

# THE BROWSER'S BOOK OF BEGINNINGS: *ORIGINS OF EVERYTHING UNDER, AND INCLUDING, THE SUN* By Charles Panati

In *The Browser's Book Of Beginnings* readers will discover the often unknown origins of subjects as diverse as humans, manners, the great religions, movable type, life in all its forms, literature, comic books, civilizations, languages, music, bullfighting, bagpipes, microscopes, shorthand, corporations, submarines, bulldogs, stereo, sponges, millipedes and monkeys, tea and Tab, and thousands of other items.

Houghton-Mifflin, 1984, 427 pages,  
9¼" x 6¼", hardback, \$17.95; paper, \$9.95

"I hope that there are, in all, enough curious and informative origins here to edify, to entertain, and perhaps to enable you to recoup the cost of this book by winning bets with friends on, say, the name of the French king who, when presented by his royal gardener with the first pineapple grown in his country, snatched up, with characteristic greed and impatience, the yet unpeeled fruit and bit vigorously into it, severely lacerating his lips on its prickly eyes."

—Charles Panati

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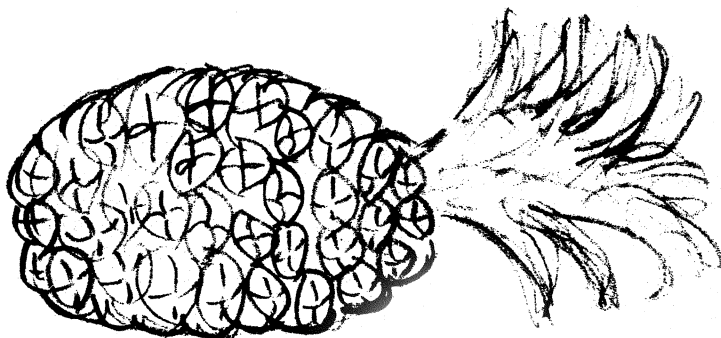
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# Edison didn't Invent the Light Bulb

Thomas Edison simply improved upon a principle others had discovered and worked on for years.

Furthermore...

- Cleopatra was not Egyptian.
- Darwin did not originate the idea of evolution.
- Lindbergh did not make the first nonstop transatlantic flight.
- Robert Fulton did not invent the steamboat.
- It was not Marie Antoinette who said, "Let them eat cake."
- The Emancipation Proclamation did not free any slaves.
- Ostriches do not hide their heads in the sand.
- The first American colonists did not live in log cabins.
- Delilah did not cut Samson's hair.
- Galileo did not demonstrate any of his theories by dropping objects off the Leaning Tower.

All these nuggets are found in a fascinating book, **The Dictionary of Misinformation.**

A miscellany of misinformation, misbelief, misconstruction and misquotation. This compendium of myths, misunderstandings and bits of pure buncombe is a delightful and entertaining tour through the world of, as the author puts it, "odd (or not so odd) non-facts, of only too-well-known untruths."

The articles range in length from a paragraph to a page and are arranged alphabetically for easy reference. Each entry gives the fact as falsely known plus the true facts, and frequently adds an interesting story behind the myth.

Written by Tom Burnam, a professor of English at Portland State University, and published by Crowell, the 302-page

