



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

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GROUNDBREAKERS
**Celebrates Great American Gardens in the Early 20th Century and
The Extraordinary Women Who Designed Them**

May 17–September 7, 2014

Between 1900 and 1930, landscape design achieved a new prominence in American life as estate owners created lavish flower gardens and cities landscaped public spaces. The New York Botanical Garden's exhibition ***Groundbreakers: Great American Gardens and The Women Who Designed Them*** explores this burgeoning age of gardening and the contributions of American women who emerged as influential professionals in the fields of landscape architecture and design, garden photography, and garden writing in the early 20th century. Opening on May 17 and running through September 7, 2014, the multifaceted exhibition examines how the work of Marian Coffin (1876–1957), Beatrix Farrand (1872–1959), Ellen Shipman (1869–1950), and their contemporaries helped define American garden design at sites such as Winterthur (Winterthur, Delaware), Dumbarton Oaks (Washington, D.C.), Longue Vue (New Orleans, Louisiana), Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden (Seal Harbor, Maine), and the Peggy Rockefeller Garden and others at The New York Botanical Garden. Visitors can learn why their stories are important to American history and culture as they experience the many components of the *Groundbreakers* exhibition at various locations throughout the Botanical Garden.



**Beacon Hill House, Harriet and Arthur James,
Newport, 1914, Blue Garden**
Tinted photographic glass slide, ca. 1914
Frances Benjamin Johnston (1864–1952)
Library of Congress,
Prints and Photographs Division
Scan courtesy of Acanthus Press, NY

An Iconic American Estate Garden Evoked in the Conservatory

“**Mrs. Rockefeller’s Garden,**” a gorgeous horticultural exhibition within the *Seasonal Galleries* of the New York City Landmark Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, evokes of the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden in Seal Harbor, Maine. This elegant American estate garden was designed by Beatrix Farrand in 1926 for the Eyrie, the summer home of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Farrand’s design for the garden combined a traditional summer garden palette of annuals, perennials, and bulbs with Asian architectural and sculptural elements all set within a clearing in the coastal Maine woods. The exhibition pays tribute to the sophisticated plantings and landscape features of the iconic Rockefeller Garden, including colorful flower borders, a mossy woodland, and Asian-influenced Moon Gate and tile-capped enclosing wall.

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Women's Contributions to American Garden Culture Explored

“Gardens for a Beautiful America: The Women Who Photographed Them,” a historical exhibition in the LuEsther T. Mertz Library’s Rondina and LoFaro Gallery, features a collection of vintage photographs, photo equipment, photo-illustrated books, and a simulated “Magic Lantern” slide show, highlighting the landmark work of pioneer female photographers—Jessie Tarbox Beals (1870–1942), Mattie Edwards Hewitt (1869–1956), and Frances Benjamin Johnston (1864–1952). Visitors can see how, through their pictures and interactions with garden designers, writers, patrons, and the media, these photographers played dynamic roles in popularizing the landscaped garden and defining landscape architecture as a profession.

“Six Groundbreakers” in the Mertz Library Rotunda features profiles of prominent women from across the United States whose achievements shaped garden design during the early 20th century. Large-scale reproductions of portrait photographs, biographical profiles, and images of the work of landscape architects Marian Coffin, Beatrix Farrand, and Ellen Shipman—all of whom completed projects here at The New York Botanical Garden during their careers—and garden photographers Jessie Tarbox Beals, Mattie Edwards Hewitt, and Frances Benjamin Johnston illuminate their interrelated roles in the American landscape movement.

An Exciting Array of Programming Throughout the Garden

Developed in partnership with the Poetry Society of America and located in the outdoor gardens adjacent to the Haupt Conservatory, **“The Edna St. Vincent Millay Poetry Walk”** presents the poems of early 20th-century American poet Edna St. Millay (1892–1950), a leader in her generation of poets, known for employing traditional poetry forms to convey modernist messages in a uniquely American voice. Many of the poems, displayed on poetry boards set within the Botanical Garden’s landscape, reference plants and flowers found in the Garden’s collections during the peak flowering season.

On Saturdays and Sundays in the Ross Hall during the *Groundbreakers* exhibition, **“From Ragtime to Jazz: The Roots of Pop”** highlights the music from the period—ragtime, jazz, Broadway, and beyond to Hollywood—which had a great impact on American culture. Visitors can enjoy a variety of styles in live performances by a trio of artists, including musical producer, pianist, and historian Terry Waldo, featuring the popular works of Scott Joplin, Eubie Blake, Irving Berlin, and Tin Pan Alley composers, such as George Gershwin, George M. Cohan, and Dorothy Fields.

“Focusing on Nature” offers hands-on learning activities and interpretation accessible to young visitors in the Everett Children’s Adventure Garden, a 12-acre indoor/outdoor science center. Families will learn about the practice of garden photography and have the opportunity to become garden photographers. During select summer weekends, “SousaKazooza” highlights the compositions of John Philip Sousa and two of America’s distinct musical instruments, the brass sousaphone and the beloved kazoo. At the end of summer, participants are invited back to take part in “SousaPaloosa,” a performance in Ross Hall for families and friends.

“The Groundbreakers App” enhances the visitor experience through a mobile application-guided walking tour. Available for free download in the Apple App Store and The New York Botanical Garden’s Web site, the app gives visitors a virtual view of the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden in Maine and the many gardens and collections designed by women throughout The New York Botanical Garden’s National Historic Landmark landscape. “Augmented reality” reveals more about the shaping of these collections through historical photographs, narration, and quotes from the designer’s letters and papers. App users can learn more about the Botanical Garden’s collections, including the Farrand-designed Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden, the Coffin-designed Lilac Collection and Montgomery Collection (now part of the Benenson Ornamental Conifers), and the Shipman-designed Ladies’ Border. Mobile media is sponsored by Bloomberg.

Additional programming during *Groundbreakers* includes a poetry reading of Millay's work, Jazz Age evening garden parties with live music and dancing, as well as public lectures and a symposium featuring scholars who discuss the impact and influence of women on landscape architecture in America.

An unforgettable departure from the everyday, The New York Botanical Garden is America's premier urban garden. Its special exhibitions, seasonal programs, and engaging activities inspire visitors of every age and interest. The Botanical Garden is an ever-changing living museum, and a showplace of natural beauty and wonder. For more information, visit nybg.org or call 718.817.8700.

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Exhibitions in the Mertz Library are made possible by the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust.

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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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