

For Immediate Release  
March 27, 2006

## **Dutch Watercolors: The Great Age of the Leiden Botanical Garden**

*April 8 – July 9, 2006*

### **300 Years of Art Depicting Exotic Plants Discovered During Explorations of New Continents to be Showcased at The New York Botanical Garden**

More than sixty botanical watercolors, prints, and rare books spanning three centuries of worldwide exploration will be showcased at The New York Botanical Garden from April 8 through July 9, 2006. The exhibition, entitled *Dutch Watercolors: The Great Age of the Leiden Botanical Garden*, will feature images on loan from the National Herbarium of the Netherlands at Leiden, along with artwork from the rich collections of The New York Botanical Garden's LuEsther T. Mertz Library, the most important botanical and horticultural library in the world.

*Dutch Watercolors: The Great Age of the Leiden Botanical Garden* will depict exotic and rare plants discovered by explorers during the Age of Discovery and in ensuing years. These works illustrate the historical significance of Leiden's Hortus Botanicus, one of the earliest European botanical gardens established in 1590. Works of rare plants from North and South America, Asia, the Mediterranean, and South Africa will be displayed, including plants discovered by botanists working for the Dutch East India Company. Additionally, the exhibition will illustrate the importance and impact of the historical, political, and economic reach that the Dutch trading companies had worldwide—an influence that carries through to our modern era.

Some of the paintings on exhibition were made from specimens in the Leiden Botanical Garden; other watercolors were acquired by two 18th-century collectors associated with Leiden's Hortus Botanicus. Among the artists represented in this exhibit are Johan Christian Peter Arckenhausen (1784–1855), Nicolaas Meerburgh (1734–1814), Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1701), Abraham Munting (1626–1683), and Laurens Jacobs van der Vinne (1712–1742). Display cases will present the work of famous botanists such as Carol von Linne (Linnaeus) (1707–1778), who spent three years at Leiden, and Carolus Clusius (1526–1609). Other cases will feature explorations of the Cape of Good Hope, Java and the East Indies, Surinam (Guiana), and other far-flung parts of the world.

Curators and docents will offer regularly scheduled tours of the exhibition, which will also be accompanied by an illustrated checklist.

*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.*

###

The New York Botanical Garden is a museum of plants located at Bronx River Parkway (Exit 7W) and Fordham Road in the Bronx. The Botanical Garden is open year-round, Tuesday through Sunday and Monday holidays, from 10 a.m.–6 p.m. April through October, and 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. November through March. The best way to enjoy the Botanical Garden is with the *Combination Ticket*, which includes admission to the grounds, the Conservatory, Rock Garden, Native Plant Garden, Everett Children's Adventure Garden, and Tram Tour, and costs for \$13 for adults; \$11 for students and seniors; \$5 for children 2–12. Grounds admission is free to everyone on Wednesdays all day and on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. For more information, visit [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org) or call 718.817.8700.

Media Contacts: George Shakespear or Maria Izquierdo 718.817.8616