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*Frasera*

*Gentianaceae*

*Frasera* commemorates a Scottish plant collector, John Fraser (1750-1811), who specialised in North American plants. In 1770 he established a drapery business in London and, through a friendship with a fellow Scot, William Forsyth (1737-1804), at the nearby Chelsea Physic Garden, became interested in plants. In 1780 he travelled to Canada and collected plants in Newfoundland. His success brought financial backing from leading horticultural figures in London for his next North American foray in 1785 when he first visited the United States following the American War of Independence (1775-1783). He made several more collecting expeditions to the North American Continent and took plants back to a London nursery in Chelsea. Records indicate that Catherine the Great (1729-1796) commissioned his 1796 trip during which he is believed to have managed to save seeds collected on her behalf when he survived a violent storm off Cuba in which his ship disintegrated. A further trip with his son was made on behalf of the Russian Emperor, Paul (1754-1801) and on returning home they are said to have discovered that their anticipated fees would not be forthcoming.