

For Immediate Release  
April 5, 2007

## ***Caribbean Gardens: Journey to Paradise* at The New York Botanical Garden**

### **Garden-wide Exhibition Celebrates Caribbean Flowers and Culture April 27–September 16, 2007**

From spring through the end of summer, The New York Botanical Garden celebrates the flora and culture of the tropics with a new exhibition, *Caribbean Gardens: Journey to Paradise*. Travel through exotic lands during this Garden-wide event beginning on Friday, April 27, and ending on Sunday, September 16. Accompanied by the botanical art exhibition, *Paradise in Print*, on view in the LuEsther T. Mertz Library gallery, the flowering of the beautiful outdoor living collections, and a full line-up of related events, *Caribbean Gardens* at The New York Botanical Garden will be an exhibition that will delight all the senses.

The flower show will emphasize the many influences on Caribbean gardening with a lavish Spanish courtyard garden. A series of programs—from music, food, and dance presentations to tours and home gardening demonstrations—celebrates the diversity of Caribbean culture. The historic Enid A. Haupt Conservatory will be overflowing with lush, tropical plants and flowers. Delve into the fascinating cultures of the Caribbean. Dance to the beat of island music, indulge in the flavor of the region's spices and fruits, and learn the vibrant history of its plants and people.

#### **Travel to the Tropics Without Leaving New York**

Visitors will immerse themselves in a tropical dreamland inside the Conservatory, surrounded by the fragrances and colors of passionflower, heliconias, and many more Caribbean favorites. Delight in scarlet and gold bromeliads, hot pink and purple bougainvilleas, rosy red hibiscus, and plants with leaves of burgundy and bronze. A spectacular façade of a Caribbean-style house with columns will be a centerpiece of the flower show's elaborate design. Surrounding beds will be filled with a wide assortment of tropical color and greenery.

In the shade of an allée of palms, gardenias and angel's trumpets arch overhead, filling the air with their spicy fragrance. The courtyard design is reminiscent of an old Spanish Caribbean home, cooled by a splashing fountain, in the dappled green light of tree ferns and cycads. Baskets hang from a balcony, overflowing with rich tropical colors. Flower beds carpeted with green, red, and yellow leaves surround purple glory bush with velvety leaves and intense purple-blue flowers. Pineapples, bananas, and citrus trees showcase fruit and flowers, adding to the elaborate motif of the Conservatory galleries transformed into a Caribbean paradise.

#### **Botanical Art Exhibition in the Library Gallery**

For centuries, the Caribbean has been identified with romantic landscapes, brightly colored flowers, and delicious fruits. In conjunction with *Caribbean Gardens*, the LuEsther T. Mertz Library will present a magnificent display of rarely seen, Caribbean-related illustrated works from its collections. Beautifully printed folio editions and rare books, as well as original watercolors by artists associated with the Botanical Garden, will bring to life 500 years of Caribbean history and culture.

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## Caribbean Cultural Festival

A variety of programming is scheduled to celebrate the cultural richness of the islands. A music and dance festival is planned in collaboration with the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute. Visitors will be treated to traditional Dominican music, Caribbean-themed home gardening and cooking demonstrations, salsa dancing, Afro-Jazz performances, and much more.

## Learning About the Caribbean

The New York Botanical Garden offers opportunities for individuals and families to learn more about the Caribbean. Continuing Education classes include a curator-led class on May 31 of the Mertz Library's exhibition, *Paradise in Print*. In addition, visitors can see a living example of a Caribbean garden as part of the Ruth Rea Howell Family Garden's *Global Gardens* program.

Visitors will also enjoy learning about the Garden's biodiversity research projects in the Caribbean. Current projects are underway in Puerto Rico (see <http://sciweb.nybg.org/science2/hcol/pr/florbor.asp>) and the Dominican Republic, as well on the island of Saba (see <http://sweetgum.nybg.org/saba/index.html>). Since its founding, the Garden has been especially distinguished by its botanical research in the New World, including the Caribbean. Indeed, the Garden's first expedition outside the United States, in 1898, was to the Caribbean. It has amassed the world's most extensive holdings of Caribbean plant specimens, which are preserved in the William and Lynda Steere Herbarium and can be viewed in a behind-the-scenes tour on May 5, 2007. Many of the Steere Herbarium holdings can also be seen online via the Garden's Virtual Herbarium (see <http://sciweb.nybg.org/science2/VirtualHerbarium.asp>).

## Caribbean Colors at the Shop

Shop in the Garden offers many tropical plants, from exquisite passionflower and fragrant crinum lilies to exotic flowering trees. Garden shoppers can even add a fun tropical touch to their homes or gardens with one of the Shop's fanciful flamingos.

*Caribbean Gardens: Journey to Paradise* is an exhibition that combines the tradition and formality of Spanish gardens with the variety and vividness of Caribbean flora.

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*Exhibitions in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory are made possible by the Estate of Enid A. Haupt.*

*Exhibitions in the Mertz Library are made possible by the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust, William D. Rondina and The Carlisle Collection, and The Kurt Berliner Foundation.*

For more information, visit [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org) or call 718.817.8700.

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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 Botanical Garden is open Tuesday through Sunday and Monday federal holidays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. April through October. PRICING: \$18, Seniors/Students \$16, Children \$5. Advance tickets are available online at [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org). For more information, please call 718.817.8700 or visit our Web site at [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org)

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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