



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

For Immediate Release  
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## **New 3.5 Acre Native Plant Garden at The New York Botanical Garden Celebrates the Beauty of Native Flora**

**Most Contemporary Garden Design Ever Installed on the National Historic Landmark Site  
Includes a Dramatic 230-Foot-Long Water Feature as Its Centerpiece**

**Symposium, Dedication, and Ribbon-Cutting on May 3, 2013  
Grand Opening Weekends with Public Education Programs on May 4 & 5 and 11 & 12**



**Rendering of New Native Plant Garden, courtesy of Oehme, van Sweden.  
Larger, high-resolution version available upon request.**

***“Congratulations to The New York Botanical Garden for this bold step. The new Native Plant Garden is a visionary achievement in modern architectural, horticultural, and landscape design—a grand aesthetic departure from European precedent. This New American Garden design in the very heart of the Botanical Garden’s National Historic Landmark landscape is an extraordinary combination and contrast of modern and traditional styles that succeeds in grabbing one’s attention and sparking the imagination. The Native Plant Garden will surely inspire visitors for generations to come.”***  
– **Hugh Hardy, FAIA, leading American architect and founding partner of H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture**

In early May, The New York Botanical Garden debuts the new **Native Plant Garden**, a cutting-edge 3.5-acre installation with a dramatic 230-foot-long water feature as its centerpiece. It is the most contemporary garden design ever created at The New York Botanical Garden. The Native Plant Garden was designed by Oehme, van Sweden, landscape architects specializing in the New American Garden style, to harmonize a stunning designed terrain with the diversity of microclimates across the site. The layout, in the middle of the Botanical Garden’s historic grounds, is both sustainable and visually inventive, a radical blend of modern sensibilities along with environmentally friendly elements. Built to inspire and teach visitors about the beauty of native flora throughout the seasons, it also illustrates how native plants can be used to produce attractive and imaginative gardens. The new Native Plant Garden, accompanied by educational materials and programs, and a major permanent endowment to secure its future, was made possible by a \$15,000,000 gift from the Leon Levy Foundation.

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The enclosed facility features a central pool with water cascading over stone weirs. A promenade of broad boardwalks made from black locust, a native hardwood, and intimate paths lead visitors through a range of settings, from the shaded woodland to the dry, open meadow, and lush wetlands featuring nearly 100,000 plants. The garden has as its framework a dramatic set of heritage oak trees and is bursting with native trees, shrubs, ferns, grasses, and wildflowers, confirming that native plants can be as magnificent as their exotic counterparts more commonly used in traditional gardens. A covered outdoor classroom pavilion offers a venue for school groups and others to learn about native plants and the birds and insects they sustain.

“The new Native Plant Garden will be a surprise to many lovers of the venerable landscapes of The New York Botanical Garden,” said Gregory Long, Chief Executive Officer and The William C. Steere Sr. President. “In a very central location, next to the ancient Thain Family Forest and nestled between the traditional landscapes of the Azalea Garden and the Ross Conifer Arboretum, the Native Plant Garden is a major contemporary intervention, replete with a large crescent-shaped water feature, positioned quite prominently, and resting quite comfortably, in a National Historic Landmark site. The mission of the new garden is to teach our visitors about the beauty and usefulness of the plants of northeastern North America, and that message will be communicated in a fresh and vibrant place unlike any other at NYBG. We are so thankful to the Leon Levy Foundation for its generous support in making this garden possible, and to the visionary designer Sheila Brady at Oehme, van Sweden.”

Beginning with a symposium, dedication, and ribbon-cutting on May 3, and followed by public education programs during two grand opening weekends May 4 & 5 and May 11 & 12, visitors can enjoy workshops by regional native plant experts, Home Gardening Demonstrations, bird walks, and many other activities to celebrate this new attraction.

### **A Gorgeous and Sustainable Spectacle of Flora in Every Season**

The Native Plant Garden is as sustainable as it is aesthetically dazzling. Environmentally-friendly, locally-sourced, and recycled materials are used in many parts of this garden. The pool is fed by recycled stormwater captured on site and filtered by aquatic plants. Benches and buildings are constructed of salvaged, recycled, and sustainably harvested materials.



“This is an exciting project that will serve as a showcase of the region’s native flora and an engaging outdoor classroom,” said Todd Forrest, Arthur Ross Vice President for Horticulture and Living Collections at The New York Botanical Garden.

“Native plants reflect our rich natural heritage and are a beautiful addition to any garden. A native plant can be found to fill any niche in the garden and they are as appealing to native birds and insects as they are to people.”

Native plants, chosen for their visual impact, sustainability, and adaptability are the defining features of the regional biome. These plants evolved along with the physical conditions and living communities that coexist with them. Offering many

environmental benefits, they filter water and air, prevent erosion, and provide shelter for wildlife while also supporting the food web.

