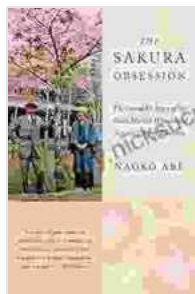


# The Incredible Story of the Plant Hunter Who Saved Japan's Cherry Blossoms



## The Sakura Obsession: The Incredible Story of the Plant Hunter Who Saved Japan's Cherry Blossoms

by Naoko Abe

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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In the early 1900s, Japan was facing a devastating threat to its iconic cherry blossoms. A deadly fungus was spreading rapidly through the country's cherry trees, and it seemed as if the beloved trees would soon be wiped out.

But then, a savior emerged in the form of a British plant hunter named Ernest Henry Wilson. Wilson had spent years traveling the world in search of new and unusual plants, and he had a deep love for cherry blossoms. When he heard about the threat to Japan's cherry trees, he knew he had to do something to help.

Wilson traveled to Japan in 1914, and he immediately began to study the fungus that was killing the cherry trees. He quickly realized that the fungus was a new species, and he named it *Ceratocystis fimbriata*. Wilson also discovered that the fungus was spread by a tiny insect called the cherry bark beetle.

Wilson knew that he had to find a way to stop the spread of the fungus, but he also knew that he had to do it without harming the cherry trees. He spent months experimenting with different treatments, and finally he developed a solution that worked.

Wilson's solution was to inject the cherry trees with a chemical called copper sulfate. The copper sulfate killed the fungus without harming the trees. Wilson also developed a way to trap the cherry bark beetles, which helped to prevent the spread of the fungus.

Wilson's work saved Japan's cherry blossoms. The trees were able to recover from the fungus, and they continue to bloom beautifully every spring. Wilson's legacy lives on in Japan, where he is considered a hero.

## **Wilson's Early Life and Career**

Ernest Henry Wilson was born in Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, England, on February 15, 1876. He was the son of a gardener, and he grew up with a love of plants. Wilson began his career as a plant collector in 1899, when he was hired by the Arnold Arboretum in Boston, Massachusetts. He spent the next several years collecting plants in China, Japan, and Korea.

In 1908, Wilson was hired by the Veitch Nurseries in London, England. Veitch was one of the world's leading nurseries, and Wilson was given the task of collecting new and unusual plants for the nursery's catalog. Wilson spent the next several years traveling the world in search of new plants. He collected over 2,000 new species of plants, many of which were introduced to cultivation for the first time.

## **Wilson's Work in Japan**

Wilson first visited Japan in 1914. He was immediately struck by the beauty of the cherry blossoms, and he was determined to save them from the fungus that was threatening to kill them. Wilson spent the next several years studying the fungus and developing a solution to stop its spread.

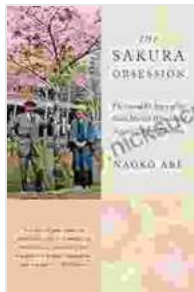
In 1918, Wilson published a book about his work in Japan. The book, titled *The Cherries of Japan*, was a comprehensive study of the cherry trees of Japan. The book included detailed descriptions of the different species of cherry trees, as well as information on their cultivation and care.

Wilson's work in Japan had a profound impact on the country. He saved the cherry blossoms from extinction, and he also introduced new species of cherry trees to Japan. Wilson is considered a hero in Japan, and his legacy continues to live on.

## **Wilson's Later Life and Death**

After his work in Japan, Wilson continued to travel the world in search of new plants. He collected over 10,000 new species of plants during his career. Wilson also wrote several books about his travels and his work with plants.

Wilson died in Worcester, Massachusetts, on October 15, 1930. He was 54 years old. Wilson's legacy lives on in the many plants that he introduced to cultivation. He is considered one of the greatest plant hunters of all time.

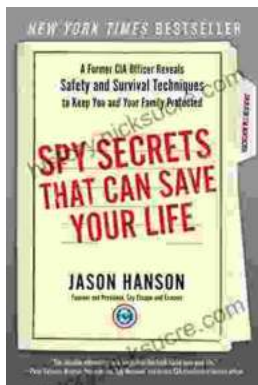


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