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*Dieffenbachia*

*Araceae*

*Dieffenbachia* may commemorate one or more people including Johann Karl Ernst Dieffenbach and Joseph F. Dieffenbach.

A German physician, geologist, naturalist, linguist and writer, Johann Karl Ernst Dieffenbach (1811-1855), known as Ernst Dieffenbach who, because of his liberal views, took refuge in England as a political fugitive from Germany in 1837 as well as one year's sojourn in Switzerland. In 1839 he travelled to New Zealand and surveyed the Country (including the Chatham Islands) for a New Zealand Company which was interested in minerals and agricultural land for prospective European settlements. At the same time he made extensive collections of natural history specimens including plants. In 1841 he returned to England and then on eventually to Germany where, after 1848, he became professor of geology at Geissen. His writings included contributions to medical and scientific journals, correspondence with Charles Darwin during the 1840s, and translations of many papers into German not least Charles Darwin's *Journal* of his researches. Among his longer published works is *Travels in New Zealand* covering the then geography, geology, flora and fauna of that Country.

In this case however the most likely candidate is thought to be an earlier German botanist, Joseph F. Dieffenbach (1790-1863) who controlled the gardens of the Viennese royal palace at Schönbrunn in about the 1830s.