



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

For Immediate Release  
January 7, 2014

## **Escape Winter's Frigid Grip With a Trip to the Tropics —Right in New York**

***Tropical Paradise* Offers a Look at The New York Botanical Garden's  
Permanent Collections in the Warmth of the Conservatory**

**Winter Exhibition Also Includes Guided and Virtual Tours,  
A Photo Display, Interactive Demonstrations, and Children's Programs**

**January 18–February 23, 2014**

Visitors to The New York Botanical Garden this winter can find a refuge from the frigid weather outside with a retreat to the warmth of *Tropical Paradise*, a showcase of the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory's permanent collection of tropical trees, flowers, and foliage, including orange-yellow crotons and fuchsia bromeliads. Through self-guided strolls, use of a virtual smart phone tour, or participation in guided tours of the Conservatory offered daily at 12:30 p.m., visitors can encounter many surprises in the largest Victorian-style glasshouse in the country. Visitors can also enjoy a display of tropical photos from the International Garden Photographer of the Year competition. Interactive demonstrations in the Conservatory provide insight to the historical and cultural importance of various plants found throughout the tropics and highlighted in the Garden's collection. Children can participate in a scavenger hunt that begins in the Conservatory and continues in the Everett Children's Adventure Garden.



The winter period between the Botanical Garden's major seasonal shows, when the climate in the Conservatory is inviting (65 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit, depending on the plant collections in a particular gallery) is an ideal time for visitors to fully immerse themselves in and take advantage of these rich collections.

Tropical displays abound with lush ornamentals planted for color and fragrance as well as plants that have medicinal and culinary uses. Many are also economically important. The mix represents species that bloom in warm-weather regions around the world that have interesting stories to tell. The New York Botanical Garden's long history of scientific research and conservation in the tropics has produced a permanent collection rich with plants from these areas. Visitors can look for species from the African bush lily to the South American false bird-of-paradise to the Caribbean passion flower.

– more –

## Programming Rounds Out the Tropical Experience

During *Tropical Paradise*, visitors can enjoy a rich selection of sights and activities. Throughout the galleries in the Conservatory, *The Beauty of Paradise: A Photographic Tour*, a display of select photographs from the International Garden Photographer of the Year competition, highlights outstanding pictures of tropical gardens, plants, and flowers taken around the world.

The *Wild Medicine mobile app* enables interaction with a number of featured medicinal plants throughout the Conservatory's galleries—saw palmetto, coconut palm, kava, cacao, jaborandi, curare, lotus, tropical blueberries, aloe, eucalyptus, and more—as visitors encounter the physical signs marking featured plants in the various galleries or by using the map in the application on their mobile devices to locate them.

**“Tropical Interactive Encounters”** offers visitors the chance to see, smell, or taste the rejuvenating and healing powers of tropical plants like coconut, nutmeg, annatto, and banana through demonstrations at interactive stations. In addition, a gallery of large light-box photographs highlights some of the remote locations around the world where Garden scientists have collected and studied healing plants.

**“Adventures in Adaptations”** is a scavenger hunt with components in multiple Garden venues that teaches plant adaptation in different climates. Young visitors are offered field notebooks when they enter the Conservatory. Inside, they find simulated entries about plant adaptations written by a traveling scientist, and they use the clues in the entries, as well as clues sent to them by text message, to solve the puzzle of where in the world the scientist has been, and where he or she is going next. The scavenger hunt stretches through the galleries of the Conservatory and outdoors toward the Leon Levy Visitor Center, concluding in the Everett Children's Adventure Garden.

After the hunt, hands-on activities in the Discovery Center include sorting fruits and leaves and potting up plants to take home, all part of the **“Tropical Discoveries and Wintertime Wonders”** program. Kids of all ages take a closer look at the differences between tropical and temperate plants. They also have the chance to make bark rubbings, count tree rings, and head back into the winter garden with a field notebook to discover the vital sparks of life that lie just below the surface of this quiet season.

## Embark Upon a Warm Ecotour of the World



The Garden's permanent ecotour, *A World of Plants*, also allows discovery of aquatics, medicinal plants, unusual species, and the process of evolutionary change. The journey of discovery begins with the Conservatory's exhibition of palms. *Palms of the World*, features exotic species that occur in warm regions across the globe. A diversity of palms from every known tropical habitat is displayed. The collection includes the red sealing wax palm, an exotic ornamental from Malaysia prized throughout the tropics for its bright-red crownshaft and clumping habit, as well as the Seychelles stilt palm, a curious ornamental with a spiny trunk and stilt roots. Towering palms, cycads, and ferns surround a large pool that reflects the magnificent and iconic dome of the Conservatory, 90 feet above.

– more –

A stroll through the Conservatory is also a journey through time, because many plants such as cycads are survivors of great evolutionary changes. Their leaves are not that different today from the leaves of their ancestors geological ages ago.

