



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

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Dr. Barbara M. Thiers Named Vice President for Science Administration at The New York Botanical Garden

**A Leader in Digitizing Research Collections, Dr. Thiers Becomes One of the Few Women
Ever to Lead Science Research at a Major Botanical Institution**



**Dr. Barbara M. Thiers, Vice
President for Science Administration
and Patricia K. Holmgren Director of
the William and Lynda Steere
Herbarium at The New York
Botanical Garden**

The New York Botanical Garden is pleased to announce that Barbara M. Thiers, Ph.D., currently Director of the Botanical Garden's William and Lynda Steere Herbarium, has been appointed to the position of Vice President for Science Administration.

In her new role, Dr. Thiers will oversee all staff, programmatic initiatives, and operations in the Garden's Science Division.

She becomes one of the few women ever to lead science research at a major botanical institution.

"Dr. Thiers is a natural choice to fill this critical leadership position," said Gregory Long, Chief Executive Officer and The William C. Steere Sr. President of The New York Botanical Garden. "She is highly regarded throughout the Botanical Garden as a most able administrator and a leader in Science program development. Her promotion demonstrates the Garden's longstanding commitment to advancing the careers of women in science."

Dr. Thiers will also continue to take direct responsibility for the Steere Herbarium, among the four largest collections of preserved plant specimens in the world, as Patricia K. Holmgren Director of the Herbarium. This newly endowed position, the result of a major gift by Garden Board members Anne and Tom Hubbard, is named in honor of Patricia K. Holmgren, Ph.D., who served as Director of the Herbarium for 19 years and is now Director Emerita.

"I am honored and excited by the opportunity to lead The New York Botanical Garden's Science Division at an important juncture for botanical research," Dr. Thiers said. "The Garden has been contributing knowledge about plants and fungi for more than 120 years, but there is still so much to learn about these organisms that are critical for life on Earth. We need to share more information from our collections and integrate our work more tightly with worldwide biodiversity research and conservation efforts. We must also increase our contribution to science education and outreach to our local community and beyond. I look forward to addressing these challenges with the truly exceptional staff of the Science Division."

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Digitizing Scientific Collections Has Been a Major Theme of Dr. Thiers's Career

Dr. Thiers started at the Garden as a postdoctoral museum intern in 1981 and has held many positions over the course of her career, including Manager of the Cryptogamic Herbarium and Administrative Curator. In 2000 she was named Director of the Herbarium, which contains 7.3 million plant specimens.

One of the major projects she has overseen during her career at the Herbarium has been the effort to make its specimens available online to researchers and the general public by digitizing high-resolution images of the specimens and incorporating the specimens' invaluable collection information into a searchable database.

She has led the development of the Garden's electronic data-sharing program, the C.V. Starr Virtual Herbarium, since its inception in 1990. She has also led the Garden's participation in the Global Plants Initiative, a project to enable more than 100 herbaria worldwide to digitize "type specimens"—the specimens that serve as a reference point for defining a particular species—in a comprehensive online digital library. In addition, she has played a leadership role on a task force advising the National Science Foundation on an initiative to digitize biological collections at American research institutions.

Dr. Thiers has a long and extensive track record in obtaining and successfully completing many collection improvement and specimen digitization grants from the National Science Foundation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, as well as from numerous private foundations.

Since 2008 she has also served as Editor of the *Index Herbariorum*, an online reference to 3,337 institutions worldwide that house plant, fungi, and algae specimens for scientific research.

Dr. Thiers earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Biology from San Francisco State University and completed her Ph.D. in Botany at the University of Massachusetts.

She succeeds James S. Miller, Ph.D., as head of the Garden's Science Division. Dr. Miller resigned in November to become Senior Vice President, Science and Conservation, at the Missouri Botanical Garden.

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The New York Botanical Garden is a museum of plants, an educational institution, and a scientific research organization. Founded in 1891, the Botanical Garden is one of the world's preeminent centers for studying plants at all levels, from the whole organism down to its DNA. Garden scientists conduct fundamental research on plants, algae, and fungi globally, as well as on the many relationships between plants and people. A National Historic Landmark, the Garden's 250-acre site is one of the greatest botanical gardens in the world and the largest in any city in the United States, distinguished by the beauty of its diverse landscape and extensive collections and gardens, as well as by the scope and excellence of its programs in horticulture, education, and science. Learn more: 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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