

# NYBG/125

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## **Beguiling Beauty and High-Stakes Adventure Set the Stage for *The Orchid Show: Orchidelirium* at NYBG, February 27–April 17, 2016**

Exhibition Also Spotlights the Garden's Worldwide Orchid Rescue and Conservation Efforts



Rendering of a waterfall showcasing orchids in the wild during *The Orchid Show: Orchidelirium*



Rendering depicting vignette of glasshouse displays in *The Orchid Show: Orchidelirium*

**Bronx, NY**—The 19th-century craze sparked by a single orchid bloom, which came to be known as Orchidelirium, is the inspiration for The New York Botanical Garden's 14th annual *Orchid Show*, which opens on February 27 and runs through April 17, 2016. Visitors to the landmark Enid A. Haupt Conservatory will be transported on an epic journey that engages all of the senses and underscores the allure and intrigue of these exquisite beauties.

Thousands of orchids in a stunning array of colors, sizes, shapes, and textures will be showcased, highlighting the far-flung adventures of daring explorers who risked life and limb to secure these captivating and exotic flowers from danger-laden jungles around the world for determined collectors. From its origins in England as a symbol of power, wealth, and opulence, the frenzied fascination with orchids underpins the exhibition, which illustrates their transition

from the wild to their display and cultivation as well as the Garden's important role in their conservation today.

Orchids belong to the largest family of flowering plants, with more than 30,000 naturally occurring species. NYBG's celebrated permanent orchid collection represents all of the floristic regions of the world, including Australia, Africa, South America, and Madagascar, and this exhibition will showcase some unusual and rarely seen gems. Specimens of the spectacular *Psychopsis papilio*, which inspired the Duke of Devonshire's obsession with orchids that contributed to Orchidelirium in London, will be on view along with *Paphiopedilum sanderianum*, named for nurseryman Frederick Sander, the self-proclaimed "Orchid King," renowned for the remarkable length of its petals.

Aesthetic delights in the Haupt Conservatory begin in the *Palms of the World Gallery's* Reflecting Pool, which will be festooned with a plethora of bold orchids in pots and delicate orchids perched in trees. Proceeding through the exhibition, visitors will be treated to displays of thousands orchids as they grow in the wild, in much the same way the Victorian-era explorers first encountered them in their travels through tropical habitats around the world—cascading from branches, nestled in crevices, reaching up from under rain forest trees. To create this irresistible world of fragrance and color, NYBG horticulturists assemble thousands of flowers from the Garden's research collections as well as the finest growers across the country. From the rare and oldest to the unusual and iconic, orchids of seemingly every conceivable color, shape, and provenance will be on display.

Moving on through the Conservatory galleries, visitors learn about the transition of orchids from growing in the wild to cultivation in the greenhouse. The trend-setting Duke of Devonshire began collecting orchids in 1833 at his Chatsworth House estate. His head gardener, Joseph Paxton, revolutionized the way orchids were cultivated in England by innovating larger and more effective glasshouses, beginning with the Great Conservatory there and culminating in his masterpiece, the Crystal Palace of Prince Albert's Great Exhibition in London in 1851.

A series of vignettes will evoke the dazzling glasshouse displays that the Duke and other obsessed collectors went to great lengths to create with their newly acquired prized specimens brought back by hired hunters, who often endured shipwrecks, animal attacks, and even fatal competition among other hunters.

Antiqued, staged potting benches with specimen orchids of strange and rare species will be featured. Hanging pots, baskets, and Victorian walls containing a diverse selection of orchids from around the world combine formal features with less formal plantings to achieve a lush and enveloping glasshouse environment. A small stone patio will accommodate a stunning Wardian Case (an early type of protective terrarium for plants) housing a selection of

miniature orchids.

Also highlighted throughout the exhibition will be fellow British horticulturists and collectors such as James Bateman, whose beautifully illustrated manuscripts contained detailed renderings of orchids and vignettes depicting New World Spanish colonies. Oakes Ames, the great American botanist and NYBG Patron, traveled the globe with his wife, Blanche, who illustrated their finds. Ames donated his important collection to NYBG in 1906, and several rare plants will be on display.

Orchid exploration today is inextricably tied to conservation efforts to preserve species in the wild. Since 1990, The New York Botanical Garden has been a designated Plant Rescue Center, charged with nurturing and bringing back to health orchids that have been collected illegally in the wild and seized at international borders through the Convention on Illegal Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). NYBG's orchid experts, Matthew Pace, Assistant Curator of the Herbarium, and Marc Hachadourian, Director of the Nolen Greenhouses and Curator of the Orchid Collection, are at the forefront of modern orchidology and conservation.

As NYBG celebrates its 125th Anniversary in 2016, its founders' ambitious goals to create a museum of plants dedicated and committed to leadership in plant research and conservation, horticulture, and education have never been more focused. This exhibition is a dynamic opportunity for the public to experience the Botanical Garden's mission in action.

*The Orchid Show: Orchidelirium* is designed by Christian Primeau, who oversees the extensive tropical/subtropical plant collections housed in 11 unique environments in the Conservatory. Marc Hachadourian curates the exhibition's orchid selection and NYBG's extensive groupings of living plants from around the world housed in the Nolen Greenhouses, the behind-the-scenes glasshouses where plants for the Garden's indoor and outdoor displays and science program are grown and maintained.

### **Diverse Programming Enhances the *Orchid Show* Experience**

*The Orchid Show: Orchidelirium* will be on display as NYBG marks its 125th Anniversary. Complementary programming invites celebration of the exhibition and milestone.

- **Orchid Evenings** on Saturdays (March 5, 12, 19, 26, April 2, 9, 16), Friday (April 15), and Thursday (March 24, LGBT night) bring a nighttime cocktail experience to *The Orchid Show: Orchidelirium*. One of New York City's most romantic date night activities, Orchid Evenings start at 6:30 pm and include a complimentary cocktail. On select evenings, visitors can also upgrade to V.I.P. status and enjoy an Orchid Lounge.  
*Non-Member \$35/Member \$25 (Adults 21 and over) Advance tickets recommended.*

- In partnership with the Poetry Society of America, **Poetry for Every Season: Ada Limon** features poems in the landscape celebrating spring, flowers, and beauty.
- **World Beat: Music and Dance Around the World of Orchids** brings live performances from cultures around the world on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the exhibition.
- On weekends during the exhibition, **orchid care demonstrations** with topics such as “Easy Orchid Care,” “Fantastically Fragrant Orchids,” and “Orchid Tips for Amateurs” show visitors how to care for their own orchids.
- **Cell phone tour stops at NYBG Shop** will be available to provide answers to frequently asked orchid questions and allow visitors to dial up care tips on watering and feeding, reblooming, and repotting for several specific types of orchids. Thousands of top-quality orchids, from exotic, hard-to-find specimens for connoisseurs to elegant yet easy-to-grow varieties for beginners, are available for purchase at NYBG Shop, along with orchid products and books.

Visit the Garden’s Web site, [nybg.org](http://nybg.org), for more information on all the offerings during *The Orchid Show: Orchidelirium* and to purchase tickets.

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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, bus, 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](http://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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Images and b-roll available.