

THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

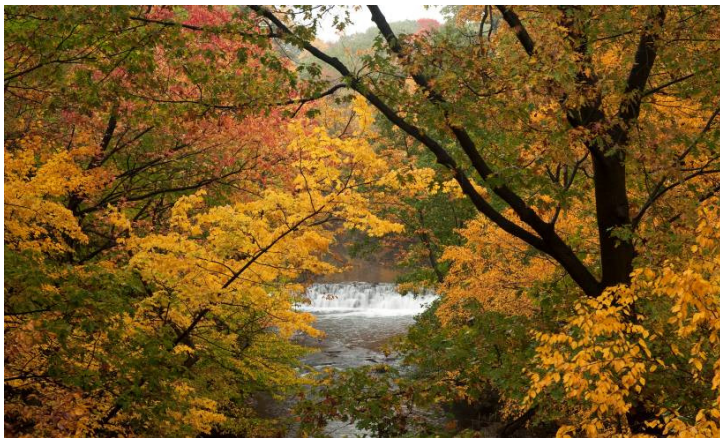
Studying, exhibiting, and conserving plants for 120 years

For Immediate Release
October 17, 2011

Thain Family Forest Dedicated During November Events at The New York Botanical Garden

**Symposium, Two Festival Weekends, and Exhibitions
Mark the Restoration of New York City's Largest Old-Growth Forest
During the United Nations International Year of Forests**

November 5–6 and November 12–13



On November 5, The New York Botanical Garden will celebrate the dedication of the Thain Family Forest, kicking off a series of public events to mark the ongoing restoration of the largest old-growth forest remaining in New York City.

Graced with towering, centuries-old oaks, hickories, beeches, sweetgums, tulip trees, and many other species, the Forest is home to many birds and other wildlife in the middle of America's largest metropolitan area. Located along an especially beautiful stretch of the Bronx River, the Forest is

both an idyllic setting for the enjoyment of Botanical Garden visitors and an unparalleled resource for studying the impacts of an urban environment and a changing climate on forest ecosystems.

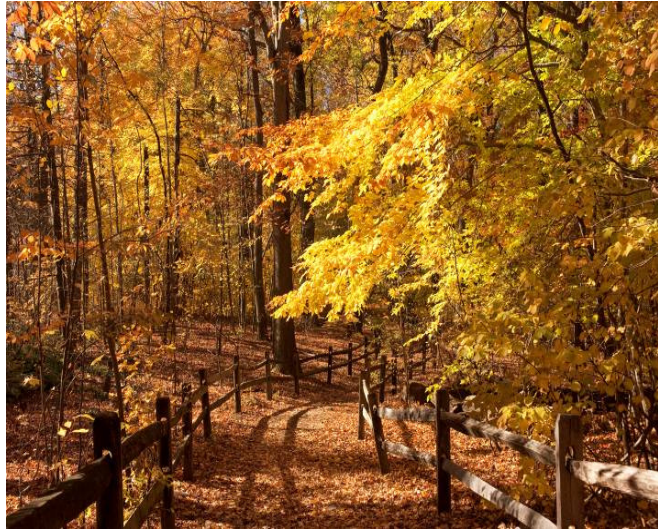
The 50-acre Forest has survived intact since the 17th century, when the region's trees began to be cut down for timber and fuel and woodlands were converted to farming. Preserved through the enlightened stewardship of a succession of landowners—including the Lorillard family, who lived and worked on the edge of the Forest from 1792 until 1870—the Forest was one of the key features that led the founders of the Garden to select the 250-acre site in the Bronx that became the Garden's home. Founding director Nathaniel Lord Britton felt that the Forest would be a uniquely valuable outdoor laboratory and classroom for the Garden's scientists and educators.

Since 2008 Garden employees and volunteers have removed hundreds of invasive, non-native trees, including 800 Amur corktrees, and other invasive plants such as Japanese honeysuckle, linden viburnum, and devil's walking stick. To take their place, the Forest restoration team has planted 5,200 trees, including oaks, hickories, sweetgums and tulip trees; 900 shrubs, such as spicebush, witch hazel and low-bush blueberry; and 3,000 other plants, including ferns, goldenrod and white wood aster. The new trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants were grown from locally sourced seeds.

