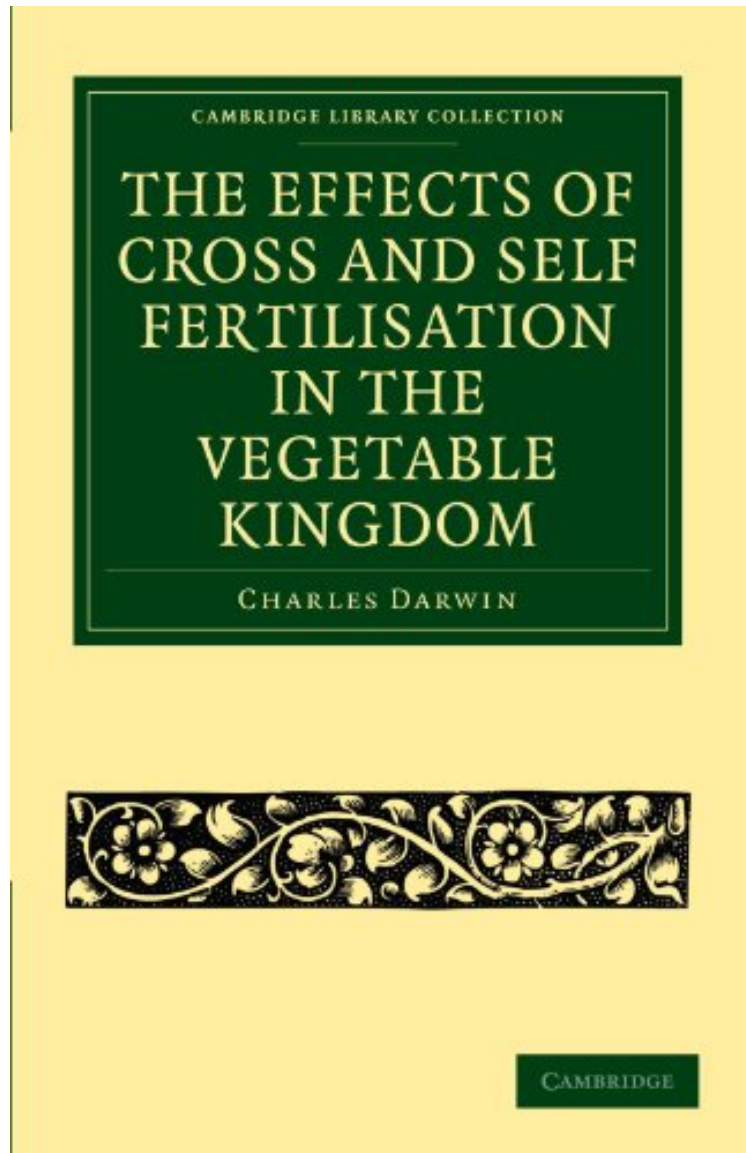



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The Effects of Cross and Self Fertilisation in the Vegetable Kingdom (Cambridge Library Collection - Darwin, Evolution and Genetics)

Charles Darwin

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Effects of Cross and Self Fertilisation in the Vegetable Kingdom* (Cambridge Library Collection - Darwin, Evolution and Genetics):

Darwin's impetus for the experiments of which the results are recorded in this book was 'a mere accidental observation; and indeed it required the accident to be repeated before my attention was thoroughly aroused to the remarkable fact that seedlings of self-fertilised parentage are inferior, even in the first generation, in height and vigour to seedlings of cross-fertilised parentage'. After eleven years of meticulous experimentation and observation, described in this volume, he was ready to publish in 1876 the detailed study which he regarded as a companion volume to his 1862 *On the Various Contrivances by which British and Foreign Orchids are Fertilised by Insects*. His 'first and most important of the conclusions which may be drawn ... is that cross-fertilisation is generally beneficial, and self-fertilisation injurious': this understanding is of course the basis of all modern plant breeding programmes.

About the Author Charles Darwin was an English naturalist and author best-known for his revolutionary theories on the origin of species, human evolution, and natural selection. A life-long interest in the natural world led Darwin to neglect his medical studies and instead embark on a five-year scientific voyage on the HMS Beagle, where he established his reputation as a geologist and gathered much of the evidence that fuelled his later theories. A prolific writer, Darwin's most famous published works include *The Voyage of the Beagle*, *On the Origin of Species*, *The Descent of Man*, and *Selection in Relation to Sex*, and *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*. Darwin died in 1882, and in recognition of his contributions to science, is buried in Westminster Abbey along with John Herschel and Isaac Newton.