



***A Force for Nature: Lucy Braun*** is a co-production of Meg Hanrahan Media and Voyageur Media Group. “The documentary highlights the life of E. Lucy Braun, a groundbreaking 20th century scientist,” says Meg Hanrahan, the documentary’s writer, producer and director. “We think Dr. Braun should be better recognized for her role as one of the country’s first ecologists and for being a tireless advocate for preservation.” In addition to telling Lucy’s story, the program documents important history in ecology, tells the tale of the fate of many of our virgin forests, and illustrates the rewards of successful preservation of natural places.”

### **Who was E. Lucy Braun?**

E. Lucy Braun (pronounced ‘Brown’) was born and lived her entire life in Cincinnati. She received a bachelor's and master's degree from the University of Cincinnati before becoming the second woman in the sciences and the third woman ever to receive a Ph.D. there -- (her sister Annette was the first) -- accomplishments that all came before women received the right to vote. According to Ronald L. Stuckey who wrote a biographical sketch of Braun shortly after her death in 1971, "Dr. Braun was one of the truly dedicated pioneer ecologists of the first half of the 20th century. Her work coincided with the time when the field of plant ecology was becoming recognized as a scientific discipline. Truly her work was instrumental in the development of that discipline." Her research culminated in the book *Deciduous Forests of Eastern Northern America* (1950), a groundbreaking publication that received recognition and praise for its detailed documentation of deciduous trees from New Brunswick to Florida. In all, Braun published over 180 works including four books and papers in 20 different journals.

One of Braun's most important traits may have been her ability to inspire others toward learning and conservation. Common stories tell of expeditions in which she led students, garden club members, and patrons into the field to share her knowledge and enthusiasm, and to garner support for preservation of areas she found ecologically significant. She was the catalyst for what became the 20,000-acre Edge of Appalachia Preserve System in Adams County, Ohio. Her impact is also apparent in numerous organizations like the Ecological Society of America and Cincinnati Wildflower Preservation Society, and in important publications of those organizations, including *Naturalist's Guide to the Americas* (1926) and *Wild Flower* magazine.

Lucy Braun is well known by botanists and naturalists for her published works, but her contributions remain largely unknown by broader audiences. Her private/personal life remains hidden even to those appreciative of her



scientific contributions. “This documentary promotes greater appreciation for a remarkable woman of science who worked ceaselessly to produce botanical guides still in use today,” according to Meg Hanrahan, Writer/Producer/Director. “She was the driving force behind the preservation of some of the most beautiful natural spaces in Ohio and Kentucky, and who still provides inspiration for those who carry the torch for conservation in our state and beyond.”

### How can this documentary be used by educators?

Viewing and retaining all the information presented in this documentary all at once can be challenging for students, so the following is strongly suggested:

In the **elementary** classroom, it is suggested that students view the *Introduction* and second scene, *A Natural Connection*, from the documentary to become acquainted with Dr. Braun. Viewing these sections alone will stimulate discussion, introduce vocabulary and serve as a jumping off place for educational activities. Vocabulary might include botany, ecology, plant ecologist, primeval forest, geology, biodiversity, conservation, immigrants, anecdote, herbarium, Lepidoptera and biography.

Discussion topics could include:

- Cultural perspective of the time, especially living with educated, German parents,
- Childhood days of Dr. Braun,
- Historical perspective of what women should study (vs. men),
- Methods used to collect and record data during research,
- Research focus of Dr. Braun.

After viewing and discussing the introductory sections to the documentary, teachers can use the classroom lessons that have been prepared to accompany and compliment the film.

- The Life of Dr. E. Lucy Braun
- Treasure Chest of Science
- Champions Among Us

For **middle and high school classrooms** the first viewing of the documentary could be in sections or by viewing the entire film at once. The accompanying lesson plans all follow the same format: Background Info., Discussion Questions, Research Topics, and Student Projects. After watching the film, educators can lead the class in a discussion of the film using the suggested discussion questions listed in each lesson plan. It may helpful to view relevant segments from the film a second time. Student Projects are designed to get students moving and doing while learning and also incorporating different strategies for students to show what they have learned. Finally, each lesson has some suggested resources that may help students with Research Topics and Student Projects.

There are five different lesson plans to choose from:

- Documenting E. Lucy Braun
- Joys and Hardships in the Field
- “Save the Big Trees”
- Change Through Time
- Taking Action

It is hoped that educators will use their own creativity to further develop lessons and activities to accompany and enhance this documentary.

