



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

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**Discover the Curative Power of Tropical Rain Forests
At NYBG's New Winter Exhibition, *Wild Medicine in the Tropics***

**Learn How Plants Are Used for Health and Wellness
While Enjoying the Warmth of the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory**

January 24–February 22, 2015

Visitors to The New York Botanical Garden this winter can explore the warm rain forest and desert galleries of the landmark Enid A. Haupt Conservatory to discover how plants are used for health and wellness during *Wild Medicine in the Tropics*, the Botanical Garden's new winter exhibition. Drawing on the Haupt Conservatory's richly varied permanent collection of tropical trees, exotic flowers, and desert succulents, *Wild Medicine in the Tropics* underscores the essential role that plants play in human health while providing an escape from winter's icy grip.

Opening January 24 and running through February 22, 2015, *Wild Medicine in the Tropics* builds on the success of the Garden's multifaceted 2013 exhibition, *Wild Medicine: Healing Plants Around the World, Featuring The Italian Renaissance Garden*. With interpretative signage, an award-winning iPhone app, and related programming for adults and children, *Wild Medicine in the Tropics* shows how cultures around the world rely on plants for everything from medicine to cosmetics and features plants that are essential to a wide variety of healing traditions.

The winter period between the 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 immerse themselves in the Conservatory's rich collections, a product of the Garden's long history of scientific research and conservation in the tropics.

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From the Common Cold to Cancer, People Use Plants to Fight Disease and Protect Health

People have relied on the healing power of plants for millennia. Today, 25 percent of prescription medicines are derived from plant ingredients, and 4.5 billion people worldwide use plants for part of their health care needs. During *Wild Medicine in the Tropics*, visitors will encounter more than 50 highlighted plant species and varieties found in different parts of the world that have been especially valued for their importance in promoting health or fighting disease.



From Central and South America, the bark of the cinchona tree (genus *Cinchona*) is the source of quinine, long used to prevent and treat malaria as well as to give tonic water its distinctive taste. In traditional Chinese medicine, the ephedra plant (genus *Ephedra*) has been used for thousands of years to alleviate the symptoms of asthma, allergies, and colds. It is the original source of the popular decongestants ephedrine and pseudoephedrine. And from Madagascar comes the rosy periwinkle (*Catharanthus roseus*, shown at left), a pretty perennial with pink flowers whose leaves are the source of the powerful compounds vincristine and vinblastine, used in chemotherapy to fight cancer.

Also, to show that plant-based medicine can taste delicious as well as be therapeutic, informative signage will explain how the seeds of the tropical tree species *Theobroma cacao* are turned into one of mankind's favorite treats—chocolate. Enjoyed for its rich flavor, chocolate also has medicinal properties. Theobromine, the main active ingredient in chocolate, is a stimulant that dilates blood vessels, improving blood flow, while another ingredient, theophylline, is used to treat asthma and relieve congestion.

Mobile App and Programming Enhance the *Wild Medicine in the Tropics* Experience

The ***Wild Medicine* mobile app** for iPhones enables interaction with a number of featured medicinal plants throughout the Conservatory's galleries—saw palmetto, coconut palm, kava, cacao, jaborandi, curare, tropical blueberries, aloe, and more. As visitors encounter the physical signs marking featured plants in the various galleries, they can view animations on their iPhones showing how the plants heal the body. The *Wild Medicine* app, available for free download through the iTunes app store, won the first-place gold award in the mobile applications category of the 2014 Media & Technology Muse Awards, presented by the American Alliance of Museums.

During *Wild Medicine in the Tropics*, visitors can also enjoy a selection of sights and activities to round out their tropical Garden experience. On Saturdays and Sundays from 1 to 3 p.m., a Garden photography expert will be on hand for **Photography Tips and Tricks in the Tropics**. Advice on perspective, lighting, and composition will be provided, as well as encouragement and critiques for budding photographers. Meet in the Conservatory's *Palms of the World Gallery*. The program includes a 20-minute tour of *Wild Medicine in the Tropics* at 1:30 p.m. (*All-Garden Pass* admission is required. No monopods or tripods are allowed in the Conservatory.)

