

NYBG/125

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Groundbreaking Ceremony Marks Beginning of Construction of the Edible Academy, NYBG's State-of-the-Art Facility for Learning about Healthful, Plant-based Nutrition

New Three-Acre Complex Will Feature a Classroom Building, Teaching Greenhouse, and Terraced Amphitheater to Accommodate a Much Broader Range of Programs and Activities and Double the Number of People Served Each Year

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and New York State Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz Among Dignitaries Who Participated in the Festivities



Groundbreaking for the Edible Academy (left to right): Gregory Long, Chief Executive Officer and The William C. Steere Sr. President of The New York Botanical Garden; Tom Finkelppearl, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; Ruben Diaz Jr., Bronx Borough President; and Jeffrey Dinowitz, New York State Assemblyman. (NYBG Photo)



Rendering of the new three-acre Edible Academy complex (Cooper Robertson)

Bronx, NY—Marking a dramatic expansion of The New York Botanical Garden's important and popular edible gardening program, Chairman Maureen K. Chilton, Chief Executive Officer and The William C. Steere Sr. President Gregory Long, elected officials, and other Botanical Garden leaders and supporters participated in a groundbreaking ceremony today to start construction of the Garden's new Edible Academy. Building on generations of success, the Ruth Rea Howell Family Garden will remain as the centerpiece of this state-of-the-art complex for teaching children and families how to grow and prepare healthful fruits and vegetables and for promoting the benefits of plant-based nutrition.

With the three-acre facility's combination of indoor and outdoor spaces, the \$28 million Edible Academy will allow the Garden to offer a bigger and broader range of educational programs and hands-on activities throughout the year, doubling the number of children, parents, teachers, and other visitors served from 50,000 to 100,000 annually. Construction is scheduled to be completed in spring 2018.

"We have long dreamed of expanding the Ruth Rea Howell Family Garden," said Maureen K. Chilton, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of The New York Botanical Garden. "With the opening of the Edible Academy in 2018, we will be able to offer even more educational resources, impacting the lives of countless children as they learn about gardening, plant science, and healthful living. I would like to thank all of the generous donors, both public and private, who have contributed to the realization of the Edible Academy. It is no longer a dream."

Responding to the demand for year-round, garden-based education and opportunities to offer life-changing programs emphasizing the connections among plants, nutrition, and healthy lifestyles, the Edible Academy will build on the Garden's leadership role to address 21st-century needs and interests. Edible Academy programming will include distance learning opportunities, expanded teacher and educator training, cooking demonstrations, and special events.

"It's essential to the health and vitality of our communities to teach children and families how to grow healthy fruits and vegetables, and how to cook nutritious meals," said New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. "Food is a focal point of every culture and we all get to share in it. In the culture capital of the world, food offers us a unique opportunity to learn about one another and build a more inclusive community. We are proud to partner with NYBG, and I'm excited to see what amazing opportunities will be provided in this new hub for community, education, health, and collaboration."

"The New York Botanical Garden has always been a place of respite for New Yorkers to escape the bustle of the city and surround themselves with the quiet beauty of nature. The opening of the Edible Academy will mark another groundbreaking event in NYBG history—as not only a breathtaking work of architecture, but also a location that will facilitate important opportunities for hands-on learning about edible gardening and cooking," said New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. "The New York City Council is proud to support NYBG's efforts to make accessible to all New Yorkers the joys of plant biology, horticulture, and the natural world around all of us."

The Edible Academy Will Feature Innovative Spaces and Sustainable Design

Designed by the esteemed architecture firm Cooper Robertson, the Edible Academy will incorporate many notable features to enhance learning while minimizing environmental impact. The Edible Academy complex will include an environmentally sustainable building with two high-tech classrooms and a green roof, new display gardens, a 350-seat terraced amphitheater, and composting toilets. Geothermal wells will supply heating and cooling for the Edible Academy Building, and a freestanding solar pavilion will help power the facility as well as provide a shaded gathering space. The Edible Academy's sustainability features are designed to meet the criteria for certification as a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold project.

The following features are among the major components of the Edible Academy design:

- **Edible Academy Building:** Two high-tech classrooms with interactive features will allow programming about edible gardening and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education activities about growing and cooking plants to take place year-round. A green roof will feature succulents to detain stormwater and add insulation, reducing the energy needed to heat and cool the building.
- **Overlook Pavilion:** Acting as a front porch for the Edible Academy Building, this covered pavilion overlooking the Bronx River at the eastern edge of the old-growth Thain Family Forest will accommodate educational programs, cooking demonstrations, and seated outdoor dinners.
- **Teaching Greenhouse:** With maximum sun exposure, temperature control, and a shading system, the greenhouse will serve as a potting and propagation area as well as a child-friendly teaching space, allowing students to be involved in the propagation of seedlings during the late-winter months and then into the growing season.
- **Terraced Lawn Amphitheater:** Designed to seat 350, this stepped-terrace amphitheater will be sited in the grassy, sloped area north of the existing Howell Family Garden. With open views, this new outdoor venue can host large-scale cooking demonstrations, music performances, and other public programming.

Cooper Robertson, founded in 1979, practices award-winning architecture and urban design. The underlying and unifying theme of the firm's work continues to attest that architecture and urban design are critically interconnected disciplines.

