

The Life of Carl Linnaeus



1707 1709 1716 1727 1728 1730 1732 1733

This chronology focuses on Linnaeus as a private person. Only a selection of the most important events are included.

1707 Carl Linnaeus was born at Råshult on 23 May, the first child of Nils Ingermarsson Linnaeus, rector of Stenbrohult, and Christina Linnaea. The village of Råshult is a couple of kilometres from Stenbrohult and about 50 kilometres from the city of Växjö in southern Sweden.

1709 The family moves to the vicarage at Stenbrohult when Linnaeus's father is appointed vicar. His father is very interested in plants and makes a fine garden at the vicarage.

1716-1727 Carl goes to school in Växjö and only comes home for the long holidays. He is not interested in studying to be a priest, which is his parents' wish. Instead, he devotes himself to botany, and sometimes plays truant from school so that he can go out and study plants. He is interested in nature study and mathematics and also learns Latin, which is the international, scientific language at that time. Dr. Johan Rothman, a district

doctor and teacher at Växjö Grammar School, gives Carl special lessons in botany. Rothman recommends Carl to study Latin at Lund University after leaving school.

1727 Starts to study medicine at Lund University

1728 Moves to Uppsala to study at the university there. The standard of teaching is not very high at either Lund or Uppsala and Linnaeus goes in mostly for self-study.

1729 Linnaeus meets Olof Celsius, Professor of Theology and an enthusiastic botanist, in the Academic Botanic Garden in Uppsala. This meeting is of great importance for Linnaeus, who stays at Celsius's house, where he has access to his extensive library. Linnaeus writes an essay on the sexuality of plants (*Praeludia sponsaliorum plantarum*) which arouses great interest in academic circles in Uppsala.

1730 Linnaeus holds very popular demonstrations in the Botanic Garden and stays at the house of Professor Olof Rudbeck the Younger.

Linnaeus was not big, not small, thin, brown-eyed, light, hasty, walked quickly, did everything promptly, could not stand lateness; was quickly moved, sensitive, worked continuously; could not spare himself. He enjoyed good food, drank good drinks; but was never inebriated by them. He cared little for appearance, believed that the man should embellish the clothes and not vice versa. He was certainly not argumentative, so he never answered those who wrote against him, and said: If I am wrong, I will not win and if I am right, I will be shown to be right as long as Nature exists

Linnaeus's description of himself



1733 1734 1735 1736 1737 1738 1739 1741

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| <p>1732 The Journey to Lapland, 12 May – 10 October</p> <p>1733 Linnaeus's mother dies. Linnaeus interests himself in minerals and rocks and also writes a textbook on the subject.</p> <p>1734 The Journey to Dalarna</p> <p>1735 Linnaeus meets his future wife, Sara Elisabeth (Lisa) Moraea in Falun and proposes to her after only a couple of weeks. Linnaeus needs better means to support a family before he marries, so he travels to Holland to take a doctor's degree. A three-year-long journey in Europe begins, first to Hamburg and then to Holland. Linnaeus takes his doctor's degree at Hardewijk University with a thesis on malaria. He stays in Holland to classify the exotic plants that are cultivated on Georg Clifford's land near Haarlem. Linnaeus's work is published in 1738, together with exquisite engravings by the artist Georg Ehret. During his stay in Holland Linnaeus socialises with influential friends who are interested in botany.</p> | <p>1736 Linnaeus travels to England for a few months to meet botanists but then returns to Holland.</p> <p>1737 Several important works are published in Holland.</p> <p>1738 Linnaeus travels to Paris to meet botanists and then continues on to Sweden. He gets engaged to Sara Lisa and opens a doctor's practice in Stockholm.</p> <p>1739 Carl and Sara marry.</p> <p>1741 Their son Carl is born. Linnaeus gets a professorship at Uppsala with responsibility for botany and other subjects and moves to the professor's residence in the University Botanic Garden, now the Linnaeus Garden. Commissioned by the Swedish Parliament, he embarks on a scientific expedition to the Baltic islands of Öland and Gotland.</p> <p>1743 His daughter Elisabeth Christina (Lisa Stina) is born.</p> |
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Illustrations from the left: Linnaeus's birthplace, Råshult Farm; portrait of Carl Linnaeus and his wife Sara Elisabeth (Lisa) painted in 1739 by J.H.Scheffel; the wedding cottage near Falun; Linné's Hammarby near Uppsala; the professor's residence in the Linné Garden; the orangery in the Linné Garden: portrait of Carl von Linné painted in 1775 by Alexander Rosin (the same portrait appears on the Swedish 100-crown note).



1743 1744 1750 1753 1757 1761 1776 1778

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| <p>1744 Another daughter is born but lives for only a short time.</p> <p>1746 Linnaeus undertakes a journey to Västgöta in the west of Sweden on the commission of Parliament. The first of Linnaeus's disciples, Christopher Tärnström, to go on a journey abroad commissioned by Linnaeus travels on board a Swedish East India Company ship bound for China.</p> <p>1748 Linnaeus's father dies.</p> <p>1749 His daughter Lovisa is born. A journey to Skåne in the south of Sweden is commissioned by Parliament.</p> <p>1750 Linnaeus is appointed Rector of Uppsala University.</p> <p>1753 Species Plantarum is published. This work is the starting point for naming plants even today.</p> <p>1754 His son Johannes is born.</p> | <p>1757 His daughter Sophia is born. Johannes dies.</p> <p>1758 Systema Naturae, Vol 1 (10th edition) is published. This edition is still the starting point for the naming of animals. Linnaeus buys the two farms Hammarby and Sävja.</p> <p>1761 Linnaeus is raised to the nobility. His name is changed from Linnaeus to von Linné.</p> <p>1774 Linnaeus suffers a brain haemorrhage and is partially paralysed.</p> <p>1776-1777 Another brain haemorrhage.</p> <p>1778 Linnaeus dies on 10 January and is buried in Uppsala Cathedral.</p> |
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