

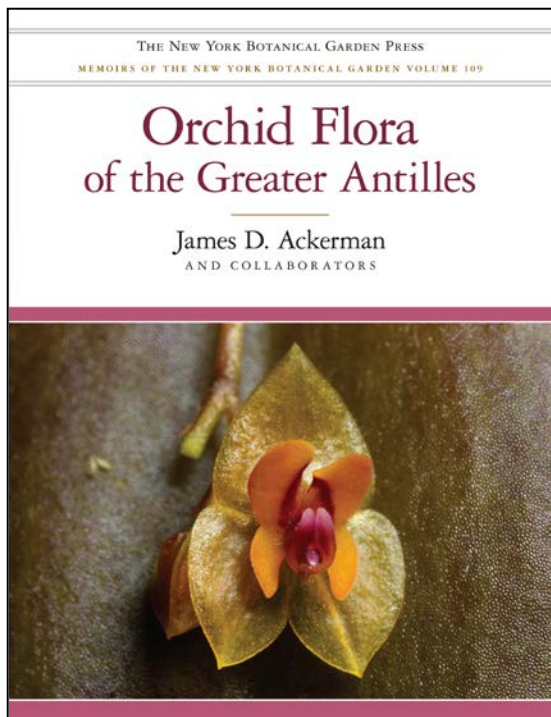


THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

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Orchid Flora of the Greater Antilles Documents the Dramatic Variety Of Orchids in One of the World's Biodiversity Hotspots

**Published by The New York Botanical Garden Press, the Book Will Be Available
For Purchase During *The Orchid Show: Key West Contemporary* at the Botanical Garden**



Covering the oldest, largest, and most complex islands of the West Indies, *Orchid Flora of the Greater Antilles*, newly published by The New York Botanical Garden Press, provides clear, detailed accounts of all currently known orchid species found in the Greater Antilles, which includes Cuba, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Hispaniola, the island that comprises the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Written by world-renowned orchidologist James D. Ackerman, Ph.D., and a team of nine collaborators, *Orchid Flora of the Greater Antilles* gives full scientific treatments of 594 orchid species, including botanical descriptions, vernacular names, and notes on distribution, ecology, and conservation status. The book is profusely illustrated with high-quality scientific drawings of these dramatically varied and, in many cases, narrowly distributed flowering plants. The principal illustrator is Bobbi Angell.

The 640-page flora incorporates many of the recent findings that have resulted from the growth of molecular systematics, in which analysis of plant DNA is used to resolve long-standing questions about such fundamental matters as what constitutes a distinct species or group of related species. In addition, English and Spanish versions are given for the keys used to identify orchid species and for a glossary of orchid-related technical terms.

Orchids rank among the most species-rich family of flowering plants in the Greater Antilles, which extend from Cuba in the west to Anegada, an island of the British Virgin Islands, in the east. This group of large Caribbean islands is considered a Biodiversity Hotspot because of the high numbers of its plant species; the high percentage of those species that are found nowhere else, known as endemic species; and the degree of deforestation in the region. Of 594 orchid species, 70 percent are endemic to the archipelago. The most species-rich genus (a group of related species) is *Lepanthes*, accounting for 120 species. (The orchid shown on the book cover is *Lepanthes ovalis*, a Jamaican species.)

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Because they are some of the most popular plants for gardens and displays, orchid populations in the Caribbean occasionally suffer from over-collection by orchid enthusiasts or entrepreneurs. However, according to Dr. Ackerman's introductory section on the orchid family, the most important threat to the orchid flora of the region is habitat destruction driven by urban and tourist development and industrial, agricultural and mining pressures.

"I have hope that the orchid flora of the Greater Antilles is unusually resilient after disturbance and there is some indication that this may be so," writes Dr. Ackerman, a professor of biology at the University of Puerto Rico. "Change has always occurred. We certainly have the capacity to dramatically accelerate the process and we also have the ability to minimize the detrimental consequences. All we need is the will."

The Orchid Show: Key West Contemporary Opens Saturday, March 1

Publication of the book comes as The New York Botanical Garden prepares its 12th annual exhibition of orchids. Opening Saturday, March 1, this year's exhibition, *The Orchid Show: Key West Contemporary*, evokes the modern, angular architectural lines of a Key West garden originally designed for Susan Henshaw Jones, President of the Museum of the City of New York, and Judge Rickard K. Eaton. Thousands of orchids are displayed in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory in the country's largest curated show featuring these exotic, fascinating flowers.

As part of the programming for *The Orchid Show: Key West Contemporary*, on Sunday, April 13, Dr. Ackerman will speak about his time in the field cataloging the orchids of the Greater Antilles and sign copies of *Orchid Flora of the Greater Antilles*. Part of the Torrey Botanical Society's series of talks, the presentation will begin at 4 p.m. in Ross Hall at the Botanical Garden.

About The New York Botanical Garden Press

Since 1896 The New York Botanical Garden Press (nybgpress.org) has been publishing books and journals based on original research by plant scientists from around the world. Its mission is to put information in the hands of those engaged in exploring, understanding, and conserving plants and fungi. Areas of focus include floristics, systematics, economic botany, ecology, evolution, and ethnobotany. A growing list of books for general readers includes field guides and botanical history.

Ordering Information: *Orchid Flora of the Greater Antilles* (\$105 hardcover) is available through NYBG Press. To order, call 718.817.8721 or go to nybgpress.org. Also available through Amazon.com.

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The New York Botanical Garden is a museum of plants, an educational institution, and a scientific research organization. Founded in 1891, the Botanical Garden is one of the world's preeminent centers for studying plants at all levels, from the whole organism down to its DNA. Garden scientists conduct fundamental research on plants and fungi globally, as well as on the many relationships between plants and people. A National Historic Landmark, the Garden's 250-acre site is one of the greatest botanical gardens in the world and the largest in any city in the United States, distinguished by the beauty of its diverse landscape and extensive collections and gardens, as well as by the scope and excellence of its programs in horticulture, education, and science. Learn more: 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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