



## Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker

Traveller & Plant Collector  
*Ray Desmond*

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**Territory:** World

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- The first detailed account of Hooker's extensive travels
- A study of Hooker's importance as a plant geographer
- A representative selection of his drawings

Sir Joseph Hooker is remembered as an eminent Victorian botanist and one of Charles Darwin's closest collaborators. Many gardeners and lovers of rhododendrons know of his plant collecting expedition in the Himalayas, but few are aware of his participation in Sir James Clark Ross' epic voyage to Antarctica in 1839-43, of his visits to Syria and Lebanon in 1860, to the Atlas Mountains in Morocco in 1871, and to the Rockies and California in 1877. At some risk to his own safety and health (he came close to drowning in the Antarctic Ocean and was imprisoned by the Rajah of Sikkim), he discovered many new species of plants and introduced a number of attractive flowers into British gardens.

When Hooker encountered European species growing in the southern hemisphere he naturally wondered how they got there. He shared his theories on plant distribution and other topics of mutual interest with Darwin to whom he also sent scientific data acquired during his travels.

He was a competent surveyor who produced the first map of Sikkim which the British Army used for several decades. He was also an amateur artist who obsessively sketched landscape, flora, and occasionally people and their buildings. A selection of these accomplished drawings are featured in *Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker* which also includes illustrations by other artists of plants seen or collected by Hooker. Many of them are reproduced in colour.

Extracts from his letters home and his published Himalayan Journals testify to his narrative skills, his constant curiosity and careful observation which combined to make him an outstanding scientific traveller.