

THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

Studying, exhibiting, and conserving plants for 120 years

For Immediate Release

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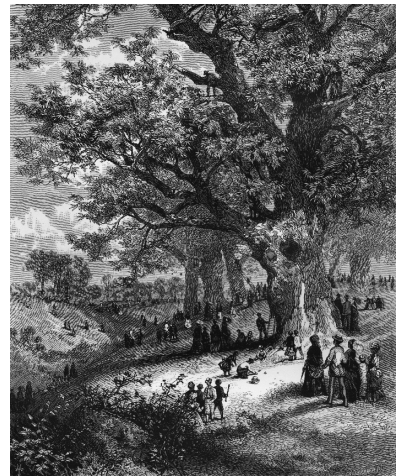
***A Forest in the City: Centuries of Sylvan Beauty* Explores History and Significance of New York City's Largest Remaining Old-Growth Forest**

**Exhibition of Magnificent Folios, Artifacts, Photographs, and Rare Artwork in Library
Gallery Celebrates The New York Botanical Garden's Thain Family Forest**

November 5, 2011–January 16, 2012

Marking the dedication and ongoing restoration of The New York Botanical Garden's Thain Family Forest, the LuEsther T. Mertz Library has gathered together dozens of beautiful botanical prints, natural history books, historical photographs, and artifacts from its collection to tell the story of the 50-acre, old-growth Forest at the heart of the Botanical Garden.

A Forest in the City: Centuries of Sylvan Beauty, on display in the Mertz Library's Rondina Gallery from November 5, 2011 through January 16, 2012, shows how the forces that affected woodlands throughout the northeastern United States played out along the rocky, tree-lined banks of the Bronx River, which bisects the Forest. A combination of evolution, exploration, resilience, conservation, and management has resulted in the preservation of one of New York City's most precious natural areas, whose restoration is being celebrated with two Festival Weekends, November 5–6 and November 12–13, featuring a symposium and a variety of forest-related activities.



The exhibition offers visitors a rare opportunity to see several treasures held in the collections of the Garden's renowned Library or on loan from the American Museum of Natural History. Among the highlights are:

- An unusual juxtaposition of the works of three famous bird artists—John James Audubon, Louis Agassiz Fuertes, and Roger Tory Peterson—to represent some of the more than 200 species of birds that can be seen at the Garden over the course of a year;
- An example of Audubon's little-known yet beautifully colored work devoted to mammals, *The Quadrupeds of North America*;
- A hand-colored etching from a pristine copy of 18th-century naturalist Mark Catesby's large folio *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands...*, featuring the first full-color published illustrations of the plants and animals of British North America; and

—more—

- An impassioned sign posted at the Garden in the 1920s asking visitors to help “spare the flowers,” part of co-founder Elizabeth Britton’s valiant crusade to preserve the native plants that grow in the Forest and elsewhere at the Garden.

The exhibition opens with a look at the ways in which the Lenape people, the Native Americans who lived in the area before the arrival of European settlers, used the land where the Garden is sited as a source of food and shelter and as a travel route between seasonal hunting and fishing grounds. Among the items on display is a carved Iroquois or Mohawk cradleboard that would have been used to carry an infant on these treks.

Beginning in the 17th century, a series of European naturalists and travelers started to publish descriptions of the natural resources and wonders of eastern North America. Visitors to the Rondina Gallery have the opportunity to view several magnificently illustrated accounts of the New World seen through European eyes, including what the Dutch, the first Europeans to settle in the New York area, found in the native forests of the area.

A Forest in the City continues with displays of spectacular images of the great variety of plant and animal life found in the Forest, as well as illustrations of the ever-changing stresses and threats that all northeastern forests have faced, including air pollution, invasive species, and disease, which has wreaked havoc on three giants of the region’s forests—American chestnut, American elm, and eastern hemlock.

With its location in one of the world’s most densely populated urban areas, the Forest has not been immune to these pressures, but *A Forest in the City* concludes by reviewing the efforts of Garden scientists and arborists to understand and preserve this precious woodland ecosystem, culminating in the ongoing restoration project that began in 2008. Because of the Garden’s careful stewardship of this urban old-growth forest, it is still dominated by native species and supports healthy populations of birds, amphibians, mammals, and insects.

A free checklist of the exhibition will be available. For more information and a complete schedule of events, go to nybg.org

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Exhibitions in the Mertz Library are made possible by the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust.

*Image Credit: James W. Lauderbach, **Gathering Chestnuts**, 1878*

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: \$10 for adults, \$5 for seniors and students with ID, \$2 for children ages 2–12, free for children under 2. Grounds-only admission is free all day on Wednesdays and from 10 to 11 a.m. on Saturdays. For more information, please call 718.817.8700 or visit 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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