

# THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

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*Studying, exhibiting, and conserving plants for 120 years*

For Immediate Release

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## **NEW 11-ACRE AZALEA GARDEN OPENS MOTHER'S DAY WEEKEND, SHOWCASING ONE OF WORLD'S MOST IMPORTANT COLLECTIONS OF THE POPULAR PLANT**

*Celebration includes tours, home gardening demonstrations, live music,  
and family activities during two weekends: May 7–8 and 14–15*



*Photo by Larry Lederman*

The New York Botanical Garden has created an 11-acre **Azalea Garden**, comprising one of the largest and most diverse displays and one of the most important collections of the plant in the world. Located in the heart of the Botanical Garden, the Azalea Garden is sited across a broad hillside punctuated by rock outcrops and shaded by stately native trees, many of them over 200 years old. The opening of the new garden, on May 7, 2011, will be celebrated over two Festival Weekends: May 7–8 (Mother's Day weekend) and May 14–15, 2011.

**Botanical Garden President Gregory Long** notes, "The spectacular new Azalea Garden embodies much that is central to this institution and its mission: beauty of plants and landscape, conservation, curatorial rigor, and engagement with the public. With its encyclopedic collection of azaleas and their close relatives rhododendrons, the new garden—a key component of the Botanical Garden's 120th-anniversary year—will provide a vivid example of the great diversity that may be found in a single group of plants. We look forward to welcoming people not only during the opening festivities for

this major achievement, but also over many return visits. The Garden is deeply grateful to Maureen and Richard Chilton for their support of the Azalea Garden, which will provide enjoyment and enrichment for generations to come.”

### **Azalea Garden**

The Azalea Garden represents the transformation of the Botanical Garden’s historic Azalea Way into a richly layered horticultural extravaganza that celebrates the beauty and variety of these popular garden plants. The Azalea Garden offers a completely new design, with greater diversity than has ever been shown in New York; a much improved viewing experience; expanded access to the landscape; more effective circulation; new seating areas; and newly created, carefully framed views.

The new Azalea Garden includes nearly a mile of woodland paths that meander through a collection of 3,000 azaleas and rhododendrons from around the world, planted beneath ancient native oaks, tulip trees, and sweetgums. The more than 70,000 new plants in the garden comprise 40,000 bulbs, over 28,000 flowering woodland perennials and ferns, and more than 3,000 trees and shrubs.

The Azalea Garden has been meticulously designed to ensure brilliant color and rich texture for much of the year. It will begin to flower during the first warm days of spring, when the pale pinks and lavenders of Korean rhododendron emerge. The spectacle provided by azaleas will reach a crescendo in late April and early May, when an entire hillside of Asian hybrid azaleas erupts into clouds of white, pink, coral, and magenta. Azaleas and rhododendrons will continue to provide color through late spring and into summer, flowering in sequence until the last of the vivid orange-red flowers of plum-leaf azaleas open in July. Finally, companion plantings of fall-blooming witch-hazel and herbaceous plants, as well as a second flush of magnificent color from reblooming azalea cultivars, will ensure that the garden remains vibrant into late autumn. A tapestry of daffodils and crocus, vast sweeps of ferns and hostas, and grassy glades inspired by mountain meadows will provide additional drama in early spring, summer, and fall. All of this will be visible from accessible pathways that open to long vistas in all directions.

As one of very few azalea collections to be located within a formal educational institution, the Azalea Garden provides a rare opportunity to educate the public about the

value and importance of these plants to ornamental horticulture. It will achieve this through year-round public programming, interpretation, and curatorial work. Compelling offerings, including lectures, self-guided cell phone tours, and docent-led walking tours of the landscape and the adjacent Native Forest—combined with an expertly planned interpretation scheme that includes permanent and easily updated signage—will enrich visitors’ experiences and increase their knowledge of these popular and beautiful plants.

The celebratory opening weekends of the Azalea Garden will include tours led by Botanical Garden horticulture staff, home gardening demonstrations, live music, family activities, and complimentary light refreshments, providing an ideal way to usher in spring.

### **Design Team**

The design of the Azalea Garden has been created by the following individuals and firms: Paths and seating areas were designed by Towers|Golde Landscape Architects, in collaboration with OLIN, the Botanical Garden’s Landscape Master Planner. Azalea and rhododendron plantings were designed by Garden staff, and companion plantings of perennials were designed by landscape architects Oehme, van Sweden & Associates.

### **Support**

The Azalea Garden is a project of Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Chilton, Jr. Mrs. Chilton serves as Chairman of The New York Botanical Garden Board. She and Mr. Chilton are leadership figures in the museum and education communities of New York City.

*Spring Season sponsored by MetLife Foundation*

*Audio Tour sponsored by Bloomberg*

## The New York Botanical Garden

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, Rock Garden, and Tram Tour: \$20 for adults, \$18 for seniors and students with ID, \$8 for children ages 2–12, free for children under 2. A *Grounds-Only Pass* is also available: \$6 for adults, \$5 for adult Bronx Residents; \$3 for seniors and students with ID, \$1 for children ages 2–12, free for children under 2. Grounds-only admission is free all day on Wednesdays and from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. For more information, please call 718.817.8700 or visit [nybg.org](http://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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## Press Information

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