In the Conservatory's ***Lowland Tropical Rain Forest Gallery***, a re-created Healer's House illustrates how traditional healers use plants to treat human illnesses as well as how ethnobotanists gather and preserve the plants and the healers' knowledge. This ethnobotanical discipline—the study of the relationship between plants and people—not only preserves centuries-old knowledge, but also points toward plants that may be useful in pharmacological research, or in the ever-growing market for herbal medicine. Nearby, visitors discover the cacao tree, the source of chocolate. A skywalk leads up into the taller regions of the rain forest canopy, where one experiences the steady mist that rain forest explorers encounter in the wild.

In the ***Aquatic Plants and Vines Gallery***, lush curtains of tropical vines drape from the arching lattice of the glasshouse roof around an elegant fountain and pool displaying aquatic plants. The Conservatory's aquatic collection—plants adapted to life in the water—includes papyrus, the plant used to make some of the earliest paper.

As visitors enter the ***Upland Tropical Rain Forest Gallery***, they see an encased orchid display featuring an assortment of exotic specimens from the Garden's spectacular collection. High-elevation plants dangle and weave throughout the gallery, reminiscent of the tree ferns, mosses, relatives of blueberries, ferns, bamboos, and bromeliads one would find in a cloud forest.

The ***Deserts of the Americas*** and the ***Deserts of Africa Galleries*** house plants such as cacti, agave, boojum trees, euphorbias, aloes, and “living stones” or *Lithops* that have adapted to dry and challenging climates. Many of the desert plants on display in raised beds are succulents, the collective name for the thick-fleshed species designed for water storage. The two galleries provide a contrast between the older deserts of Africa and Australia—with their undulating plains and vast expanses of sand—and the geologically younger deserts of the Americas, with their mountains, basins, and flats.



A display of carnivorous Venus' flytraps and pitcher plants and deliciously fragrant citrus flowers and fruits in the ***Hanging Baskets Gallery*** concludes the educational and enticing trek.

#### **Other Attractions Both Indoors and Out**

***Four Seasons*** is an outdoor installation of four sculptures—each standing more than 15 feet high—by contemporary American artist Philip Haas. Encompassing Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter, the works are inspired by the 16th-Century creations of Italian Renaissance painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo. ***Four Seasons*** will be on display in the Conservatory Courtyard through March 31, 2014. A display of the artist's maquettes is also on view in the 6th-floor rotunda of the Garden's Library building.

Through March 16, 2014, in the Arthur and Janet Ross Gallery, *Close: A Journey in Scotland* highlights the spectacular images captured by landscape photojournalist Allan Pollok-Morris during several years traveling throughout Scotland in search of new works in landscape and land art. The title of the exhibition, “Close,” is a traditional Scottish term used to describe a landscape so inspirational that heaven seems closer to Earth in that place. A lavishly illustrated, full-color book by the artist is available for purchase at Shop in the Garden.

Another indoor exhibition at The New York Botanical Garden is located in the Library building in the Britton Science Rotunda and Gallery. *Plants and Fungi: Ten Current Research Stories* offers a peek at some of the mysteries of the plant world that are being unraveled by Garden scientists through their global field trips.

Since the 1890s, scientists at the Garden have traveled far and wide to better understand plants and fungi, their relationship to their environments, and their many uses by people around the world. Visitors can get a glimpse of their valuable work through this exhibition. Photographs, diagrams, unusual plant specimens, artifacts from explorations in remote locales, and audio/visual presentations bring to life ten research projects, from the study of mosses and lichens to Brazil nuts and vanilla orchids.



The displays and presentations reveal how they use modern tools such as DNA fingerprinting as well as classic techniques of plant exploration, and how they are studying topics like genetic diversity in rice and a nerve toxin in cycads that may provide insight into Alzheimer’s disease.

For intrepid lovers of winter, outdoor attractions abound. A **Tram Tour** highlights collections on the Garden’s 250 acres of historic landscapes and tree specimens from around the world. The **Native Plant Garden**, designed to be vibrant in all seasons, features thousands of local plant species. The 50-acre **Thain Family Forest** is the largest remnant of original forest that once covered most of New York City. The **Arthur and Janet Ross Conifer Arboretum**, 37 acres surrounding the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, exhibits 250 specimens of the world’s temperate pines, spruces, and firs as they live in the wild. This collection, the first ever planted in the Garden, is more than 100 years old. The **Benenson Ornamental Conifers**, 15 acres in the southeastern corner of the Garden, is a collection of more than 400 hybrids and horticultural selections of conifers, including some of the world’s rarest dwarf, weeping, and unusual forms of conifers.

**Adult Education classes** provide opportunities to start a new career in botanical art, botany, floral design, gardening, horticultural therapy, horticulture, and landscape design. **Shop in the Garden** offers a wide assortment of items for garden enthusiasts, nature lovers, and souvenir seekers. The **Garden Cafe** presents a menu of entrées, sandwiches, soups, desserts, and beverages.

– more –

No matter what the weather is like outside, there is plenty to see and do at The New York Botanical Garden. For more information, visit [nybg.org](http://nybg.org) or call 718.817.8700.

*Mobile Media sponsored by Bloomberg*

###

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, 10 a.m.–5 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 Contacts:** Nick Leshi at 718.817.8658 or [nleshi@nybg.org](mailto:nleshi@nybg.org) — **Images available**