

Suggested Materials List

Below are some of the materials that I use plus several alternative brands BUT you may use your existing materials, assuming that they are artist quality. If you are a registered student and unsure, please email me.

Pencils A full set of 4H - 8B pencils for tonal work. I use Faber Castell 9000 or Caran d' Ache graphwood but other brands will suffice. Such as, Staedtler Mars Lumograph, Tombow (not sure how wide the range is with Tombow). A mechanical pencil may also be useful for fine line drawing (but is not essential) 0.3mm or finer leads are advised and the Pentel Orenz ultra fine come with a 0.2 lead. I use this pencil with 2H and HB leads for line drawing.

Sharpener I find the best point is achieved using a heavy-duty craft knife and emery board or fine glass paper for fine tuning the pencil tip.

Eraser of your choice. I use a Tombow retractable eraser and a Faber Castell dust free as well as a putty kneadable eraser e.g. Faber Castell or Winsor and Newton.

Artist quality watercolour paints I work with mostly primary colours and recommend 5 blues, 5 reds and 4 yellows, mostly Winsor & Newton pans. I prefer pans for botanical painting as they are better suited to smaller subjects and dry brush but the choice of pans or tubes is personal and you can use either. Single pigment paints are best. I've put the pigment numbers in brackets and you can find these numbers on the tubes of paint or on colour charts from the manufacturer. I find that these colours allow me to mix pretty much anything!

BLUES: Cerulean (PB35), Cobalt (PB28) Indanthrene (PB60), Winsor Blue green shade (PB15) and French Ultramarine (PB29). I also use Manganese blue (PB33) as an alternative to cerulean but it can be difficult to obtain.

REDS: Permanent Alizarin Crimson (PR206) or Permanent Carmine, Scarlet Lake (PR188), Permanent rose (PV19) Quinacridone magenta (PV122) and Permanent Magenta (PV19)

YELLOWS: Transparent Yellow (PY150), Winsor Yellow (PY154), Winsor lemon (PY175) Lemon Yellow nickel titanate (PY53)

Others Cobalt violet (PV14), excellent for reflected light

Other popular brands include: Daniel Smith, M. Graham and Schmincke

Note: these are just suggestions and you can use preferred alternatives, **cross check pigment numbers with different brands** but bear in mind that manufacturing process also affects the final colour even though the pigment is the same! As long as you have a decent range of primary colours you can produce a good realistic colour matches. There is no need whatsoever to have a large number of paints, it will only confuse you when learning. Instead use less and learn *all* of their properties. You can add more later if need be.

Paintbrushes

For dry brush work use small sized short haired brushes: size 1, 2 will do the job. these include:

Winsor and Newton series 7 miniatures.

Rosemary & Co Spotters series 323 Not quite the same quality as the above but a good short haired lower cost option, ideal for dry brush because the technique it causes the brush to wear

David Jackson (The Brushman) you can find him on Facebook – he makes brushes to order, so you must write to him. Excellent needle point and spotters.

A Filbert is a useful brush for soft edges, for working on blending, such as on fruit, size 1 and 2

Good quality sable wash brushes, I use sizes 3 - 7. Round or pointed sable brushes are best, again W & N, Raphael and Rosemary and Co are good choices. If your'e on a budget just but the 4 and the 7.

A good brush for lifting is a synthetic flat square size 0 or 1. I use the Pro Arte Masterstroke but many others are available. It just needs to be a fairly firm flat square brush.

Watercolour Paper

I prefer to buy loose imperial size sheets and cut them to suit my subject but you can use blocks or pads too. Be careful that you are using the correct side of the paper though, sometimes blocks need to be removed from the card and used from the back, as the 'mesh' or wrong side is facing up. Check with a magnifying glass to identify a small mesh pattern, this is the wrong side of the paper and varies from manufacturer to manufacturer. Having said that, some artists prefer the mesh side and it's usually possible to paint on either side.

Hot Pressed watercolour paper is the smoothest paper and needed for fine botanical work, recommended brands include:

Arches Satine (HP) 140lbs (300 gsm) in weight (don't work on anything lower in weight as it will cockle)

Canson Moulin de Roy 140 (300 gsm) or 300 lb (640gsm). Canson Heritage is also a new paper shortly available, I believe it's good but haven't tried it myself.

Another good alternative is Sennelier HP 140lb but can be difficult to find

Saunders Waterford new smooth HP is available in several weights

Note: Paper choice is quite personal so try out small samples before investing in too much of a particular type. There are many others in addition to this list.

Fabriano Artistic papers update: Some of you may know that one of the botanical artists' favourite watercolour papers has been beset with problems. Unfortunately, Fabriano papers are no longer of a quality that I can recommend. Changes in production have resulted in a poor surface on their papers, which cause it to act like a blotting paper making it difficult to achieve clean edges and which can result in spotting. Fabriano Artistic, was always one of my favourite papers, so it's a great shame and it's unlikely that there will be any change for another 2 years, even if they do resolve the issue.

Sketchbook. I use the Stillman & Birn Zeta series 8.5 x 5.5 inch book, available in hardback or softcover. Other sizes and brands are available but choose a heavier weight paper suitable for wet media.

Hand held magnifying glass x2 magnification and/ or long arm desk magnifier

Ruler Transparent ruler in mm

Drawing Board or an elevated board. At least A2 in size (16.5 x 23.4 inches)

An angle poise lamp, with a good quality daylight bulb. Put a good bulb in a low-cost lamp but make sure that the fitting is the same, usually ES E27 screw, named after the Thomas 'Edison Screw' fitting and 27mm. The main things to look for in a bulb is the 'K' or Kelvin number, which should be around 5000 - 5500 for natural white daylight. Also, look for the CRI (Colour Rendering Index) should be as high as possible for accurate colour, preferably over 90. Be careful with bulbs labelled 'daylight' without these specifications, many are not true daylight bulbs.

Books: Not at all essential but worth having:

The Cambridge Illustrated glossary of Botanical Terms by Michael Hickey

Understanding the Flowering Plants: A Guide for Botanical Illustrators by Anne Bebbington

Or

The Kew Book of Botanical Illustration by Christabel King