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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flora Illustrata: A Celebration of Botanical Masterworks

November 15, 2014 – January 19, 2015

The New York Botanical Garden

LuEsther T. Mertz Library's Rondina
and LoFaro Gallery

2900 Southern Boulevard

Bronx, New York

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**The New York Botanical Garden Presents
Flora Illustrata: A Celebration of Botanical Masterworks
November 15, 2014 to January 19, 2015
in Mertz Library's Rondina and LoFaro Gallery**

Exhibition Marks Publication of Landmark Book, FLORA ILLUSTRATA

From November 15, 2014 until January 19, 2015, The New York Botanical Garden presents **Flora Illustrata: A Celebration of Botanical Masterworks**, a visually stunning display of books, manuscripts, maps, private letters, and art, in the Mertz Library's 6th floor Rondina and LoFaro Gallery. The Library is located at The New York Botanical Garden at 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, New York.

This exhibition marks the publication of the landmark book, **FLORA ILLUSTRATA: Great Works from the LuEsther T. Mertz Library of The New York Botanical Garden** edited by Susan M. Fraser and Vanessa Bezemer Sellers (The New York Botanical Garden/Yale University Press, November 2014; \$50.00 hardcover). Both the book and the exhibition explore the Mertz Library's extraordinary Collections which include some of the most important botanical and horticultural works ever created. Some will be on view for the first time.

Among the more than 50 books and objects on display will be an edition of Carolus Linnaeus' *Systema Naturae*, representing *the* defining moment in botanical history when

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the eminent Swedish botanist introduced his new, simplified classification system that ushered in the modern era for the plant sciences.

Other memorable works include:

- Denis Dodart's *Recueil des plantes*, the first project of the *Académie des Sciences* commissioned in 1667 by Louis XIV, illustrated by the miniature painter Nicolas Robert and intended as royal gifts;
- the highly inventive *Herbarium vivum* with surprisingly life-like images that are the result of nature prints, published by Johann Kniphof, an 18th-century German botanist;
- the magnificent *Temple of Flora*, the production cost of which resulted in the financial ruin of its author, Robert Thornton; and
- *La Théorie et la pratique du jardinage*, published in 1709 in Paris, the first do-it-yourself garden book, offering models for gardens in French classical style, which might still prove useful today.

Of the numerous Floras displayed, three 19th-century masterpieces stand out, namely:

- John Sibthorp's *Flora Graeca*, a celebrated survey of the flowers of ancient Greece;
- Aimé Bonpland's *Description des plantes rares*, exquisitely illustrated by Pierre-Joseph Redouté; and
- *Flora Brasiliensis*, the culmination of two centuries of plant collecting in Brazil.

For those visitors interested in the history of garden art and architecture, the exhibition also includes a series of engravings depicting grand Baroque layouts, pastoral scenes in English estates, and picturesque designs for The New York Botanical Garden.

Both the book **FLORA ILLUSTRATA** and the exhibition are meant to raise awareness of the continued availability of the Mertz Library as a key resource for the study of the plant world, which has played a central role in the arts, sciences, and humanities throughout history.

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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

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.