The eminence of Linnaeus is imperfect without Uppsala Hammarby!

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On 23 May 2012, biologists reverentially remembered Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778) on his 305th birth anniversary. His binomial nomenclature and other botanical contributions continue to be an inspiration. Modern-day biology is subjecting his botanical collections to molecular investigations. Many of the taxonomical contributions and accomplishments of Linnaeus are, undoubtedly, the result of his proactive networking with scholars and scientific associations of his time. Beyond doubt, scientific aptitudes, attitudes and discoveries, like those in arts are also a product of circumstances and surroundings. A good look at the favourite summer home of Linnaeus and later his permanent residence, the Uppsala Hammarby, will confirm that this quiet and serene place has fundamentally nurtured the skills of this celebrated Princeps botanicorum. It is no surprise that the private residence of Linnaeus is now the most genuine Linnaeus site in the world.

In 1741, Linnaeus was appointed professor of medicine at the Uppsala University, Sweden. He and his family had an official residence at a corner of the then Uppsala University Botanical Garden (now Linnaeus Museum). But it is widely believed that Linnaeus detested the city atmosphere of Uppsala, especially the warmer summer months. He longed to get away to the countryside. He was also worried about his family’s fortunes and prospects after his official retirement. So in 1758, at the age of 51, he purchased two properties adjacent to Uppsala, namely Hammarby and Sävja.

The Hammarby estate, located around 15 km southeast of Uppsala, has one main building and two out-houses. Considering the heritage value, the Hammarby buildings and garden is a Swedish state property since 1879. The Linnaeus Landscape Project is now focusing on tracing the Hammarby from the Linnaean days and to preserve it. The 18th century-style wooden fences which once guarded his estate are being re-constructed. When Linnaeus purchased the Hammarby estate in 1751, it had only two small buildings which were facing each other (watch video at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuiS8U-z3mV). He constructed a main building in the centre, between the two out-houses and made it his home. Subsequently, he laid out a garden, a grove and built his personal museum in the estate. A Siberian crabapple (Malus baccata (L.) Borkh.) tree with its large white flowers, but small-sized apples still exists there, in front of his erstwhile manor (Figure 1a).

The main Hammarby building is a two-storey wooden house. The floor-boards of the first floor and all the walls are of heavy wooden planks. The rooms on the ground floor now house a modest collection of the personal articles, including the attires of Linnaeus and his wife, Sara Lisa. On display also is chinaware, probably gifted to him by some of his travelling apostles. In the private lecture hall is a replica of his lectern and a few wooden benches. A wooden winding stairway leads to the upper floor and into his study room. Linnaeus had this room wallpapered with illustrations of various plant species (Figure 1b). These illustrations are from Plumier’s Planta-
ambience to experiment with plants and his other objects of attention like animals and minerals. Linnaeus planted at least 100 species while he lived at the Uppsala Hammarby. These plants (Figure 2a) naturally might have cast a strong bearing on his thinking and theories. Among the plants introduced by Linnaeus to Hammarby were wild tulip (*Tulipa sylvestris* L.), hazelwort (*Asarum europaeum* L.), barrenwort (*Epimedium alpinum* L.) and Russian belladonna (*Scopolia carniolica* Jacq.). The most famous plant of this lot was *Linaria vulgaris* L. (formerly *Peloria*). This plant had caught the imagination of Linnaeus as its construction was contrary to his concept 8.

Adjacent to the Hammarby house, Linnaeus also established a small grove (Figure 2b), where he sat and smoked his pipe during his leisure time. The dog’s mercury (*Mercurialis perennis* L.), the plant depicted on the Swedish 100 kronor currency note (Figure 3) can be still seen there. Large trees like ash (*Fraxinus excelsior* L.), maple (*Acer platanoides* L.) and elm (*Ulmus glabra* Mill.) now stand tall in this grove. The aromatic plant, sweet cicely (*Myrrhis odorata* Scop.) which was originally planted by Linnaeus now grows abundantly. The grove leads to the personal museum (*Museum in altis*) built by Linnaeus in 1769, since he wanted to keep his valuable collections out of the reach of fire. Inside this museum are a couple of herbarium and insect cabinets, his ‘plugghasten’ (lectern) and a few wooden benches.

The Uppsala Hammarby hosted Linnaeus and his family during the summer months. It was here that Linnaeus realized some of his famous intellectual and scholastic achievements that are now part of biological history. Some of his memorable explorations, observations and published descriptions came while he was at the Uppsala Hammarby. He received and taught many private students here, who came from both near and far. His famous study tours around Uppsala called ‘Herbationes Upsalienses’, which usually started from the Uppsala University always terminated at his Hammarby. In those trips, the professor and the students collected plants, animals and rocks which they finally examined in the Hammarby. These ‘live’ classes of Linnaeus were a matter of envy among his peer group. Linnaeus completed the 10th–12th volumes of *Systema Naturae* at the Hammarby in which *Homo sapiens* L., among other organisms, is named 3. The coining of the term *Mammalia*, the inclusion of whales and bats in this category and the suggestion that humans are closely related to apes 3, perhaps happened while he was at the Uppsala Hammarby. It is no wonder that this quiet countryside, the wooded grove and the elegant manor inspired and triggered the botanical genius in Carl Linnaeus, God created, but Linnaeus organized 4. Yes, but this would not have been fully possible without his Uppsala Hammarby.

**Figure 2.** a. The garden in front of the Hammarby. b. The grove adjacent to the Hammarby house.

**Figure 3.** Dog’s mercury on the Swedish 100 kronor currency note.