

Carolus Linnaeus

How the cacao tree got its name.

The search for the name of the cacao tree starts out in Sweden, the birthplace of Carolus Linnaeus (the Latinized version of Carl von Linné), a scientist who studied medicine and invented what is known as the system of binomial nomenclature.

This is a classification system based on two Latin words, the first standing for the genus and the second for the species. Thanks to this system, Linnaeus finally brought order into what had been the chaos of naming in the plant and animal world. Thus, human beings became *Homo sapiens* and the cacao tree became *Theobroma cacao*.



Carolus Linnaeus

His binomial nomenclature made Linnaeus famous even during his lifetime. He also created a fundamental hierarchical system which classified all living things in the categories of kingdoms, classes, orders, genera and species. This system remains valid even today in a somewhat altered form.