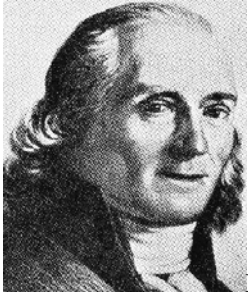


CARL PETER THUNBERG BIOGRAPHY

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Thunberg, Carl Peter (1743–1828)—eager for botanical exploration in South Africa -- due to his travel books of his experiences in South Africa became known as "The Father of South African Cape Botany".



Born in Jönköping, Sweden, on 11 November 1743, Carl Peter Thunberg (also known as Karl Peter von Thunberg, Carl Pehr Thunberg, or Carl Per Thunberg), became a Swedish physician, naturalist and botanist, a favorite student of Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778) at the Swedish Uppsala University graduating in 1767 after only 6 years of study. However, it wasn't until 1772 at the Cape in South Africa that Linnaeus had him graduating as a Doctor of Medicine in absentia.

With the help of Johannes Burman (1706–1779) and Laurens Theodorus Gronivius (1730–1777), Thunberg joined the Dutch East India Company in December 1771 as a surgeon on board the "Schoongezicht" on the way to the Far East. He reached Cape Town in South Africa in April 1772 and stayed for three years studying the Dutch language and collecting specimens for the gardens in Leiden, The Netherlands. He took field trips into the interior of South Africa with Johann Andreas Auge (1711–1805), who was the superintendent of the Dutch East India Company in southern Africa, between September 1772 and January 1773 in search of specimens. During three expeditions into the interior of South Africa, Thunberg collected many specimens of both flora and fauna. He was handicapped in most of his trips by insufficient funds, so his equipment was relatively modest, consisting of an ox-wagon, riding horses and assisted by two Hottentots. During two of these expeditions he traveled with Francis Masson (1741-1805), a collector from the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, England.

Although Thunberg continued on to the Far East where his medical knowledge was most useful, collections of succulent plants were mostly done in South Africa. He returned to The Netherlands in 1778, and then on to Sweden in 1779 where he learned that Linnaeus died a year earlier. Thunberg was appointed botanical demonstrator in 1778 under Linnaeus' son, Carl von Linne (1741–1783), and after the son's death, professor of medicine and natural philosophy at the University of Uppsala for the rest of his life..

Two important books Thunberg wrote was *Travels in Europe, Africa and Asia* (1788 to 1793 in 4 volumes) and *Flora Capensis* (1807 to 1813 in 3 parts).

Thunberg was the author of three succulent genera:

Augea (Northern Cape Western Cape) in 1794 and named in honor of JA Auge,

Cussonia (Africa, Mascarene Islands) in 1780 and named in honor of Pierre Cusson (1727–1783),

Sansevieria (Africa, India, Yemen) in 1794 and named in honor of Raimondo di Sangro, 7th Prince of Sansevero (1710-1771).

Thunberg also had a number of succulent species named in his honor under these genera: *Crassula*, *Gasteria*, *Mesembryanthemum* (*Malephora*), *Sarcostemma* and *Senecio*. He discovered many succulent species and described many more, including a description of *Augea capensis*, *Cussonia thyrsoiflora* and *Sansevieria aethiopica*.

Dr. Thunberg died at Thunberg near Uppsala on 8 August 1828 — crowned with many honors during his lifetime, a member of over 60 scientific societies in all parts of Europe.

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