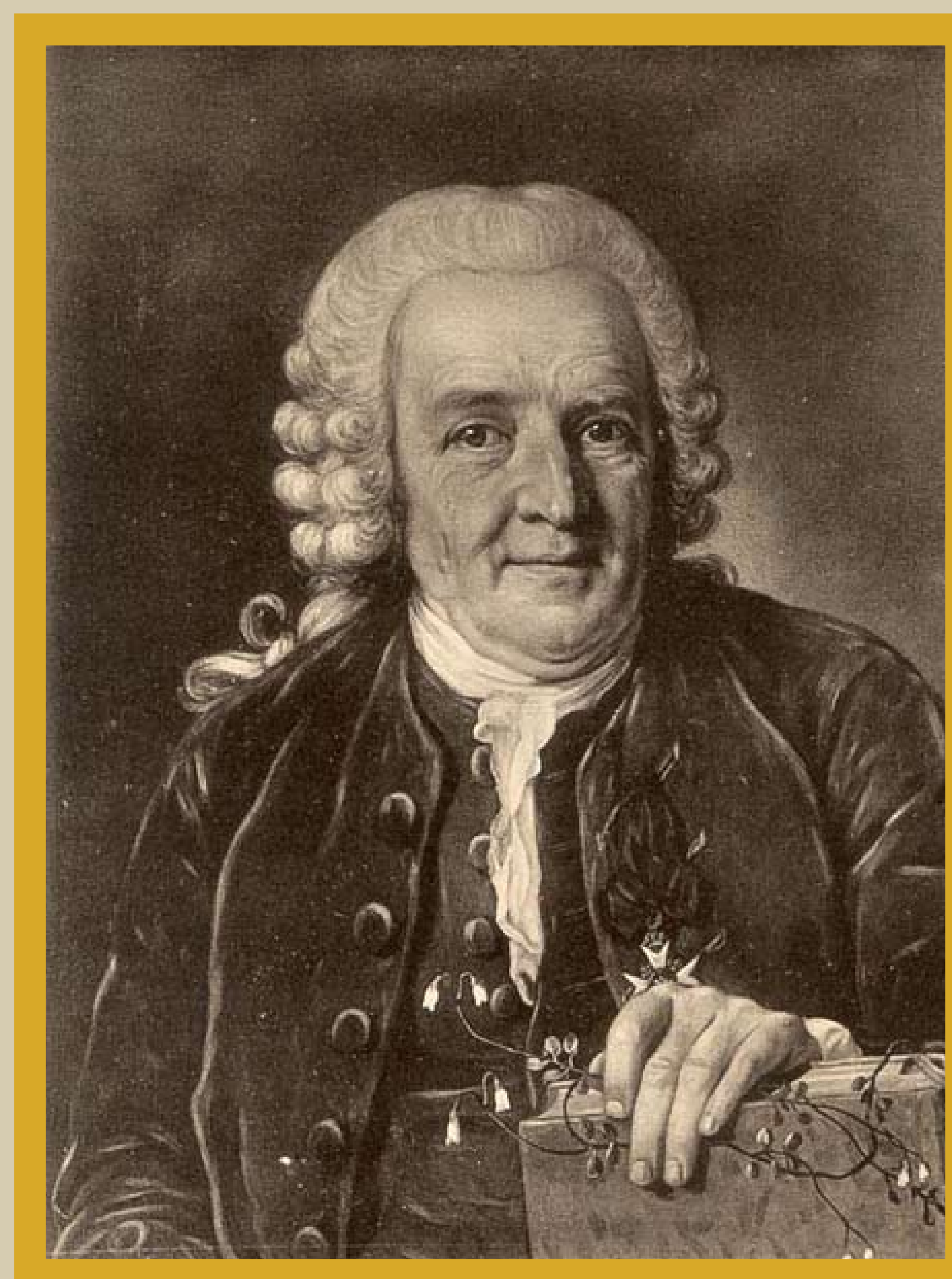


# LINNAEUS' LEGACY

There is a basic human need to organize—by establishing categories, we make sense of our complex world. Categories can be coarse or refined, but generally their usefulness conforms to the “Goldilocks Principle”—somewhere in the middle is just right. The history of human knowledge starts with classifying the world around us.



Starting a game of twenty questions with “animal, vegetable, or mineral?” is helpful to a point, but present-day biologists classify living organisms into many categories and then arrange them into a nested hierarchy—from species at one end, to kingdom at the

other. This surprisingly useful system was devised by Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The science of classifying living organisms is known as “systematics.” To learn more about this fascinating work, visit our companion exhibit, *Systematics: Roots and Relationships*, in the West Orangerie of the Conservatory.

