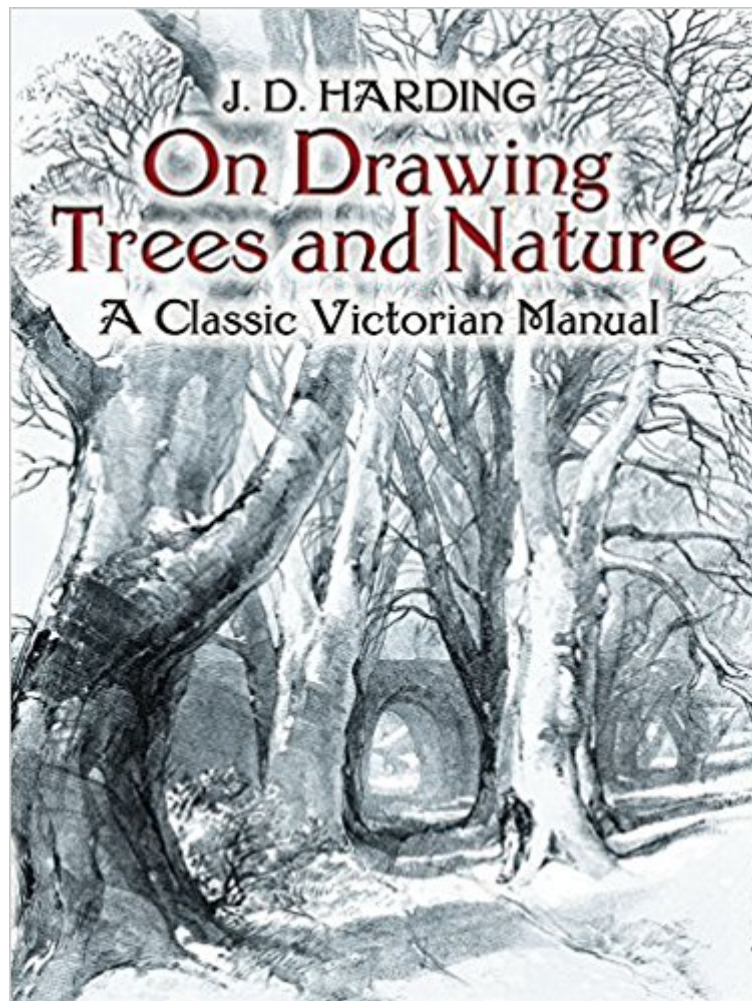


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# On Drawing Trees And Nature: A Classic Victorian Manual (Dover Art Instruction)



## Synopsis

This classic of art instruction is the work of James Duffield Harding (1798-1863), who served as drawing master and sketching companion to the great Victorian art critic, John Ruskin. Generations of students have benefited from the teachings of this 19th-century master, who sought always to "produce as near a likeness to Nature, in every respect, as the instrument, or material employed, will admit of; not so much by bona fide imitation, as by reviving in the mind those ideas which are awakened by a contemplation of Nature . . . The renewal of those feelings constitutes the true purpose of Art." This volume consists of direct reproductions of Harding's sketches of vignettes from natural settings. Each is accompanied by a series of lessons emphasizing both practical and theoretical considerations. The edition features the added attraction of 23 outstanding plates from the author's Lessons on Trees.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (14 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

If there were a preview of the print version, I have no doubt it would be more popular and have more reviews. A chance to see some of the full-page plates would make clear the value of the book. It is true that this "classic Victorian manual" is written in a style most of us have little exposure to, filled as it is with complex chains of subordination, and strings of parataxis when the author gets excited. In addition to the unfamiliar style, the author also does not hesitate to inject strongly worded commentary on morals and taste, such as this excoriation of examples from two plates: "In neither of them is there the least evidence of thought; the one displays rashness, the other inanity. At first sight, one of them may please by a semblance of power; but it is a power of the fingers, not of the

mind; it is dexterity without truth or judgement; it is power misapplied. The other has not even this low recommendation; the only idea that it forcibly impresses on the mind is that of time wasted. As a production of Art it is purposeless, idealess, and powerless. There is neither distinct form nor character in any one object it contains. The only utility of such examples consists in their exhibition of a collection of errors and deformities to be avoided." This, in the middle of the chapter on foliage. Further, the somewhat digressive nature of the discussion means the example plates may be several pages away from important discussion of technique. I've gone through my book and added margin notes to the plates so I can find the sections of text that go with them.

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