“The design was truly based on the site and the site landforms,” said Sheila Brady, Principal, Oehme, van Sweden. “We pivoted the design around the geology, all the beautiful rock outcroppings, the wet meadow, and the mature forest nearby.”

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The Native Plant Garden celebrates the exquisiteness and diversity of native plants and the contributions they make to the Botanical Garden's landscape throughout the seasons. In spring, carpets of trillium, bloodroot, Dutchman's breeches, and a mix of other beautiful ephemerals, along with accents of lady slipper orchids, are all part of the great variety of stunning plants native to northeastern North America that are on display. Meadow grasses dance in summer winds as sunlight dapples through the canopies of the nearby stately oaks and other large native trees. Red-stemmed dogwoods and golden birches flash against the blue autumn sky above and the russet red and purple hues of the grasses and bulbs in their fall glory. Winter reveals the intricate architecture of the ancient trees towering above bedrock knolls, while abundant clusters of red winterberry fruit add eye-catching color to brown twigs.

“What makes this garden special is that it was not only designed to be a beautiful and inspiring garden, but it was also designed to teach our visitors the essential role that plants play in the living ecosystem all around us,” said Jody Payne, Curator of the Native Plant Garden. “The many habitats throughout the garden will transport our visitors well outside of New York City.”

The wet meadow has showy plants such as swamp rose mallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos*), as well as taller indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) and Joe-Pye weed (*Eutrochium*), along with a collection of insect-eating pitcher plants and other rare treasures. Lining the wetland are sweetflag (*Acorus*) and woolgrass (*Scirpus cyperinus*), an important cleansing element of the water feature. In the specially designed wetland, a pump recirculates rainwater, moving it through layers of gravel, sand, and plant roots that filter and clean the water through this natural bio-filtration system.



Shelby White, Founding Trustee of the Leon Levy Foundation and Vice Chairman of the Botanical Garden Board commented, “The New York Botanical Garden is one of the great green treasures of our city. The Foundation has been a longtime supporter of its continuing development. Not only will the new Native Plant Garden celebrate the beauty of native plants, it will also serve as an important laboratory for plant study and conservation. Its splendor also demonstrates the Botanical Garden's commitment to contemporary garden design.”

### **Programs Celebrate the New Native Plant Garden**

A Native Plant Garden Symposium takes place on May 3 at 10 a.m. in the Ross Hall at The New York Botanical Garden. Dr. Robert Naczi, the Garden's Arthur J. Cronquist Curator of North American Botany, explains how plant populations are responding to environmental change. Dr. Douglas Tallamy, Chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, discusses the essential role native plants play in sustaining native birds and insects. Author and photographer Rick Darke speaks about using native species to create vibrant designed landscapes. Native Plant Garden lead designer Sheila Brady reveals her vision for creating the new garden. A ribbon cutting ceremony immediately follows the symposium.

The public opening of the newly designed Native Plant Garden includes a celebration over two weekends on May 4 & 5 and May 11 & 12, 2013, with music, wine, food, expert tours and workshops, family fun, and more. (Activities vary each weekend, so be sure to check [www.nybg.org/npg](http://www.nybg.org/npg) for details.) The scheduled public programs offer visitors the opportunity to learn about the creation of the Native Plant Garden and the inclusion of its nearly 100,000 plants, with a selection of ideal native plants for the home gardener. Guided tours provide an exploration of the splendor of the region's natural landscapes, and curators will be on hand to offer further insight. Visitors also have the chance to explore the history, flora and fauna, and importance of native plants with many organizations in the region, such as Audubon New York, Torrey Botanical Society, Native Plant Center, Butterfly Project, and others, which will have representatives at the Garden during the first festival weekend, offering talks and workshops. Families can partake in fun activities, looking for flora and fauna of the Garden and listening to native folklore stories.

## The Native Plant Garden and the “Heart of the Garden”



The New York Botanical Garden has a long history of studying, documenting, and conserving native plants. The Garden’s founders Nathaniel Lord Britton and Elizabeth Knight Britton studied and documented the native plants of northeastern North America. The New York Botanical Garden continues to document and help preserve these and other native plants from many other regions of the world.

The Native Plant Garden completes The New York Botanical Garden’s “Heart of the Garden” projects, in which several areas at the center of the Botanical Garden’s 250-acre National Historic Landmark site were restored or transformed. The projects are public exhibitions and amenities that greatly enrich the visitor experience. They include: the restoration of The Lillian and Amy Goldman Stone Mill and surrounding landscape, which was completed in September 2010; the 11-acre Azalea Garden, which opened in May 2011; the Thain Family Forest, which was dedicated in November 2011; the restored Mitsubishi Wild Wetland Trail; and the Native Plant Garden.

*The Native Plant Garden is a gift of the Leon Levy Foundation.*

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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 prices, please check our Web site. For more information, please call 718.817.8700 or visit [nybg.org](http://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.

**Media Contact:** Nick Leshi at 718.817.8658 or [nleshi@nybg.org](mailto:nleshi@nybg.org)