

NYBG/125

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Artwork from NYBG's Nursery and Seed Catalog Collection Featured on New Forever Stamps Issued by the U.S. Postal Service



Forever stamps issued by the United States Postal Service, using images from NYBG's Nursery and Seed Catalog Collection. Pictured top row from left: corn lilies, tulips, stocks, roses, and petunias. Pictured bottom row from left: tulips, dahlias, Japanese irises, tulips, and daffodils and jonquils.

Bronx, NY—Historical botanical illustrations sourced from The New York Botanical Garden are featured on new Forever stamps issued on January 29, 2016, by the United States Postal Service (USPS). Spotlighting 10 individual designs, each a detail of an illustration from an American nursery catalog printed between 1891 and 1912, the *Botanical Art Forever stamps* continue the USPS' tradition of beautiful, floral-themed stamps. The catalogs are part of the Nursery and Seed Catalog Collection of NYBG's LuEsther T. Mertz Library, one of the largest and most important such collections in the United States.

Depicted on the stamps are illustrations of corn lilies, tulips, stocks, roses, petunias, dahlias, Japanese irises, and daffodils and jonquils.

Beginning in the late 15th century, intrepid Europeans explored new lands in the Americas, the South Pacific, and other areas of the world. There they discovered plants unknown in Europe, which they imported for study and propagation. Scientists, gardeners, plant hunters, and collectors required accurate botanical drawings of the exotic new species. Botanical illustrators produced works that were meticulous, highly detailed, and quite often beautiful pieces of art.

In the mid-19th century, as more people discovered the joys of ornamental and recreational gardening, thriving commercial greenhouses and nurseries marketed plants to eager gardeners. To entice buyers, nurseries created colorful catalogs illustrated with beautiful blossoms and lush foliage. The illustrations were idealized, romantic versions of what plants could look like, but they fueled many a garden dream.

The Mertz Library, one of the most comprehensive botanical and horticultural libraries in the world, holds some of the earliest information available on the history and development of botany, horticulture, and commercial agriculture in America. The value of the Library's Nursery and Seed Catalog Collection also extends to the humanities; nursery and seed trade catalogs offer a unique window into other areas of American life, including publishing, landscape design, marketing, industry, and leisure activity, making them valuable resources for humanities research.

NYBG has cataloged all 58,000 items in the Nursery and Seed Catalog Collection and digitized the complete contents of 1,400 catalogs printed before 1923 and in the public domain. The nursery and seed catalogs in the Mertz Library may be searched by author, title, subject, and keywords using the online catalog. For more information about the Collection, visit <http://libguides.nybg.org/nurseryandseedcatalogs>.

Issuance of the *Botanical Art Forever stamps* comes as The New York Botanical Garden marks its 125th anniversary in 2016.

Forever stamps are available at local post offices or online at <https://store.usps.com/store/>.
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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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