



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

For Immediate Release
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***Caribbean Gardens: Journey to Paradise* Starts Summer Run at The New York Botanical Garden**

Garden-wide Exhibition Celebrates Caribbean Flowers and Culture Through September 16, 2007

Now through the end of summer, The New York Botanical Garden is celebrating the flora and culture of the tropics with the exhibition, *Caribbean Gardens: Journey to Paradise*. Travel through exotic lands during this Garden-wide event through Sunday, September 16. Accompanied by the botanical art exhibition, *Paradise in Print*, on view in the LuEsther T. Mertz Library gallery through August 19, the flowering of the waterlilies and lotus in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory Courtyard pools, and a line-up of complementary programs, *Caribbean Gardens* at The New York Botanical Garden is an exhibition that will delight all the senses.

The flower show emphasizes the many influences on Caribbean gardening with a lavish Spanish courtyard garden. A series of programs—from music performances to cooking demonstrations, tours and presentations—celebrates the diversity of Caribbean culture. The historic Enid A. Haupt Conservatory overflows 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.

Discover the Treasures Caribbean Gardens Hold

Caribbean architecture is a synthesis of different cultural influences and styles, and Caribbean gardens reflect this heritage. The bold blending of brilliant colors, however, both in flowers and foliage is quintessentially tropical.

Along with lush, ornamental plants for color and fragrance, traditional Caribbean gardens are full of plants with medicinal and culinary uses. These plants represent a mix: some native to the Caribbean but most brought for centuries from all over the world as people traveled through or returned home to the islands. In addition, many plants were introduced because they are useful and economically important, including sugar cane, breadfruit, mango, and papaya.

Visitors to the *Caribbean Gardens* exhibition 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 columned, Caribbean-style house is the centerpiece of the flower show's elaborate design. Surrounding beds are filled with a wide assortment of colorful coleus and cannas.

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Gardenias and angel's trumpets arch overhead shaded by an allée of palms, 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 Featuring Caribbean Flora 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 presents 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, bring to life 500 years of Caribbean history and culture.

Caribbean Culinary Adventures and Fiesta de Flores

A variety of programming is scheduled to celebrate the cultural richness of the islands. Celebrity chef Daisy Martinez from *Daisy Cooks!* on PBS shows Garden visitors how to spice up their meals Caribbean-style on September 8, and Maricel Presilla, culinary historian and nominee for Best Chef for the Mid-Atlantic Region by the James Beard Foundation, demonstrates Caribbean-inspired dishes and recipes that showcase the versatility of chocolate on September 9. *Fiesta de Flores* returns to the Garden on September 15 and 16, kicking off Hispanic Heritage Month with a weekend festival celebrating the people and plants of Latin America and the Caribbean through music, dance, food, storytelling, and more.

Learning at the Garden

The New York Botanical Garden offers opportunities for individuals and families to learn about horticulture, botanical art and illustration, landscape design, garden photography, botany, floral design, gardening, and more. Continuing Education classes include such topics as “Ornamental Tropical Plants,” “The Scented Garden,” “Designing with Orchids,” and more. In addition, visitors can see a working example of a Caribbean garden as part of the Ruth Rea Howell Family Garden’s *Global Gardening* program, where they can decorate carnival masks, taste delicious Caribbean recipes featuring homegrown produce and native recipes, and participate in other Caribbean-themed activities.

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. It has amassed the world’s most extensive holdings of Caribbean plant specimens, which are preserved in the William and Lynda Steere Herbarium, many of which can be seen online via the Garden’s Virtual Herbarium (see <http://sciweb.nybg.org/science2/VirtualHerbarium.asp>).

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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 a Garden-wide exhibition that combines the tradition and formality of Spanish gardens with the variety and vividness of Caribbean flora with rich offerings in horticulture, education, and science for the whole family.

Caribbean Gardens: Journey to Paradise has been made possible by Mr. & Mrs. Marvin H. Davidson.

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.

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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. For more information, please call 718.817.8700 or visit our Web site at 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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