

# Renaissance Art: Nature's Unseen Threads

Renaissance Art · Answer Key · 13 Questions

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**1. In Leonardo da Vinci's 'Annunciation,' the precise botanical rendering of the Virgin Mary's garden includes a variety of plants. Which of the following plants, identifiable by its characteristic feathery fronds, is accurately depicted and was often associated with purity and the Virgin Mary?**

- A) Orris root (*Iris germanica*)
- B) Columbine (*Aquilegia*)
- C) Rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*)

**D) Fern (various species)**

**2. Albrecht Dürer's 'Great Piece of Turf' (Das große Rasenstück) is celebrated for its meticulous, near-scientific study of a patch of meadow. Which specific plant, known for its delicate, star-shaped blue flowers and often found in grassy areas, is clearly identifiable in this work?**

- A) Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)
- B) Daisy (*Bellis perennis*)

**C) Blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium* spp.)**

- D) Clover (*Trifolium* spp.)

**3. The animals in Hieronymus Bosch's 'The Garden of Earthly Delights' are often symbolic and fantastical. However, certain species are recognizable. Which of the following real-world birds, known for its distinctive markings and often depicted in medieval and Renaissance art, appears in the central panel?**

**A) Peacock (*Pavo cristatus*)**

- B) Owl (*Strigiformes*)
- C) Raven (*Corvus corax*)
- D) Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*)

**4. In Jan van Eyck's 'Ghent Altarpiece,' the detailed depiction of the 'Adoration of the Mystic Lamb' includes numerous animals. The lamb itself is central, but on the lower register, a detailed depiction of a rabbit, a creature often symbolizing fertility and the resurrection, is prominently featured. What is the specific species of rabbit identifiable through its coloration and form?**

**A) European Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)**

- B) Snowshoe Hare (*Lepus americanus*)
- C) Arctic Hare (*Lepus arcticus*)
- D) Jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*)

**5. Leonardo da Vinci's anatomical studies extended to animals. His detailed observations of horses informed his artistic depictions. In studies like the 'Study of a Horse for the Sforza Monument,' he accurately captured the musculature and bone structure of a horse. Which specific breed's characteristics, known for its power and athletic build, can be inferred from these studies?**

- A) Arabian horse
- B) Thoroughbred horse
- C) Warhorse (destrier) type**
- D) Pony

**6. The botanical accuracy in Renaissance art was often linked to the burgeoning interest in scientific classification. In Sandro Botticelli's 'Primavera,' numerous plants are depicted. Which of the following plants, known for its small, white, bell-shaped flowers and fragrant scent, is identifiable and was associated with springtime and Venus?**

- A) Lily of the valley (*Convallaria majalis*)**
- B) Jasmine (*Jasminum* spp.)
- C) Honeysuckle (*Lonicera* spp.)
- D) Hyacinth (*Hyacinthus* spp.)

**7. Piero della Francesca's frescoes, such as 'The Resurrection,' often incorporate natural landscapes. The flora depicted, though perhaps stylized, reflects the environment of his time and region. Which common Mediterranean tree, known for its evergreen foliage and significant cultural symbolism, is often hinted at or depicted in the backgrounds of his works?**

- A) Olive tree (*Olea europaea*)
- B) Cypress tree (*Cupressus sempervirens*)**
- C) Pine tree (*Pinus* spp.)
- D) Laurel tree (*Laurus nobilis*)

**8. The symbolic meaning of animals in Renaissance art is well-documented. In representations of St. Jerome, the lion is a common motif. The specific features of the lion depicted often reflect contemporary knowledge of the animal, which would have been based on observations and existing visual traditions. Which of these anatomical features, observable in many Renaissance lions, aligns with actual lion morphology?**

- A) A very short, tufted tail.
- B) A prominent mane on both male and female lions.
- C) A mane that extends down the chest and belly of males.**
- D) A distinctly spotted coat on adult males.

**9. Pieter Bruegel the Elder's 'Hunters in the Snow' offers a realistic depiction of winter life. The natural environment is crucial to the scene. Which common woodland bird, often depicted in winter landscapes for its dark plumage against the snow, is identifiable in Bruegel's work?**

- A) Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)
- B) Crow (*Corvus spp.*)**
- C) Finch (*Fringillidae*)
- D) Woodpecker (*Picidae*)

**10. The water bodies depicted in Renaissance art, such as in Venetian paintings, often show detailed elements of marine or riverine life. Which of the following fish, a common food source and a familiar sight in Italian waterways and coastal areas, is identifiable in some still-life elements or background scenes of Venetian Renaissance art?**

- A) Salmon (*Salmo salar*)
- B) Cod (*Gadus spp.*)
- C) Sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*)**
- D) Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)

**11. Dürer's scientific curiosity extended to insects. His 'The Apocalypse' series includes depictions of the natural world. In the woodcut of the Four Horsemen, which insect, a symbol of pestilence and plague, is often depicted hovering near the riders?**

- A) Dragonfly (*Odonata*)
- B) Beetle (*Coleoptera*)
- C) Fly (*Diptera*)**
- D) Bee (*Anthophila*)

**12. The use of specific flora in allegorical paintings was common. In Botticelli's 'The Birth of Venus,' the laurel branches surrounding Venus symbolize victory and fame. Which part of the laurel plant is typically depicted in such allegorical contexts?**

- A) Flowers
- B) Berries
- C) Leaves**
- D) Roots

13. The precise rendering of light and shadow in oil paintings allowed for greater naturalism. In Leonardo da Vinci's 'Lady with an Ermine,' the animal is depicted with striking realism. The ermine, in its winter coat, is white. What is the scientific name for the species of ermine that exhibits this white winter pelage?

A) *Mustela nivalis*

B) *Lutra lutra*

C) *Martes foina*

D) *Vulpes vulpes*