average talent but was absolutely determined to become a painter, and to eventually capture what was pleasing to me in the landscape on paper. It's funny how we can work against ourselves, diminishing our own work, and always seeing others' as superior, more original, "preferred." Are they, in turn, looking over our shoulders, thinking the same thing? Is there really such a thing as talent? Or is it determination? Good instruction? Or simply, a different way of seeing?

After years of painting, I have come to terms with my own work. I no longer struggle with it; it comes easily and much of the time, I'm fairly pleased with the results. It's a release and a joy. I like to call my sloppiness being "painterly," and am not as concerned with accuracy. While I appreciate beautifully rendered botanicals, for me, a more impressionistic approach captures the freshness of an image. Art without horticulture, or horticulture without art, would be stale. Each adds so much to the other!