"I am proud to have allocated \$1.5 million in state funding to The New York Botanical Garden to support the construction of a new state-of-the-art and environmentally sustainable facility for the Edible Academy. As a result, more children can participate in this crucial program addressing childhood obesity and teaching healthy eating practices to our Bronx families. We must continue to invest in our children's health and well-being and provide them with access to the tools to stay healthy," said New York State Senator Jeffrey D. Klein.

"The New York Botanical Garden is a historic living landmark that we are fortunate to have in the Bronx," said New York State Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie. "The Assembly's investment in the Edible Academy will ensure that future generations learn to appreciate, care for, and effectively make use of the living world around us. The program's expansion will allow more families to enjoy garden-based education and develop skills to prepare healthier and more nutritious meals."

Leadership support for the Edible Academy and the Ruth Rea Howell Family Garden is provided by:

Mr. and Mrs. Coleman P. Burke
Amy Goldman Fowler, Ph.D.
The Goergen Foundation
Lillian Goldman Charitable Trust
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Jill Joyce
Jill and Alan Rappaport Family
Phyllis and Howard Schwartz Philanthropic Fund
Kate Solomon and David Wasserman
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Leadership support for the Edible Academy is provided by:

The Mayor of New York City and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs
Speaker of the New York City Council and

Members of the Bronx Delegation of the New York City Council

New York State Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie and

Members of the Bronx Delegation of the State Assembly

New York State Senator Jeffrey D. Klein

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Caroline A. Wamsler, Ph.D., is Chairman and Mrs. Edith B. Everett, Mrs. Andrew Heiskell, and Mrs. Nicholas J. Sakellariadis are Honorary Chairmen of NYBG's Education Committee. Committee members include: R. Ellen Avellino, Kim Bendheim, Cynthia D. Brodsky, Maureen K. Chilton, Mrs. Jonathan C. Clay, Phyllis Criscuoli, Jacqueline H. Dryfoos, Ricardo R. Fernández, Ph.D., Aramina Vega Ferrer, Ph.D., Amy Goldman Fowler, Ph.D., Charlotte Frank, Ph.D., Jill Joyce, Diane Katzin, Edith W. Kean, Lynden B. Miller, Susan Palm, Mrs. Jean Putzer, Hon. Dianne T. Renwick, Karen L. Rosa, Pola Rosen, Ed.D., Joanna B. Schulman, Sara Lee Schupf, Kate Solomon, Beth Taylor, Karen Washington, and Mrs. B. Robert Williamson, Jr.

Members of the Edible Academy Committee include: Ashley Abess, Mr. and Mrs. Coleman P. Burke, Maureen K. Chilton, Mrs. Jonathan C. Clay, Amy Goldman Fowler, Ph. D., Emma and Todd Goergen, Robert F. Gossett, Jr., Carla Hall, Jill Joyce, Nathalie Kaplan, Alexandra Lebenthal, Amy Todd Middleton, Jennifer Napier Nolen, Jill and Alan Rappaport, Deborah Goodrich Royce, Gail Simmons, Kate Solomon, Beth Taylor, and Caroline A. Wamsler, Ph.D.



Left to Right: Bruce Davis, Partner, Cooper Robertson; Ursula Hoskins, Vice President for Capital Projects, NYBG; James Boyer, Stavros Niarchos Foundation Vice President for Children's Education, NYBG; Annie Novak, Manager of the Edible Academy, NYBG; Gregory Long, Chief Executive Officer and The William C. Steere Sr. President, NYBG; Tom Finkelppearl, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; Ruben Diaz Jr., Bronx Borough President; Jeffrey Dinowitz, New York State Assemblyman; Toby Adams, Gregory Long Director of the Edible Academy, NYBG; J. V. Cossaboom, Director of the Garden, NYBG; and Maureen K. Chilton, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, NYBG. (NYBG Photo)

The year 2016 marks the 125th Anniversary of the founding of The New York Botanical Garden. For decades, the Garden has been a leader in garden-based education as well as the edible gardening headquarters for schools, families, community groups, home gardeners, and urban farmers. Serving as a national model for using edible gardening to promote a more healthful lifestyle, the new Edible Academy's programs will be shared widely to encourage similar programs at botanical gardens around the United States and is expected to become a benchmark for such institutions worldwide.

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The New York Botanical Garden is a museum of plants located at Bronx River Parkway (Exit 7W) and Fordham Road. It is easy to reach by Metro-North Railroad or subway. The Garden is open year-round, Tuesday through Sunday and Monday federal holidays, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The best way to enjoy the Garden is with the *All-Garden Pass*, which includes admission to the grounds as well as to seasonal gardens, exhibitions, and attractions such as the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, Everett Children's Adventure Garden, and Tram Tour. For ticket pricing, please check our Web site. For more information, please call 718.817.8700 or visit nybg.org

The New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, New York 10458

The New York Botanical Garden is located on property owned in full by the City of New York, and its operation is made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. A portion of the Garden's general operating funds is provided by The New York City Council and The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The Bronx Borough President and Bronx elected representatives in the City Council and State Legislature provide leadership funding.

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