



Position Specification

The New York Botanical Garden

Chief Executive Officer & The William C. Steere Sr. President

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Our Client

Founded in 1891, and now a National Historic Landmark, The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) is one of the greatest botanical gardens in the world and the largest in the United States. The Garden is an iconic and inspirational living museum distinguished by the beauty of its diverse landscape and extensive collections and gardens, and renowned for the scope and excellence of its programs in horticulture, education, and science.

Conceived in the late 19th century by founding director Nathaniel Lord Britton as New York's answer to the great botanical gardens of Europe, NYBG has always been a botanical garden with a three-fold mission — to conduct basic and applied research on the plants of the world with the goal of protecting and preserving them; to cultivate and improve the gardens and collections at the highest horticultural standard of excellence; and to use the Garden itself as a venue for teaching the public about plant science, horticulture, and the natural world. Today the Garden is an urban oasis defined by living collections comprising more than one million plants, spectacular display gardens, and award-winning architecture across its 250-acre campus.

Driven by this mission, the Garden's Board and staff have created one of the world's most comprehensive plant research and conservation programs, which includes fieldwork to discover new species, active collaborations to promote forest and habitat protection, and plant molecular biology. In the course of a century-long effort, the institution has amassed over 7.8 million plant specimens in the research herbarium, now the second largest in the world; built the world's premier research library about plant science and horticulture; continued to steward this important American landscape; and taught millions of visitors to love and respect the world's flora.

The Garden's educational work serves all levels and ages and experiences. Offerings include programs in plant sciences, gardening and ecology geared toward children starting at the kindergarten-level; a robust adult education program that offers 30 courses in plant sciences; the School of Professional Horticulture; a robust PhD training program offered in collaboration with six affiliated Universities; as well as symposia, fellowships and research opportunities for established scientists.

Today NYBG welcomes more than 1.1 million visitors per year. Its 2016-2021 strategic plan reinforces the organization's commitment to its historical mission and highlights five areas of focus going forward.

Saving the Plants of the World

NYBG is the world leader in science-based plant conservation, and also provides fundamental research to support policy decisions made by governments on local, national, and international scales. Its efforts have helped to protect some of the most threatened floras in the world, from Brazil to Myanmar, and have advanced forest management practices and capacity building in countries with the most biologically diverse and endangered habitats. NYBG's scientists are currently engaged in 250 international collaborations with 168 institutions in 49 countries. This vast work is supported by the William and Lynda Steere Herbarium, C.V. Starr Virtual Herbarium, Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Program for Molecular Systematics, and Commodore Matthew Perry Graduate Studies Program. Further, the LuEsther T. Mertz Library is the largest, most comprehensive botanical and horticultural library in the world.

The Garden also recently introduced the new Center for Conservation Strategy (CCS), which leverages NYBG's scientific resources, in partnership with collaborators and stakeholders, to achieve conservation

results that will help save the plants and fungi of the world. With one-third of Earth's 350,000 known plant species at risk of extinction, and humankind's dependence on plants as essential sources of food, medicine, and materials, and for the healthy ecosystems that sustain and protect life on Earth, NYBG is redoubling its commitment to saving the plants of the world by scaling up its focus on conservation by catalyzing conservation action.

Connecting Gardening to the Arts and Humanities

Gardening throughout the ages has been closely related to scientific exploration and innovation, the visual arts, architecture, and cultural and aesthetic movements. NYBG has always offered hundreds of courses and lectures each year for adult learners interested in diverse subjects related to plants. And more recently, through the development of pioneering interdisciplinary, multimedia exhibitions of plants, books and manuscripts, and works of art, NYBG exhibitions have explored subjects such as the connections between Charles Darwin's scientific thinking and his English country garden and the relationships among Emily Dickinson's interest in plants, her Massachusetts garden, and her poetry. Exhibitions combining original works of art and horticultural displays have also explored, for example, the pivotal role of Claude Monet's passion for his garden at Giverny and its inspiration upon his art; ideas about Mexican nationalism that informed Frida Kahlo's gardening and her painting; and the close harmony between landscape and the sculpture of Henry Moore.

