

ANNA BOTSFORD COMSTOCK

(1854 - 1930)

Field: Natural Science

Subject: Conservation

Nationality: American

ENTOMOLOGIST
of the
MONTH



Comstock is widely known as a talented entomologist and illustrator and was ahead of her time in her advocacy of nature conservation. After growing up in Cattaraugus County, New York, fascinated by the natural world around her, Comstock decided to attend the newly-opened Cornell University to continue her education on this subject. There she met a young entomology professor, John Henry Comstock, who became her husband and work partner and for whom she illustrated many publications, including the textbook *A Manual for the Study of Insects*, which they coauthored. Comstock was very involved in the Nature Study Movement, which sought to encourage conservation through educating people in the natural sciences, and taught, created courses, trained educators, and published many works on this topic. In 1897, Cornell hired her as an assistant professor of nature study, making her their first female professor. She became a full professor in 1920 and continued to guest lecture after her retirement in 1922, while remaining a prolific author. In recognition of her vast contributions to conservation, the National Wildlife Federation named her the “Mother of Nature Education” in 1988.

References:

- Pictures via Wikimedia Commons; Left: Picture of Comstock, Unknown Author (ca. 1900), Right: Part of Plate I, *A Manual for the Study of Insects*, Illustration by Anna Botsford Comstock (1897)
- Kautz, A. “Famous Female Entomologists Part 2: Anna Botsford Comstock”. *Entomology Today* (2015).
- D’Acunto, S. “Anna Botsford Comstock: Trailblazer in Nature Education”. *New York Botanical Garden, Plant Talk* (2017).
- This factsheet was produced by Anne Johnson, a Penn State Entomology graduate student

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