

Updated 2025 Fall: Art Supply List for Intro to Botanical Drawing II: Shading & Structure

All supplies listed for Intro to Botanical Drawing Part 01 should be brought to class; we won't repeat them here. By now, you know your preferred mechanical pencils, tracing paper, sketchbooks, erasers, kneaded erasers, and any other materials—please bring those to Botanical Drawing II.

Legion Stonehenge Drawing Paper Pad (2-1/2" x 3-1/4", Multi-Color, 15 Sheets)

Graphite Pencils

- **Faber-Castell Pitt Graphite Matte Pencils**
 - HB
 - 6B
 - 14B
- **Caran d'Ache Grafwood Pencils**
 - H
 - 3H

Colored Pencils

In botanical drawing, every color you see has its own lightness or darkness. Even though we work in graphite in this class, learning to translate those color values into grayscale is essential for realistic drawings. We'll briefly use colored pencils in Part II to practice blending hues and converting color into matching gray tones—building your confidence from simple outlines to fully shaded sketches.

Professional colored pencils offer consistent color, durability, and longevity. Artist-grade lines use high pigment concentrations, provide verified lightfastness, and clearly list their pigments—features that support precise color work and archival stability. Refer to the guide at the end to recognize these professional standards and choose wisely.

We use Faber-Castell Polychromos because they're among the most affordable artist-grade pencils available, and their pigment numbers and lightfastness ratings are clearly listed on the manufacturer's website.

Faber-Castell Polychromos Colored Pencils

- **Black – 199**
- **White – 101**
- **Fuchsia – 123**
- **Burnt Sienna – 283**
- **Dark Indigo – 157**
- **Helioblue-Reddish – 151**
- **Phthalo Blue – 110**
- **Light Cadmium Yellow – 105**
- **Blender: Primsacolor Blender or Dickblick Blender**

Erasers & Pencil Sharpeners

- **Westcott Erasing Shield**
- **Pencil Sharpener**

NOTE: Caran d’Ache Grafwood pencils are 8 mm thick, so you’ll need a sharpener that fits that size. Below are two top picks—feel free to use these or any sharpener that accommodates your pencils.

- Rapesco Pencil Sharpener- 74 model (Model 74 (R74000B2. Be AWARE model 64 fits 6mm pencils NOT 8mm)
- Classroom Friendly Supplies Pencil Sharpener: Comes in an assortment of bright colors: All parts can be replaced on this sharpener making it a workhorse for years! (Stephey’s Favorite)
- Kum Wedge Sharpener - Double-Hole

Field-Drawing Reminder: Since we’ll be working on site, plan for the weather and your comfort—consider a sun hat, sunscreen, a portable chair or stool, and a messenger type bag to hold your supplies.

Graphite Pencils

As botanical artists, our choice of pencils reflects our commitment to nature. **Faber-Castell** sources over 90 percent of its wood from FSC-certified forests and replants saplings annually. **Caran d’Ache Grafwood** uses first-choice FSC-certified cedar under strict environmental standards. When shopping, look for FSC or PEFC labels on barrels or packaging to support sustainable forestry.

Understanding Pencil Grades

Pencil grades (4H – 9B) indicate lead hardness or softness based on clay-to-graphite mix—they don’t guarantee specific lightness or darkness. To find a pencil’s true value range:

- **Make a graphite gradient** building light layers upon layers, going from lightest to the darkest, then note the value range you created with each pencil.

The difference between the lightest-light and the darkest-dark marks shows the range that pencil offers **you**. Since pressure, paper, and brand vary, always test your own pencils—drawing is about the relationship you build with your tools.

What Defines “Professional” Colored Pencils

Below is the integrated guide with the **High Pigment Load** section expanded to include a simple definition of “pigment load” for beginners.

Summary

Professional colored pencils stand out in four key areas—pigment load, lightfastness, pigment disclosure, and archival quality. By focusing on these qualities rather than brand loyalty, you'll select tools that yield vibrant, fade-resistant work and support your growth in botanical illustration.

Quick Guide to Artist Grade Professional Color Pencils

High Pigment Load

What is pigment load? It's the amount of color-pigment versus binder in the pencil core. A higher pigment load means:

- **Richer color** with fewer layers
- **Better coverage**, so you don't see white paper underneath
- **Smoother blending** and layering

Lightfastness Ratings

Look for pencils tested and rated for UV resistance (e.g., ASTM I–V or Blue Wool 1–8). Aim for top ratings (ASTM I–II) to ensure colors won't fade over time.

Pigment Disclosure

Choose lines that list their pigments (Colour Index "CI" numbers) so you can verify color consistency and avoid fugitive hues.

Archival Quality

Professional pencils use acid-free, 100 % pigment formulations that resist yellowing and breakdown—preserving your work for decades.

Choosing Your Materials

Feel free to mix pencils from different brands—prioritize archival-quality, lightfast materials over name recognition. By selecting pencils that meet these criteria, you'll ensure the precision, permanence, and vibrancy essential for archival botanical drawing.

Recommended Professional Brands: Faber-Castell Polychromos, Caran d'Ache, Derwent Lightfast, Holbein Artists' Colored Pencil, Lyra Rembrandt Polycolor

Note: Feel free to mix pencils from different brands—what matters is choosing archival-quality, lightfast materials that preserve your work's integrity rather than remaining brand-loyal. Opt for artist-grade lines that clearly disclose pigments and lightfast ratings so you can achieve the precision and permanence required for archival botanical drawings.

For convenience, items on this list can be found online at the **Dick Blick class store**. This is provided **solely as a resource** to help students procure materials—I (stephey baker) do not receive any commissions, kickbacks, or affiliate benefits from your purchases—just say'n. :)

www.dickblick.com/lists/blicku/JBACRHGBI2AM1

Items can also be found on Amazon, and Plaza Art.

Any questions or comments please reach out to me: Stephey @ mbtmuse .com | markedbythemuse .com