

Plate 223 *Ipomoea indica*

Convolvulus multiflorus

Blue Morning Glory, Ocean Blue Morning Glory, Blue Dawn flower,
Koali'awa (Hawaiian)

Endeavour River, Australia, 17th June – 4th August, 1770



Ipomoea indica is a vigorous perennial vine native to tropical regions throughout the world. It has heart-shaped leaves and purple or blue funnel-shaped flowers, 6-8 cm in diameter, blooming from spring through autumn and can grow up to 4-8 metres in height. It can be toxic if ingested causing severe discomfort.

In notes accompanying the drawing, Sydney Parkinson described '*...the flower pale blue w' a cast of pink appearing like a lilac colour turning very pale at the tube which is white outside and in capsula fresh green at the edges and very pale green in the middle...!*

The genus *Ipomoea* contains annuals and perennials, consisting of 650 species of mostly climbers with a few trees and succulents and around 327 of these are found in the New World. Some have edible tubers such as [*Ipomoea batatas*](#) and others are used in the pharmaceutical industry.

The precise origins of the plant are unclear but thought to emanate from the neotropics of the Americas, Mexico, and the Caribbean. The name '*indica*' makes reference to the West Indies. While the plant has travelled widely and received the Royal Horticultural Society's Award of Garden Merit, it has not always been a welcome visitor. It is regarded as an invasive species in many parts of the world including Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, California, Portugal and New Caledonia. In New Zealand, it is classified as an unwanted organism under the Biosecurity Act, 1993 and it is illegal to sell, propagate and distribute the plant.

The plant would have been known to Banks and Solander as *Convolvulus multiflorus* at the time of its collection on the Endeavour River in 1770. The name is attributed to Philip Miller (1691-1771) published *The Gardeners Dictionary* between 1731(1st ed.) to 1768 (8th Ed.) The publication aimed to inform gardeners and other interested parties on the methods of cultivation appropriate for various type of plant. The publication continued after Miller's death with George Don who developed its focus on general systems of gardening and botany.

Philip Miller was an English botanist of Scottish descent born in Deptford, London. He was chief gardener at the Society of Apothecaries Chelsea Physic Garden from 1722 until shortly before his death in 1771. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Society and a

member of the Botanical Academy at Florence. Joseph Banks was also a member of the Royal Society and was its president for 41 years until his death in 1820. Banks was also associated with the Chelsea Physic Garden between during this period. In all probability, Miller and Banks were well known to each and, most certainly, been aware of each other's professional work. Interestingly, Miller was not a complete devotee of the Linnaean binomial nomenclature, apparently, preferring the classification systems of French botanist, Joseph Pitton de Tournefort (1656-1708) and the English botanist, John Ray (1627-1708).

The plant is also associated with another botanist called Ernst Gottlieb von Steudel (1783-1856), a German physician and authority on grasses and creator of a herbarium of over 20,000 species of plant. The name *Convolvulus multiflorus* Banks ex Steudel, was published by Steudel in 1840. Steudel along with Christian Hochstetter set up an organization known as *Unio Itineraria*, the purpose of which was to send young botanists out into the world to discover and collect plants.

Plate 223 was engraved by John Lee (1757-1804) based on John F. Miller's 1773 water colour derived from Sydney Parkinson's surviving pencil drawing. A copy from the plate was sent by Banks to Carl Linnaeus. John Lee came from a family of engravers based in London who worked in various materials, e.g wood, and on different subjects including maps. In total, John Lee produced 7 plates for Banks' Florilegium.

Robert Parkinson

Bibliography

Ipomoea indica. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ipomoea_indica

Ipomoea indica – Blue dawn flower.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/Plants/69124/i-Ipomoea-indica-i/Details>

Convolvulus. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/convolvulus>

Philip Miller. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Miller

The Gardeners Dictionary. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Gardeners_Dictionary

Ernst Gottlieb von Steudel. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Gottlieb_von_Steudel

Joseph Pitton de Tournefort. <https://www.britannica.com/print/article600857>

John Ray. <https://www.britannica.com/print/article/492392>

Gooding, H., Mabberley, D. & Studholme, J., Joseph Banks' Florilegium: Botanical Treasures from Cook's First Voyage. Thames Hudson, London, 2017, P218.