

Sweden celebrates 300th birthday of Linnaeus

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23 May 2007

[NewScientist.com news service](#)

He's more influential than ABBA, more famous than Björn Borg. On 23 May, Sweden will celebrate the 300th birthday of its most illustrious son: Carolus Linnaeus.

The naturalist practically created modern taxonomy - including the Latin genus/species system used to label all living organisms - and to commemorate him, Sweden is throwing a party. His old university, Uppsala, is awarding honorary Linnaeus doctorates to notable scientists such as primatologist Jane Goodall and DNA co-discoverer James Watson. London's Chelsea Flower Show next week will feature a Linnaeus tribute garden, including his signature flower, *Linnaea borealis*.

All the while, however, taxonomy is seeing profound changes. Online databases based on DNA "barcodes" are poised to revolutionise classification. Robert Hanner of the Canadian Barcode of Life Network based at the University of Guelph, Ontario, says museums should make more use of their resources. "Natural history museums need to preserve not just a bug on a pin or a skeleton, they also need to be banking DNA in parallel to voucher specimens," he says.

[From issue 2604 of New Scientist magazine, 23 May 2007, page 5](#)

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Printed on Thu Oct 11 16:04:00 BST 2007

