



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

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The Heirloom Tomato
An Exhibition of Photographs by Victor Schrager
Opens August 12

Portraits of Historic Tomato Varieties from the Gardens of Amy Goldman

**In The New York Botanical Garden's
Arthur and Janet Ross Gallery**

Thirty-four glorious color portraits of heirloom tomatoes—a sampling of the amazing 500 varieties of tomatoes grown every year in the garden of acclaimed food writer Amy Goldman—will grace the Arthur and Janet Ross Gallery at The New York Botanical Garden starting in early August. The images are unabashed homage to the heirloom tomato in all of its rich variety of color and form. Photographer Victor Schrager's bold photographs harken back to the great tradition of botanical art and illustration, leavened with a decidedly modern sensibility. The exhibition runs from August 12, 2008, through August 30, 2009.

The images include artfully arranged still lifes such as *Amy's Theorem*, a tabletop display of tomatoes of every hue, shape, and size brimming from serving dishes, goblets, and spoons with a lushness reminiscent of an Old Master painting. *Cherry Group*, an arrangement of cherry tomatoes in a rainbow of shades, evokes a festive holiday display of brightly colored ornaments. *Sweet Pea Currant* is sparser, almost lyrical in composition. *Big Ben* and *Constoluto Genovese* capture the monumental voluptuousness and sensuality of hefty beefsteak tomatoes.

On the same day as the exhibition opens, August 12, 2008, Bloomsbury USA is publishing Amy Goldman's *The Heirloom Tomato: From Garden to Table*. The book features 200 heirloom varieties selected from 1,000 grown and tested by the author herself on her farm in Rhinebeck, New York. The book offers the pedigrees of the tomatoes along with data regarding size, weight, type, brix scale (sweetness), and seed source. Many of the seeds tested have been passed down through generations, which occasions the telling of some very charming vignettes of the people involved in developing and preserving the seeds. In this book, as in her previous ones, Amy Goldman has teamed with Victor Schrager to present the portrait of each variety. No book about tomatoes would be complete without some cherished recipes, this is no exception. Fifty-five delectable dishes showcase the versatility of the tomato.

Award-winning Photographer

Victor Schrager's work has been exhibited in numerous collections, galleries, and museums around the world, including the Whitney Museum of American Art. From September 30, 2007, into July 2008, an exhibition of his monumental photographs of heirloom squashes and melons was on display in the Ross Gallery at The New York Botanical Garden. He has been a frequent contributor to *Martha Stewart Living* and *House & Garden* magazines and has photographed for numerous books. They include *Bird Hand Book*, with A.S. Byatt, and *Anatomy of a Dish*, by Diane Forley, which won the Best Photography award in 2003 from the James Beard Foundation.

While drawing on the long tradition of botanical imagery associated with medieval illuminated manuscripts, botanical illustration, and natural subjects by artists such as Albertus Seba, Pierre-Joseph Redouté, and Raphael Peale, Mr. Schrager's photographs also recall the botanical work of photographers Karl Blossfelt, Charles Jones, Edward Weston, and Irving Penn.

About the Author and Grower

The heirloom specimens portrayed in the exhibition's photographs were grown by Amy Goldman, Ph.D. Dr. Goldman, a self-described "vegetable rights activist," works to preserve the agricultural heritage and genetic diversity of the world's fruits and vegetables. Every summer Dr. Goldman grows hundreds of different varieties of heirloom vegetables at her home in the Hudson Valley, New York.

In addition to *The Heirloom Tomato: From Garden to Table*, Dr. Goldman is the author of *Melons for the Passionate Grower* (2002) and *The Compleat Squash: A Passionate Grower's Guide to Pumpkins, Squashes, and Gourds* (2004), all collaborations with Mr. Schrager. The books are available at the Botanical Garden's bookshop.

Dr. Goldman serves on the boards of the Seed Savers Exchange, the New York Restoration Project, and The New York Botanical Garden.

Sculpture of Heirloom Vegetables

A series of stunning bronze sculptures by Amy Goldman are available at Shop in the Garden. They capture the allure of the marvelous shapes of heirloom vegetables, including a luscious tomato named *Radiator Charlie's Mortgage Lifter*. The sculptures are created through the "lost wax" process, used for thousands of years by artists in Egypt and China. Dr. Goldman has bestowed on this line of limited-edition bronzes the apt name of "Rare Forms."

*Exhibitions in the Arthur and Janet Ross Gallery
are made possible by support from the Arthur and Janet Ross Fund.*

All photographs appear courtesy of Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York City.

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The New York Botanical Garden is a museum of plants located at Bronx River Parkway (Exit 7W) and Fordham Road in the Bronx. The Garden is open year-round, Tuesday through Sunday and Monday holidays, from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. For more information, including directions, admissions pricing, and programming, please visit www.nybg.org or call 718.817.8700.

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.

Contact: George Shakespear 718.817.8512 **Images available.**