



## Botanical Drawing for Beginners – Materials List

Instructor: Sarah Wry – [sarahwry2@gmail.com](mailto:sarahwry2@gmail.com),  
[www.wrybotanicalart.com](http://www.wrybotanicalart.com)

---

### Welcome to the first step in Botanical Drawing!

The overall objective of this class is to give students a basic understanding of Botanical Art and its techniques. It also gives students a taste of what Drawing I and Drawing II will involve. This is not a Certificate class so there will not be homework or a grade. However, many of my students do go on to Drawing I and II.

This course will cover:

- An introduction to Botanical Art;
  - an explanation of materials and tools;
  - an introduction to observing and accurately rendering a botanical subject using graphite line drawing;
  - the basics of shading in order to show form;
  - good working practices and habits.
- 

***PLEASE NOTE: Botanical Art by its very nature is very detailed and precise. Therefore, the recommended materials are of a high quality, preferably professional standard. Using school pencils, cheap sharpeners and low quality 'sketch' paper is not going to produce good results.***

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call or email me.

## Pencils

Graphite pencils: You will need at a minimum, 2B B HB H 2H 4H. However, if you buy a set you will have a wider range which you can also use. My favorite brand is Derwent but other brands such as Faber Castell, Staedtler, Mono are good.

The different uses of soft and hard graphite pencils will be explained. Please make sure however that all your pencils are of the same brand as the tones relate to each other and may vary across different brands.

## Measuring Tool

**A metal divider (or caliper) with points – This is an essential tool for measuring your subject.** You do not need one that holds a pencil. The larger plastic ones are no good. Please make sure you have one for this class! Please see the reference photo below Erasers.

## Erasers

**Kneaded eraser** - You will learn on this course that erasers are not just for taking out mistakes, they are an essential tool used in drawing. A *kneaded* (soft) eraser is essential for this purpose. Kneaded erasers come in different sizes and a small one is fine. However, make sure you buy the **Faber Castell** kneaded eraser. The Prismacolor looks just like the Faber Castell one but does not knead properly or self clean when you fold the graphite into it.



Please make sure you get a divider with two points like this and a Faber Castell Kneaded Eraser as in the photo. The Prismacolor one also looks similar to this so double check.

## White hard eraser

**Eraser ‘pen’** for taking out detail. This is a great tool for Botanical Artists!

The best one is the Tombow Mono Zero refillable eraser (round). A battery operated eraser is ok as well, but the Tombow Zero is the most precise for lifting graphite (link below, copy and paste, sorry it’s so long!).

[https://www.dickblick.com/items/tombow-mono-zero-refillable-eraser-round-single/?clicktracking=true&wmcp=pla&wmcid=items&wmckw=21576-9330&country=us&currency=usd&gad\\_source=1&gad\\_campaignid=16552518873&gbraid=0AAAAAD\\_wX\\_EEhUGSFkgRJ9CZxnsFgN74u&gclid=CjwKCAjwo4rCBhAbEiwAxhJlCWbduhpUF9gRDPceY0A3\\_\\_dNNkn-GZYvzm6kWkxVKbW3IjEOa0e\\_TxoCRRkQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.dickblick.com/items/tombow-mono-zero-refillable-eraser-round-single/?clicktracking=true&wmcp=pla&wmcid=items&wmckw=21576-9330&country=us&currency=usd&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=16552518873&gbraid=0AAAAAD_wX_EEhUGSFkgRJ9CZxnsFgN74u&gclid=CjwKCAjwo4rCBhAbEiwAxhJlCWbduhpUF9gRDPceY0A3__dNNkn-GZYvzm6kWkxVKbW3IjEOa0e_TxoCRRkQAvD_BwE)

Also, a regular plastic block eraser is useful for erasing larger areas of graphite.

## Pencil sharpener

You will be sharpening constantly as a good sharp point provides the best result, so a good battery powered electric sharpener is very useful. However, a small metal sharpener would work if it is new. I will have an electric one in the class for you to use as well.

## Paper

Choosing paper can be confusing. However, I have tried to make this material list as clear as possible. In this class you will learn about the different weights of paper and the difference between hot press and cold press as well as other terms used by the paper industry.

It is essential you have **good quality smooth** paper for this class, so look for paper that is **Hot press**. **Cold press** has a grain that is too pronounced for smooth tonal shading in graphite.

Good brands are: Strathmore 400 (brown cover), Fabriano Artístico hot press 140 lbs /300 gm2, Strathmore Bristol Vellum surface, Stonehenge made by Legion Paper and Arches Hot Press. Arches is very expensive and there are cheaper options that will serve you just as well. I only listed it in case you had any at home already. As to the size of the pad or block 9”x12” or a bit larger is good.

For your convenience, I have included links to the drawing pads/blocks on Blick so you can recognize the right brands.

Don't worry that the Fabriano Artístico is a watercolor pad. Watercolor paper is great for graphite. Do not buy any paper that says "Sketch" or "Student", it won't be a high enough quality. **Also do not buy Bristol Plate.** Plate has a coating on it, so it is good for ink based media but not graphite. You will see and understand why in the class.

<https://www.dickblick.com/products/strathmore-500-series-bristol-pads/>

<https://www.dickblick.com/products/strathmore-400-series-drawing-paper-pads/>

<https://www.dickblick.com/products/fabriano-artistico-enhanced-watercolor-blocks/>

<https://www.dickblick.com/items/legion-stonehenge-spiral-pad-9-x-12-white/>

## Tracing Paper

The **one and only** brand I recommend is Canson Foundation Series Tracing Paper

## Ruler

**Duster** - A large cheap paintbrush 1-2" wide or an Alvin Draftsman Duster. You can also use a brand new make-up brush

**Tape:** Artist or paper based surgical tape. Artist tape is expensive. Surgical tape is cheap, comes in smaller rolls, and is just as good

## Recommended Books

I will bring samples of books to class. Don't worry about having them for the beginning of the class, it's better to buy a recommended book when you have had some experience with drawing and know more about what you would find most useful after the class.

Fundamental Graphite Techniques – Katie Lee. This is the best book on graphite techniques and exercises out there. It can be obtained from [www.katieleeartist.com](http://www.katieleeartist.com)

Botanical Techniques produced by the American Society for Botanical Artists and edited by Robin Jess and Carol Woodin.

<https://botanicalart.education/botanical-art-e-booklets/> Botanical Artist Margaret Best produces booklets that can be bought and downloaded from her education site. Her two most recent ones look at light and dark tones in graphite and make an excellent companion to this course.

## **Suppliers**

[www.dickblick.com](http://www.dickblick.com)

[www.davinciartsupply.com](http://www.davinciartsupply.com)

Thompsons Art Supply, 184 Mamaroneck Ave, White Plains, 914 949 4885