



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

For Immediate Release  
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***Darwin's Garden: An Evolutionary Adventure***

Darwin: 21st-Century Perspectives

May 6 and 8, 2008

*At The New York Botanical Garden and American Museum of Natural History*

**Hear the Latest Perspectives on Darwin from Scientists and Scholars**

In conjunction with the spring exhibition at The New York Botanical Garden celebrating Charles Darwin and his work with plants, a special symposium on two evenings in May will focus on the far-reaching legacy of Charles Darwin. It will bring together leading biologists, philosophers, and historians specializing in Charles Darwin and discuss the implications of his thinking for science and society today.

Titled *Darwin: 21st-Century Perspectives*, the two-part symposium is a collaboration between the Botanical Garden and the American Museum of Natural History. Edward O. Wilson, two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, entomologist, and biologist known for his pioneering work on evolution and sociobiology, will introduce both sessions. Dr. Wilson is also a Distinguished Counsellor to the Garden's Board.

The first session will be held in the Arthur and Janet Ross Lecture Hall at the Botanical Garden on Tuesday, May 6, at 5–7 p.m., followed by a reception. The evening's theme is "Darwin: Yesterday and Today." Panelists will be:

- David Kohn, Darwin historian, speaking on *Darwin's Delight: The Man and His Botany*;
- Michael Ruse, philosopher, *Is Darwinism an Exhausted Paradigm?*; and
- Rita Colwell, environmental microbiologist, oceanographer, and former director of the National Science Foundation, *Speciation in the Time of Microbes*.

The second session will be held in the Kaufmann Theater on the first floor of the American Museum of Natural History on Thursday, May 8, at 6:30–8:30 p.m. The evening's theme is "Human Evolution and the Complexity of Living Organisms." Panelists will be:

- Barbara Schaal, plant evolutionary biologist and vice president of the National Academy of Sciences; speaking on *Plants and People: Evolution and Domestication of Food Plants*;
- Kenneth Miller, biologist, author, and expert court witness, *Darwin, God, and Design: America's New Battle over Evolution*; and
- Gerald Edelman, biochemist and neurobiologist, *Neural Darwinism*

Admission to *Darwin: 21st-Century Perspectives* is \$10 each evening or \$16 for both sessions; free to Members of The New York Botanical Garden and the American Museum of Natural History.

Registration is required; please call 800.322.6924 for more information and to purchase tickets.

**Short Bios of Moderator and Speakers**

**Dr. Edward O. Wilson**, biologist, is serving as moderator of both sessions of *Darwin: 21st-Century Perspectives*. One of the best-known scientists in the world, Wilson has written and lectured extensively on biological diversity, biogeography, sociobiology, and the necessity of bringing biological insight into the vital center of the social sciences and the humanities. In his most recent book, *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth*, Wilson disentangles and explains science, environmentalism,

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evolution, Darwin, and secularism in several letters to a (hypothetical) Southern Baptist pastor. In 2005, he authored a book on Charles Darwin: *From So Simple a Beginning: Darwin's Four Great Books (Voyage of the Beagle, The Origin of Species, The Descent of Man, The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals)*. Wilson is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize, Pellegrino University Research Professor Emeritus at Harvard University, Distinguished Counsellor to the Board of The New York Botanical Garden, and Honorary Trustee of the American Museum of Natural History.

*Speakers on Tuesday, May 6, 2008 at The New York Botanical Garden:*

**Dr. David Kohn**, historian, is General Editor of the Darwin Digital Library of Evolution (American Museum of Natural History Research Library) and Oxnham Professor of Science and Society *Emeritus* at Drew University and Senior Research Fellow of the Charles Darwin Trust. He is also a Life Member of Clare Hall, Cambridge University, where he was based for five years as the first full-time editor of *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*. He has been at the center of scholarship concerned with interpreting Charles Darwin's intellectual development for more than a quarter of a century. In 1987 Kohn and collaborators published *Charles Darwin's Notebooks: 1836-1844*. He is currently writing a book on Darwin's evolutionary botany.

