



**Multimedia Library Collection: Environment and History (journal)**

## **"Imperial Science Rescues a Tree: Global Botanic Networks, Local Knowledge and the Transcontinental Transplantation of Cinchona"**

Philip, Kavita

Philip, Kavita. "Imperial Science Rescues a Tree: Global Botanic Networks, Local Knowledge and the Transcontinental Transplantation of Cinchona." *Environment and History* 1, no. 2 (June, 1995): 173–200. doi:10.3197/096734095779522645 . During the course of the nineteenth century, the rise in the number of British troops stationed in India, along with the increasing number of women and children who joined the colonial administrators, made military and public health a matter of imperial concern. Malaria in particular was responsible for thousands of English deaths. Worried at the South American monopoly over the quinine trade, British colonial administrators and scientists put together an ambitious plan that was to result in the establishment of an enormous global network of exploration, collection and systematisation of botanical knowledge, a centralised array of botanical gardens, and a colonial science of natural resource management. This paper follows the official records of the quinine story, in particular the memoirs of Sir Clements Markham, an employee of the East India Company and an amateur geographer who volunteered to undertake the exploration of the Peruvian forests in search of the cinchona tree. The author uses the case of the cinchona tree to examine the rhetoric of colonial science in conjunction with its economic and political functions. She suggests that in order to understand how ideas of progress are constituted by historically specific constructions of nature, we can draw methods and insights from at least three fields. Philip specifically seeks to open up the field of Science Studies to insights from the study of colonial political economy and from the field of Environmental History. All rights reserved. © 1995 The White Horse Press

**Download:**

PDF: [https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key\\_docs/Philip-1-2.pdf](https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key_docs/Philip-1-2.pdf)

**Related links:**

- *Environment and History* at The White Horse Press  
<http://www.erica.demon.co.uk/EH.html>

**Websites linked in this text:**

- <http://dx.doi.org/10.3197/096734095779522645>