

NYBG/125

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NYBG's School of Professional Horticulture Awarded Maximum Reaccreditation Renewal By Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training

The Two-year Program has Scored a 100 Percent Job Placement Rate for Six Years

Applications for Next Year's Class are Due August 1

Bronx, NY—The New York Botanical Garden's School of Professional Horticulture, the only nationally accredited hands-on horticulture training program in the country, has received full accreditation renewal for five years, the longest term possible, from the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education & Training (ACCET). The School combines high-quality academic studies with hands-on practical training in a two-year, full-time program in New York City; since 2010, it has maintained a 100 percent job placement rate for its graduates.

"Students who attend the School of Professional Horticulture at The New York Botanical Garden learn the best horticultural practices from some of the world's most skilled horticulturists," said School Director Charles M. Yurgalevitch, Ph. D. "Our credo is continuous institutional improvement, so our ACCET certification certainly demonstrates that, as does the School's consistent 100 percent job placement rate."

Accreditation by ACCET, which is recognized by the U. S. Department of Education as an authority on the quality of the programs that it accredits, attests to an organizational commitment to and a strategic plan for quality training and ensures programs are current, relevant, and educationally sound. The School, which has been accredited by ACCET since 2005, received the renewal on April 19.

The accreditation process provides a professional judgment as to the quality of the educational institution and programs offered. ACCET's function is focused on educational quality, the continuous assessment and improvement of educational practices, and assistance to member institutions in the improvement of these practices within their programs. Schools reviewed by ACCET undergo a number of processes, including an on-site professional peer review and independent review by its Accrediting Commission.

Through classes, plant walks, educational field trips, internships, group projects, and lectures, students in the School of Professional Horticulture master the science of horticulture in the classroom and practice what they learn on the Garden's 250-acre grounds. Students gain

real-world experience by working closely with the Botanical Garden's renowned horticulture staff in their first year and, in their second year, expand their skills through a six-month internship. The School's highly sought-after graduates pursue rewarding careers in gardening and landscape design in both the public and private sectors.

The stories of two recent graduates show how the School, which opened in 1932 as a professional gardener training program, can equip career-changers with the horticultural skills they need to launch new careers.

Rebecca Dragonetti (Class of 2016) attended the University of Michigan and graduated in 2009 with a BA in history and a minor in music. She worked for several performing arts organizations in New York City before deciding to pursue her love of horticulture. She spent 2013 studying horticulture at Stonecrop Gardens in the Hudson Valley and decided to continue her horticulture education by attending the School of Professional Horticulture. Upon graduation, Dragonetti was hired as a horticulturist at Cat Rock, a private estate in Garrison, N.Y.

Marc Wolf (Class of 2016) attended Williams College in Massachusetts and graduated with a BA in political science and theatre. As a writer and performer working in theatre, film, and television, he received a National Endowment for the Arts Award, an OBIE Award, and others. He was a field assistant for native plant garden installations at The New York Botanical Garden and Brooklyn Botanic Garden and has assisted private garden designers in New York City and the Catskills. Upon graduation, Wolf was hired as Director of Horticulture at Mountain Top Arboretum, a 179-acre site in Tannersville, N.Y.

Admission to the School of Professional Horticulture is selective and based on a combination of academic achievement and previous horticulture experience. Prospective applicants are required to have 500 hours of previous horticultural work experience through internships, nursery work, or gardening. Classes are kept small to ensure each student receives maximum attention from staff and instructors. Applications for classes starting in January 2017 are due August 1, 2016.

The School is certified by the U.S. Department of Education to administer Title IV funds (Pell grants and Direct Loans) to eligible students.

For information about admission requirements or to apply, visit nybg.org/edu/soph or call 718.817.8797.

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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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