

For immediate release
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**The New York Botanical Garden's
Flora Borinqueña Digital Herbarium Funded by
Institute of Museum and Library Services**

Thanks to a grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), The New York Botanical Garden will complete the *Flora Borinqueña Digital Herbarium and Library Project*. The \$140,000 grant extends through September 2008.

The *Flora Borinqueña* project is digitizing data and materials of scientific, historical, cultural, and artistic importance related to the Botanical Garden's plant research collections from Puerto Rico, which began more than a century ago. Initial *Flora Borinqueña* data is already available through the Botanical Garden's C. V. Starr Virtual Herbarium. It will now be possible to double the number of digitized plant specimens and to add interpretive text and search prompts in English and Spanish.

Barbara Thiers, Director of the Botanical Garden's William and Lynda Steere Herbarium, comments, "We are grateful to the IMLS for making it possible to bring together all published, non-published, and ephemeral material relating to the Botanical Garden's plant specimens from Puerto Rico and make it available to a wider audience." The digitization and electronic dissemination of books, articles, field notes, drawings, and photographs of material that relate to plant specimens will serve a worldwide audience of policy makers, professional researchers, scholars, hobbyists, students, and the general public. Uses for this information include biodiversity conservation activities such as ecological modeling and designation of conservation areas.

Among the highlights in the Puerto Rican collections at The New York Botanical Garden are specimens collected by Nathaniel and Elizabeth Britton, founders of the Botanical Garden, during 16 expeditions to Puerto Rico between 1906 and 1933. The digital *Flora Borinqueña* also includes more than 700 beautiful and previously unpublished watercolor illustrations of plant specimens by botanical artist Frances Worth Horne (1873–1967).

The *Flora Borinqueña Digital Herbarium and Library Project* is a collaborative effort on the part of the Botanical Garden's LuEsther T. Mertz Library and Steere Herbarium, working together with scientists in Puerto Rico, who are adding contemporary information.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 122,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development. To learn more about the Institute, please visit: www.ims.gov

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The New York Botanical Garden is an advocate for the plant kingdom. The Garden pursues its mission through its role as a museum of living plant collections arranged in gardens and landscapes across its National Historic Landmark site; through its comprehensive education programs in horticulture and plant science; and through the wide-ranging research programs of the International Plant Science Center. For more information, please call 718.817.8700 or visit our Web site at www.nybg.org

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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