



JANE WESMAN PUBLIC RELATIONS, INC.

322 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1702, New York, NY 10001  
Tel: 212.620.4080 Fax: 212.620.0370

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**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  
Publisher: The New York Botanical Garden and  
Yale University Press  
Publication Date: November 25, 2014  
Price: \$50.00/hardcover//ISBN: 978-0-300-19662-7

Contact: Jane Wesman  
212-620-4080 x11  
jane@wesmanpr.com

Felicia Sinusas  
212-620-4080 x14  
felicia@wesmanpr.com

“The LuEsther T. Mertz Library is unquestionably one of the great treasures of the world.  
**FLORA ILLUSTRATA** reveals with stunning scholarship the deeply intertwined history of plants,  
science, and humanity. Rich and fascinating beyond imagination and now accessible to anyone.  
A triumph of a book.”—Thomas E. Lovejoy, George Mason University

**With Its Sumptuous Illustrations and Authoritative Text,  
FLORA ILLUSTRATA Presents an Invaluable Look Inside  
One of the World’s Greatest Libraries Dedicated to  
Horticulture, Botany, Gardens, and Plants**

With more than one million cataloged items and eleven million archival documents in such diverse subject areas as botanical science, horticulture, floriculture, landscape architecture, garden design, and the exploration of the New World, the LuEsther T. Mertz Library of The New York Botanical Garden is one of the most comprehensive resources about plants and gardens anywhere in the world. Its holdings include many of the most beautiful and pioneering botanical and horticultural works ever created.

The sumptuously illustrated new book, **FLORA ILLUSTRATA**, edited by Susan M. Fraser and Vanessa Bezemer Sellers (The New York Botanical Garden/Yale University Press, November 2014), allows readers to enjoy this remarkable Collection by highlighting key works spanning more than eight centuries, from rare manuscripts and iconic books to Renaissance herbals, precious botanical drawings, elegant engravings, explorers’ notebooks, and more.

More

The eleven chapters in **FLORA ILLUSTRATA**, each written by a leading authority, present the Library's Collections within the context of larger cultural and historical events throughout the ages. These essays highlight the creative effort of the world's preeminent explorers, scientists, publishers, artists, and printmakers across the centuries, as bookmaking and the graphic arts developed in tandem with knowledge of natural history. The key role of artists in the advancement of botany, as well as the scientific progress that led to improved identification and representation of plants, are key themes throughout.

The first chapter of **FLORA ILLUSTRATA** describes, with accompanying illustrations, the history of the Collections of this world-renowned Library, while the final chapter focuses on the maps and architectural plans that record the development of The New York Botanical Garden itself. In between are chapters that highlight the wide range of the Library's holdings from Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis historia* (1483), to especially rare etchings of the water gardens at Villa Pratolino in Florence (1600s), to books that depict the exploration of Brazil, to celebrated works focusing on American gardening and horticulture.

**FLORA ILLUSTRATA** will inspire in readers a new appreciation for the extraordinary history of botany and its far-reaching connections to the worlds of science, books, art, and culture. "By illuminating the histories of botanical exploration, horticultural progress, and garden design represented in the Collection of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library, we trust **FLORA ILLUSTRATA** will give new emphasis to the shared scientific importance and aesthetic beauty of plants, flowers, and gardens and the remarkable fascination they have held throughout the ages for botanist and lay person alike," declare Susan M. Fraser and Vanessa Bezemer Sellers in the Preface to this glorious volume.

A visually stunning exhibition, also entitled *Flora Illustrata*, will feature many of the works portrayed in the book. The display will run from November 15, 2014 through January 19, 2015 in the Rondina and LoFaro Gallery on the 6th floor of the Library building. More than 50 works from the Collection will be showcased.

**About the Editors**

Susan M. Fraser is the Director of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library of The New York Botanical Garden. She is an active member of the Council of Botanical and Horticultural Libraries, is on the Executive Committee of the Biodiversity Heritage Library, and also serves on the Council of the Torrey Botanical Society as the Society's Historian. She has contributed articles to important journals and books focusing on the history of botany, art, and libraries. She received her MLS from Columbia University.

Vanessa Bezemer Sellers is a garden and landscape historian. She coordinates the Humanities Institute of The New York Botanical Garden and is also a member of the Garden's Library Visiting Committee. She received her Ph.D. from Princeton University. She was a fellow at Dumbarton Oaks, has taught at the Bard Graduate Center, and worked for the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She is the author and editor of various books on garden art and architecture.

Special thanks to the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust

Published with assistance from Furthermore: a program of the J.M. Kaplan Fund

---

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

Additional support has also been provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation  
and by a Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.