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In addition trails have been re-engineered and reconstructed to improve access, and extensive new fencing and interpretative signage have been installed. Audio tour stops have been added that feature commentary by Garden horticulturists and scientists and forest-inspired poetry and folklore from around the world.

Restoration will continue with monitoring of the Forest by staff and volunteers, who collect data regularly about vegetation in research plots throughout the Forest, both as a way to guide future management and to document changes in vegetation over time, with the goal of keeping the Forest healthy and native for future generations.



Events, Exhibitions, and Activities Celebrate an Ecological Treasure

With the Forest's brilliant red and yellow leaves as a backdrop, a multi-faceted schedule of events, exhibitions and activities will provide fun-filled and educational attractions for families and forest-lovers.

The Garden's celebration begins on Saturday, November 5, with the symposium *The Future of Forests: Global, Regional, Local*, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Ross Hall. Featuring presentations by internationally recognized scientists and policymakers, this symposium will address the essential role that forests play in preserving biodiversity, mitigating human-caused environmental change, and connecting people with nature. (Admission is \$20 for Non-Garden Members, \$18 for Members; advance registration recommended at <http://www.nybg.org/adulted/>)

Festival weekends (November 5–6 and November 12–13; 12–5 p.m.) will give Garden visitors the chance to learn more about the Forest and have fun at the same time. Among the activities will be expert-led nature walks, tree-climbing with an arborist, canoeing on the Bronx River, poetry readings, and a film presentation as part of the International Forest Film Festival, a program of the United Nations International Year of Forests.

Also opening on November 5 are two forest-themed exhibitions:

- ***A Forest in the City: Centuries of Sylvan Beauty, November 5, 2011–January 16, 2012***
Explore the history and significance of the Garden's 50-acre Native Forest through magnificent botanical and natural history books, works on paper, photographs, and forest artifacts from the collections of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library accompanied by several items on loan from the collections of The American Museum of Natural History. This exhibition in the Library's Rondina Gallery brings to life the history of the Forest, examines its role as a place of discovery and habitat, and describes the ways in which the Garden practices responsible stewardship of this rare, old-growth woodland.

Exhibitions in the Mertz Library are made possible by the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust.

- ***The Forest as Laboratory, November 5, 2011–January 16, 2012***
The Native Forest has been a living laboratory for researchers in many disciplines.

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This panel and poster display in the Ross Gallery will feature findings of the research that has been conducted at the Garden as well as describe the education, science, and ecological restoration programs at the Garden.

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

Forest Restoration Part of “Heart of the Garden” Projects

The Garden, which is marking its 120th anniversary in 2011, is in the midst of a plan to restore or transform several areas at the center of its National Historic Landmark grounds. Called the “Heart of the Garden,” the five projects are public exhibitions and amenities that will greatly enrich the visitor experience. They are: the restoration of The Lillian and Amy Goldman Stone Mill and surrounding landscape, which was completed in September 2010; the new 11-acre Azalea Garden, which opened in May; the Native Forest; the new Native Plant Garden, opening in spring 2013; and ongoing work on the Mitsubishi Wild Wetland Trail.

In a 1905 lecture, Garden founding director Nathaniel Lord Britton said the Forest had been called “the most precious natural possession of the city of New York.” Continuing the Garden’s history of stewardship for its grounds, the restoration of the Forest represents a significant commitment by the Garden to guarantee the survival of the Forest’s irreplaceable biodiversity and to ensure that it remains an invaluable educational and scientific resource for future generations.

For more information and a full schedule of Forest events, go to <http://www.nybg.org/>

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The Forest project has been funded by the Thain Family, long associated with the Board of The New York Botanical Garden.

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, Rock Garden, and Tram Tour: \$20 for adults, \$18 for seniors and students with ID, \$8 for children ages 2–12, free for children under 2. A *Grounds-Only Pass* is also available: \$10 for adults, \$5 for seniors and students with ID, \$2 for children ages 2–12, free for children under 2. Grounds-only admission is free all day on Wednesdays and from 10 to 11 a.m. on Saturdays. For more information, please call 718.817.8700 or visit <http://www.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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