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*Petrea*

*Verbenaceae*

*Petrea* commemorates a patron of botany and horticulture, Robert James Petre, 8<sup>th</sup> Baron Petre (1713-1742), who became interested in botany in his youth. During his teens he met both the first Cambridge professor of botany, John Martyn (1699-1768) and the Keeper of the Chelsea Physic Garden, Philip Miller (1691-1771). In due course he formed a friendship with Peter Collinson (1694-1768), who imported plants and seeds from North America (particularly from John Bartram 1699-1777) and corresponded with other plant collectors out there. Petre designed, planned and planted his gardens and parks on his Thorndon estate with many exotic trees and shrubs, and in 1736 commissioned Philip Miller to catalogue all the plants. Some of his the Thorndon plants were especially unusual as for instance banana (*Musa acuminata*) which he grew successfully and he is said to have been sending the fruit to Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753) by 1739. By 1742 he had added 40,000 American trees to the estate. After his death the Woburn estate acquired his American tree collection at auction. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society.