

FRIDA  
KAHLO  
ART·GARDEN·LIFE

MAY 16 – NOVEMBER 1, 2015

## THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

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During The New York Botanical Garden's special exhibition, *FRIDA KAHLO: Art, Garden, Life*, the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory's Seasonal Exhibition Galleries come alive with the colors and textures of the garden at the Casa Azul (Blue House), today the Museo Frida Kahlo, the artist's lifelong home in Coyoacán, Mexico City, which she expanded and decorated together with her husband, Mexican muralist Diego Rivera. A Mexican Plant Tour also showcases the many plants native to, grown in, and/or culturally important to Mexico within The New York Botanical Garden's permanent collections.

Entering the exhibition from the Palms of the World Gallery, visitors encounter a striking space defined by a series of indigo-blue walls patterned after the walls that give the Casa Azul its name. They also see an evocation of the pyramid that Rivera built in the garden as a tribute to Aztec culture and to showcase his collection of pre-Hispanic artifacts. The exhibition includes an interactive space inspired by Kahlo's studio, which overlooked the garden.

Plantings in the exhibition are inspired by archival photographs of the Garden when Kahlo was in residence and by the rich palette of plants depicted in Kahlo's paintings. An intriguing mix of native Mexican agaves and cacti, bold tropical foliage plants, brightly colored annuals, and fruit trees and other edible plants combine to evoke the unique domestic landscape Kahlo created over many decades at the Casa Azul.

In the Conservatory Courtyard immediately outside the exhibition galleries, visitors see a living fence of organ pipe cacti inspired by a planting at the Museo Casa Estudio Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo, the home and studio complex Juan O'Gorman designed for Rivera and Kahlo in San Ángel. Rustic terracotta containers bursting with a mix of plants that Kahlo grew or painted complete the transformation of the Conservatory Courtyards into a Mexican garden.

Extensive didactic bilingual interpretation is situated throughout the exhibition—large rail signs provide historical and cultural background and display reproductions of photographs of Kahlo and Rivera in the garden and depictions of plants in Kahlo's paintings. Smaller signs contain plant information. The goal of interpretation in the Conservatory exhibition is to make sure that all visitors come to understand the Casa Azul as an expression of Kahlo's deep connection to the natural world and to Mexico.

The Guest Designer of the Conservatory exhibition is Scott Pask, an award-winning scenic designer who received a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Arizona and a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Yale School of Drama. He designed NYBG's *Monet's Garden* in 2012 and *The Orchid Show: On Broadway* in 2011. His Broadway credits include *The Pillowman*, for which he won his first Tony Award for Scenic Design, followed by *The Coast of Utopia* and *The Book of Mormon*; the hit revivals of *Promises, Promises* and *Hair*; as well as *Speed the Plow*, *Nine*, *Sweet Charity*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and *La Cage Aux Folles*, among many others.

### **Mexican Plant Tour**

A self-guided walking tour showcases the many plants native to, grown in, and/or culturally important to Mexico within NYBG's permanent collections. Mexico's diverse geography, spanning nearly 800,000 square miles between the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico and including rugged mountain ranges, low coastal plains, high plateaus, deserts, and nearly 150 rivers coupled with a climate that varies from tropical to desert, supports a wide range of plant life. The Mexican Plant Tour, located in the permanent exhibition houses of the Conservatory and across the Garden's historic landscape, highlights the natural abundance of Mexico's plant life. Didactic signage and a self-guided map also inform visitors. After the exhibition closes, the self-guided tour will remain available for free download on the Garden's Web site.

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*Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this exhibition do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.*

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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](http://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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