Creating a Green Urban Oasis

NYBG's 250-acre National Historic Landmark landscape, its dramatic topography, and its collections of temperate-zone trees and plants, provide a place for city dwellers where the stresses of urban life melt away. It is truly a tonic for the soul. Arranged around a 50-acre, old-growth forest are 50 demonstration gardens and designed collections, interpreted for informal learning and content-rich experiences. These outdoor gardens are amplified by the global collections of tropical and desert plants displayed in the great Victorian-style Enid A. Haupt Conservatory. Overall, NYBG visitors depend on this institution for enjoying one of the world's most diverse and best curated exhibitions of plants—a cultural experience in a delightful setting providing New Yorkers with a “day in the country.”

Teaching Science to City Kids

The New York Botanical Garden is a leader and national model for plant-based education, committed to developing innovative programs and unique learning facilities designed to improve scientific literacy among schoolchildren, teachers, and families. Serving 300,000 visitors, 90,000 students, and 3,000 teachers annually, this is the most extensive program of children's and family education in any of the world's botanical gardens. Key components of the curricula include hands-on, inquiry-based programs that introduce plant biology and ecology, conservation, and organic gardening to increase their awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the natural world.

Anchoring the Community

NYBG is deeply committed to community outreach, local economic development, and being a key partner in neighborhood improvements. The Garden makes a tremendous contribution to the economic, educational, and intellectual well-being of the people who live and work in the Bronx. NYBG offers 20% of its open hours free to the public and is an economic driver in the Bronx, employing 475 full-time positions and 250 seasonal staff, many of them Bronx youth. The Garden's overall economic impact on New York City is estimated at \$159,000,000 annually.

Bronx Green-Up (BGU) has been the centerpiece of the Garden's commitment to serving its neighbors by providing horticultural advice, technological assistance, and hands-on gardening training to community gardens, urban farms, and school gardens. BGU also oversees nearly 200 community gardening sites throughout the Bronx. Additionally, NYBG maintains active partnerships with more than 190 community-based organizations and provides open access, hosting free community festivals such as Bronx Day and Fiesta de Flores and distributing Family Passes to partner organizations. A farmers market takes place on Wednesdays and is free to the public, encouraging healthful eating and lifestyles through cooking demonstrations, recipes, flyers and health screenings.

NYBG is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization governed by a Board of Trustees, currently numbering 71 individuals. The annual operating budget of the Garden is approximately \$82 million and its staff totals approximately 700. The Garden is in a strong financial position and has delivered a balanced budget for the past 28 consecutive years.

For more information on NYBG please refer to: www.nybg.org

The Role

In June 30, 2018, after 29 years at the helm of the New York Botanical Garden, Gregory Long will retire from his role as Chief Executive Officer & William C. Steere Sr. President leaving behind a rich and enduring legacy. We are looking for a leader of unusual vision, intellectual breadth, and aesthetical and cultural sensibility to build upon this legacy and develop innovative and aspirational strategies to further enhance the relevance, influence, impact, and appeal of NYBG from scientific, educational, and cultural perspectives.

Reporting directly to, and working closely with, the Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer & William C. Steere Sr. President will be fully responsible for the strategic, programmatic, financial and operational leadership of the organization. This is a multifaceted role calling for an experienced and confident leader and manager with a holistic vision for the scientific, cultural and educational mission of the Garden. Although not necessarily a scientist, the CEO must be a welcome partner to researchers and supporters of NYBG's scientific work and be able to set and generate support for the scientific agenda of the organization.

The CEO will play a critical role in fundraising. S/he must be a gifted partnership builder with a strategic approach to revenue generation and a talent for cultivating relationships with existing donors and generating support from new constituencies and demographic segments. S/he will be an articulate and persuasive speaker and a deeply skilled listener with the charisma, confidence and intellectual sophistication to appeal to partners and donors in the New York community as well as nationally and internationally.

In addition, the CEO must have a deep appreciation for NYBG's role as a leading New York City destination and be able to think creatively about how to enrich the visitor experience and attract new populations and demographics to the Garden, while maintaining an effective balance between NYBG's scientific, educational, and cultural agendas. Fostering and maintaining a strong relationship with New York City and State governments, as well as with cultural, business, and philanthropic leaders is key to the success of this role and to ensuring that the Garden continues to be an integral part of the heartbeat of New York City and an active contributor to its vibrant cultural and social environment.

Above all, the CEO will be a focused, disciplined, and decisive manager able to establish clear priorities and steer NYBG toward maintaining its strategic focus, mobilizing new resources, and expending them efficiently. S/he will be an inclusive and generous manager able to foster a vibrant culture of collaboration, collegiality, and accountability.

