

WHO WAS DAVID DOUGLAS?



David Douglas (25 June 1799 - 12 July 1834) was a Scottish botanist. He was born to John Douglas, a stonemason, and Jean Drummond. He worked as a gardener and explored the Scottish Highlands, North America, and Hawaii, where he died.

When he was a young man, Douglas worked at the Botanical Gardens at Glasgow University and attended botany lectures at the University of Glasgow. William Jackson Hooker, the Garden Director and Professor of Botany, was impressed by his curiosity and knowledge of plants and took him on an expedition to the Highlands of Scotland then recommended him to the Royal Horticultural Society of London.

The Royal Horticultural Society sent Douglas on a plant-hunting expedition in the Pacific Northwest in 1824 that ranks among the great botanical explorations of his generation. In the Spring of 1826, David Douglas climbed a peak now called Mount Brown near Athabasca Pass in Canada. In doing so, he became the first mountaineer in North America.

Douglas brought seeds from the Douglas-fir (which was named after him) back to England in 1827. He also collected seeds from the Sitka Spruce, Sugar Pine, Western White Pine, Ponderosa Pine, Lodgepole Pine, Monterey Pine, Grand Fir, Noble Fir, as well as numerous garden shrubs and herbs such as the Red-flowering currant, Salal, Lupine, Penstemon and California poppy. Altogether he introduced about 240 species of plants to Britain.

Learn more about David Douglas at www.DavidDouglasSociety.org.