

For Immediate Release
May 9, 2007

Renovated Rockefeller Rose Garden Celebrates Rose Month At The New York Botanical Garden

More Roses Than Ever Before

The best place this June to admire roses, the most romantic of flowers, celebrate their diversity of form and color, inhale their fragrance, and learn all about their history is at The New York Botanical Garden. This year visitors can enjoy Rose Month with more roses than ever before—3,000 rose plants and over 600 varieties—in the newly renovated Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden. They can also learn more about the cultivation, history, and romance of the rose in continuing education classes and from rose-related tours, demonstrations, and performances.

New Color-themed Beds, New Plants, New Collections

The Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden, designed in 1916 by renowned landscape designer Beatrix Jones Farrand, and completely rebuilt to her original design in 1988 thanks to the generosity of David Rockefeller, is one of the most popular attractions at the Botanical Garden. It is the only surviving New York City garden designed by Beatrix Farrand. The Rose Garden, more than an acre in a dramatic, triangular design with 83 beds of roses radiating from a central circle and a planting area of over 19,000 square feet, now showcases a broader and more diverse collection than ever. This year, 1,703 new roses and 363 new varieties have been added.

Beds of color-themed roses decorate each entry point to the Rose Garden, with pinks and whites at the north, purples and oranges at the south, and reds and apricots at the main entrance. The Rose Garden showcases all major classes, shapes, and sizes of roses. Plantings have been diversified and reorganized by rose class to display the most beautiful and diverse combination of roses possible, creating a living encyclopedia of old and modern roses. New borders chronicle the history of roses from heritage plants—roses that were developed before 1867, the date of the first hybrid tea rose—to the finest modern roses.

The heritage rose border along the southeast fence shows the lineage of roses over the centuries, beginning with species roses—wild plants evolved under natural selection—and their cultivars, and continuing through rose history. It features Gallicas and Damasks to Albas, Centifolias, and China roses; Spinossisima shrubs to Moss roses, Portlands, Bourbons, and Hybrid Perpetuals.

Modern roses, including collections from leading breeders and hybridizers from around the world, dominate the Rose Garden's other two long borders. Now doubled in size, the English rose group on the left side of the main gate features 47 additional new varieties. Another group, Griffith Buck roses, are bred for disease resistance and are versatile garden plants for any climate. The New York Botanical Garden is one of the first botanical gardens to display Barni roses from Italy, which combine the shape and scent of old roses with the vigor and repeat flowering of the moderns. Other collections include very fragrant Delbard roses from France; a near-complete collection of Pioneer roses that were tested by Texas A&M for toughness and resiliency; hardy, repeat-flowering, and easy-to-grow Canadian roses; and Polyantha roses, the parents of the modern floribundas.

Plumbing, Paving, and Pruning: The Inside Story of the Renovation

The Rockefeller Rose Garden has just undergone a thorough six-month renovation. The main pathways have been paved in native Hudson Valley bluestone in its characteristic wide range of blues and grays. Large, circular plazas accentuate the intersections where paths meet.

The upgrades and improvements also include restoring the perimeter fence and pergola and installing an automatic irrigation system. The new drainage system was tested by heavy rainstorms in late April and performed better than expected. New irrigation spouts in every bed assure that the roses will be properly hydrated even during drought conditions.

Parts of the rose collection were moved and protected during renovation. Along the fences that were repainted, important specimens were protected during construction while duplicate and non-performing plants were replaced with a diversified collection of climbers. In other areas, to allow for the installation of the new irrigation system, large shrub roses were pruned back, which also served to rejuvenate them. Groups of floribunda roses were replaced with a more varied assortment of cultivars.

The revisions and expansion include three newly configured entrance gardens; new climbers on the fence, pergola, and pillars; and newly organized borders of heritage roses and modern roses.

Roses to Take Home

Some notable new varieties growing in the Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden are also available for purchase at Shop in the Garden. Kordes roses, not yet widely available in this country, are not only disease resistant and low maintenance, but prized for their beauty and fragrance. Fourth-generation breeder Wilhelm Kordes III was honored as this year's Great Rosarian of the World by the American Rose Society. These roses are a wonderful solution for home gardeners who love roses, but dislike all the care they typically require.

Learning About Roses

During Rose Month weekends in June, the Botanical Garden is offering a range of informative programs and guided tours about roses. Garden experts will also be on hand at select times to answer questions, and home gardening demonstrations will explain the basics of rose care, pruning, and much more. All programs take place in the newly renovated Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden.

The Botanical Garden also offers classes dedicated to roses. On Saturday, June 23, "All About Roses" present a day of rose-related continuing education courses, including "Rose Growing Basics," "Rose Pruning," "Organic Rose Growing," and more. Registration and fee are required for continuing education classes; please call 718.817.8747.

Gilding the Rose: More to See and Do at the Botanical Garden

In addition to smelling the roses, visitors can also enjoy luxuriant tropical courtyard flowers in *Caribbean Gardens: Journey to Paradise*, the new exhibition in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, open through September 16. In addition, *Paradise in Print* presents beautiful botanical prints from 500 years of Caribbean history in the exhibition gallery of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library through August 19.

*Spring season sponsored by MetLife Foundation
Additional support provided by Con Edison*

#

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, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. November through March. PRICING: Adults \$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.

Media Contact: Nick Leshi or Melinda Manning 718.817.8658