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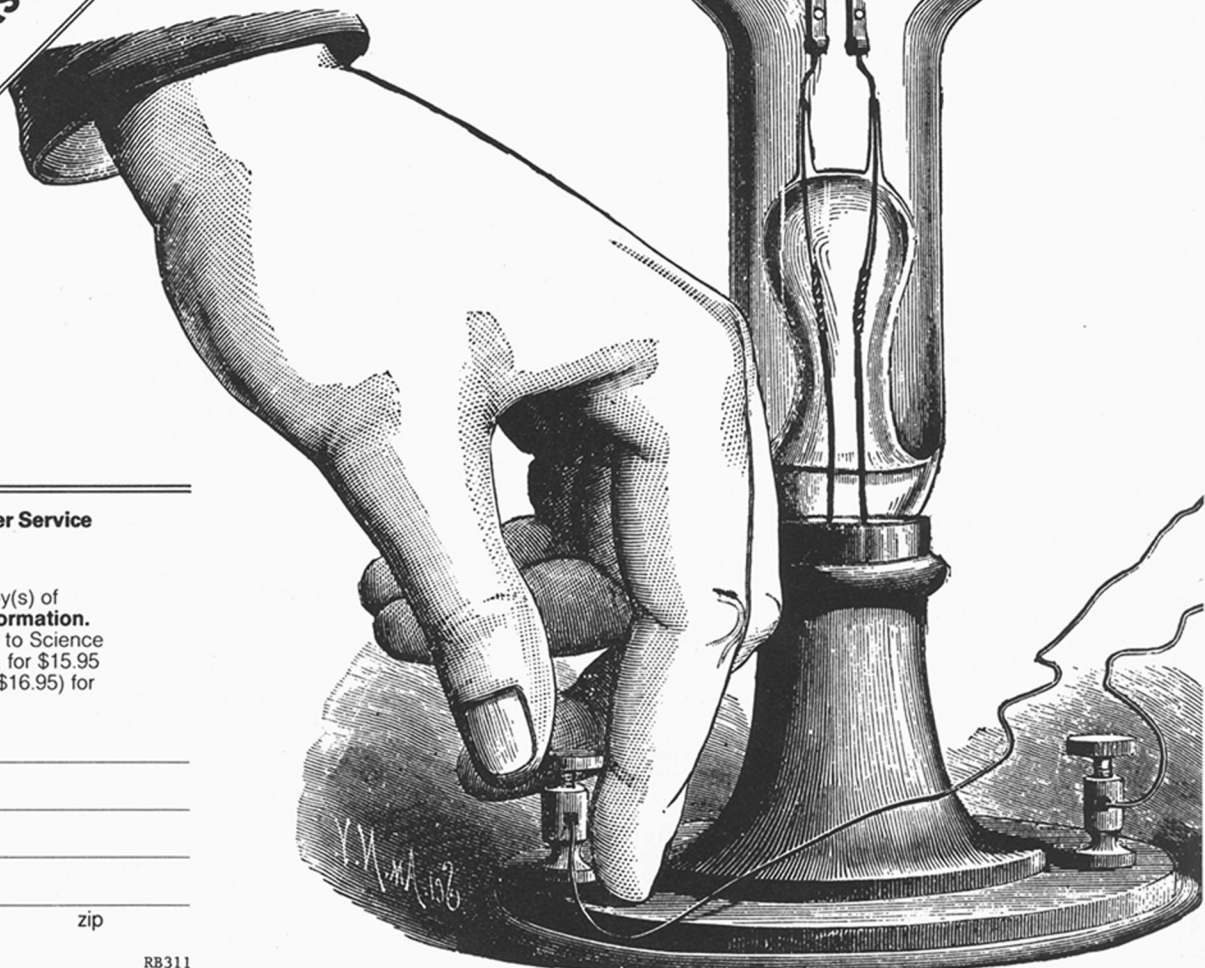
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# Plants of the Bible

By Michael Zohary

An accurate historical account drawing on the latest biblical research and a scientifically sound botanical description are, for the first time ever, joined under one cover in *Plants of the Bible*. The text is accompanied by original full-color photography that presents the plants in their natural habitat.

Part one stresses the role of plants in religion, the arts, agriculture, trade and daily life. The second part groups plants into natural agricultural and morphological units depicting the life history of each plant in terms of botany, geography and use. Two hundred photographs and five maps in full color.

## Coriander

*Coriandrum sativum* L.

Now the house of Israel called its name manna; it was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

Exodus 16:31

THE Bible tells us that the famous heavenly bread of the Israelites in the desert—the manna—was like the seeds of god. To identify god as coriander is difficult because of contextual and linguistic discrepancies. The Septuagint translates god as fennel, which is a different plant. Similarly, the Arabic *gidda*, cognate with god, refers to mountain thyme, not coriander. Most translators were probably guided by the Punic word for coriander, *god*, which is also cognate with god.

Coriander, moreover, is never found in the desert, and its brown grains cannot be compared with the white drope of manna, which should more appropriately be equated with any of a score of common desert plants with white round seed-like fruits, or with plants whose Arabic name is cognate with god.

The coriander is an annual herb of the Carrot family, with deeply incised leaves and umbels of white flowers. Its fruits are globular, 1-2 mm. across, and are crowned by a rudimentary calyx. All parts of the plant have a strong odor. It is native to Israel and occurs as a weed among winter crops. Once widely cultivated as a condiment, its leaves are sometimes used to flavor soups, puddings, curries and wines. It also has some medicinal value.



Cambridge University Press, 1983, 223 pages, 9 3/4" x 7", hardback, \$16.95

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