Key priorities include:

- Developing a comprehensive knowledge and assessment of NYBG’s history, gardens, programs, organizational structure, finances and operations and base of financial support;
- Setting a vision and a strategy for the Garden that is aligned with its mission and ambition; delivering on the Garden’s strategic plan and ensuring the financial health of the organization.
- Forging a productive relationship with the Board of Trustees, staff and key supporters; working with the Board leadership to effectively engage existing Board members and to recruit new and “next generation” Trustees; creating opportunities for them to share their talents, insights, passions and expertise in support of the garden’s strategic goals;
- Working with the Board and the development team to create and implement a strategic and tactical plan for development, including major gifts, planned giving, annual campaign, corporate giving and foundation support;
- Expanding upon NYBG’s existing base of supporters and purposefully broadening NYBG’s audiences through innovative programming, scientific excellence and educational initiatives; exploring ways to build upon and strengthen current outreach activities; ensuring NYBG’s reputation as an inclusive, inviting and welcoming destination; and
- Inspiring, motivating and leading staff efforts to realize the organization’s ambitions; ensuring clear communication within the organization, across departments and with the Board.

Candidate Profile

The next Chief Executive Officer & William C. Steere Sr. President of The New York Botanical Garden will be a skilled and inspiring leader with the stature and the credibility to lead an iconic New York institution and one of the foremost botanical gardens in the world. S/he will ideally have previous experience in one of the programmatic disciplines of the Garden and leadership experience in a complex, multi-stakeholder organization.

The successful candidate will be an able communicator and relationship builder with a track-record of professionalism, clarity, and commitment whose vision and passion for the Garden will inspire partners, funders and staff. S/he will be a forward thinker not afraid to take risks, and a leader and manager adept at developing and articulating strategies and translating them into reality. Previous experience harnessing new and traditional media to enhance an organization’s offerings and reach new audiences is also an important aspect of this role.

We are looking for a skilled and enthusiastic fundraiser, ideally experienced in mobilizing resources from private donors and foundations as well as from government sources. The ability to develop and nurture long-term relationships within the New York philanthropic community is essential. Given the Garden’s significant earned-income revenue stream, a business mindset and previous marketing experience would also be an advantage.

In addition, the successful candidate will have had previous experience working successfully with a sophisticated and engaged Board. S/he must be highly skilled in Board development as well as in managing and driving engagement from Board members through frequent communication, transparency, and clearly established and maintained priorities.

The next CEO will be a person of intellectual curiosity, aesthetic sensitivity, and personal sophistication. S/he will have a warm, engaging, and sociable personality, a genuine interest in plant conservation, and an openness to learning and to new experiences. A commitment to furthering diversity in all forms is essential to this role.

In terms of the performance and personal competencies required for the position, we would highlight the following:

- **Setting Strategy:** The successful candidate will be a visionary with a demonstrated record of setting priorities and leading organizations to success. S/he will be a strategic thinker who will work with NYBG's Board and senior leadership team to establish and pursue goals in support of their shared mission.
- **Resource Development:** S/he will have a demonstrated record of success cultivating donors and raising funds in support of institutional goals. S/he will be a persuasive advocate for institutional ambitions and a proven partnership builder able to grow and diversify the Garden's funding base.
- **Communication Skills:** The successful candidate will be an articulate and persuasive communicator who can galvanize commitment to the organization and its mission. S/he will be as effective at engaging wide audiences as in communicating one-on-one. A strong relationship builder experienced in developing and nurturing different networks to further the mission of NYBG.
- **Management of Teams and Resources:** The next CEO will be an inclusive and generous manager with a track record of attracting, developing, and retaining top talent. S/he will have experience providing successful oversight for, and stewardship of, institutional fiscal assets, including operating and capital budgets and endowment funds.
- **Passion for the Mission:** The successful candidate must have a real understanding of NYBG's role as a leading New York City cultural institution and visitor destination, as well as a scientific and educational pioneer. S/he will demonstrate genuine commitment and enthusiasm for the Garden and be an inspiring advocate for its work.

Contact

Russell Reynolds Associates has been exclusively retained for this search and prospective candidates are invited to contact Russell Reynolds Associates directly at NYBGCEO@russellreynolds.com.

All inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

EOE/M/F/Disabled/Veteran