**Dr. Michael Ruse** is Lucyle T. Werkmeister Professor of Philosophy and the director of the Program in the History and Philosophy of Science at Florida State University. He is the author of many books, journal articles, and is the editor of a number of volumes on a range of topics in the history and philosophy of science. His main areas of research interest include philosophy of biology (mainly Darwinism), ethics, and history of science. Ruse's lectures and debates are noteworthy for their perceptive accounts of the human struggle to understand life's origins. His recent books include *Taking Darwin Seriously: A Naturalistic Approach to Philosophy*, *The Evolution-Creation Struggle*, and *Darwin and Design: Does Evolution Have a Purpose?*

**Dr. Rita Colwell**, microbiologist and ecologist, has authored or co-authored more than 600 scientific publications and 16 books and produced the award-winning film *Invisible Seas*. She was the first woman director of the U.S. National Science Foundation, a post she held from 1998 to 2004. She is currently Distinguished University Professor, Center for Bioinformatics and Computational Biology at the University of Maryland, College Park. Past work by Colwell and colleagues traced the source of the causative agent of cholera, *Vibrio cholerae*, to plankton in rivers and estuaries. They also linked cholera epidemiology with sea temperatures and plankton blooms, tying together global climate and disease. Currently, Colwell is using microorganisms such as bacteria, with their rapid speciation, to test Darwinian theory.

*Speakers on Thursday, May 8, 2008 at the American Museum of Natural History:*

**Dr. Barbara A. Schaal** is Spencer T. Olin Professor in Arts and Sciences, Washington University, and vice president of the US National Academy of Sciences, the first woman to hold this post. She has served as president of the Botanical Society of America and president of the Society for the Study of Evolution. A plant evolutionary biologist, Schaal was born in Berlin, Germany and grew up in Chicago. She is particularly well-known for using DNA sequences to understand evolutionary processes such as gene flow, geographical differentiation, and the domestication of crop plants. Among her other publications, Schaal was a contributing author to the recent *Darwin's Harvest: New Approaches to the Origins, Evolution, and Conservation of Crop Plants*. Her current research focuses on the evolutionary genomics of rice.

**Dr. Kenneth R. Miller** is Professor of Biology and Royce Family Professor for Teaching Excellence at Brown University. A cell biologist, he serves as an advisor on life sciences to PBS *NewsHour* and is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Miller is coauthor, with Joseph S. Levine, of four different high school and college biology textbooks used by millions of students nationwide. He has written a number of articles defending the scientific integrity of evolution, answering challenges such as “intelligent design,” and in 2005 he served as lead witness in the trial on evolution and intelligent design in Dover, Pennsylvania. His book *Finding Darwin's God: A Scientist's Search for Common Ground between God and Evolution* addresses the scientific status of evolutionary theory and its relationship to religious views of nature. His new book, *Only a Theory: Evolution and the Battle for America's Soul*, will be published by Viking in May 2008.

**Dr. Gerald M. Edelman, M.D., Ph.D.**, is Director of The Neurosciences Institute and President of Neurosciences Research Foundation, a publicly supported, not-for-profit organization that is the Institute's parent. Separately, he is Professor at The Scripps Research Institute and Chairman of the Department of Neurobiology at that institution. His early studies focused on the structure and diversity of antibodies. His subsequent work led to the discovery of cell adhesion molecules (CAMs), which have been found to guide the fundamental processes by which an animal achieves its shape and form, and by which nervous systems are built. Edelman has formulated a detailed theory to explain the development and organization of higher brain functions. This theory was presented in his volume *Neural Darwinism* (Basic Books, New York, 1987). More recently, he described a theory of consciousness in his book *Wider Than The Sky: The Phenomenal Gift of Consciousness* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2004). His latest book, *Second Nature: Brain Science and Human Knowledge* (Yale University Press), appeared in October 2006. In 1972, he received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his work on the structure and function of antibodies.

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