Valentine's Day Date in The New York Botanical Garden will provide an opportunity to explore *Wild Medicine in the Tropics* after dark with a loved one. In the lush surroundings of the Conservatory, visitors will be treated to a complimentary glass of champagne and can enjoy curated indulgences from the cash bar. Guides will be on hand throughout the Haupt Conservatory to share information about the romantic qualities of chocolate and other plant-based aphrodisiacs. (Saturday, February 14, 5:30–7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$40.)

At the Everett Children's Adventure Garden, **Tropical Discoveries and Wintertime Wonders** will allow children of all ages to take a closer look at the differences between tropical and temperate plants. In the Children's Adventure Garden's cozy Discovery Center, kids can pot a tropical plant to take home and compare its characteristics with foliage in their neighborhood. They will also 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. (Tuesday, January 27–Friday, February 27)

Embark Upon a Warm Ecotour of the World



The Garden's permanent ecotour, *A World of Plants*, allows visitors to discover not only the medicinal plants featured during *Wild Medicine in the Tropics*, but also aquatic plants, unusual species, and the process of evolutionary change. The journey begins with the Conservatory's exhibition of palms. *Palms of the World* features species that occur in warm regions across the globe, including the coconut palm and saw palmetto, both of which have medicinal uses. Towering palms, cycads, and ferns surround a large pool that reflects the iconic dome of the Conservatory, 90 feet above.

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 Healer's House features displays that illustrate how traditional healers use plants to treat human illnesses as well as how ethnobotanists gather and preserve the plants and the healers' knowledge. Ethnobotany—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. In addition to the cacao tree, kava, tamarind, annatto, jaborandi, and curare are among the many medicinal plants that visitors will encounter in this gallery. At the far end of the gallery, a skywalk leads up into the rain forest canopy.

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. Medicinal plants on display include the rosy periwinkle, the tea plant, and passion flower.

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 throughout the gallery, and tree ferns, mosses, relatives of blueberries, and bromeliads recreate the environment one would find in a cloud forest. Among the medicinal plants in this gallery is the cinchona tree, the source of malaria-fighting quinine.

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Leaving the gallery, an underground passageway features a display of breathtaking light-box photographs that highlight some of the remote locations around the world where Garden scientists have collected and studied the diversity of plant life, including healing plants.

The *Deserts of the Americas* and the *Deserts of Africa Galleries* house plants such as cacti, agave, euphorbias, and “living stones,” or *Lithops*, which 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. Ephedra, jojoba, and aloe are some of the medicinal plants that call the desert home.

In the *Hanging Baskets Gallery*, a display of carnivorous Venus flytraps and pitcher plants and containers of deliciously fragrant citrus plants, whose fruits are the source of health-enhancing juices, conclude the Conservatory’s global trek.

Other Garden Attractions Both Indoors and Out

Through February 22, *Flora Illustrata: A Celebration of Botanical Masterworks* showcases some of the most important and fascinating holdings in the Garden’s LuEsther T. Mertz Library. More than eight centuries of knowledge, from the twelfth century to the present, are represented in the Library’s Collection. This sumptuous exhibition in the Art Gallery includes rare books, botanical artworks, illustrated manuscripts, medieval herbals, garden prints, explorers’ notebooks, and more. The accompanying book, *Flora Illustrata: Great Works from the LuEsther T. Mertz Library of The New York Botanical Garden*, is available at Shop in the Garden.

Another indoor exhibition is also located in the Library building. *Plants and Fungi: Ten Current Research Stories* in the Britton Science Rotunda and Gallery offers a look 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 the globe 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 10 research projects, from the study of mosses and lichens to Brazil nuts and vanilla orchids.

The displays and presentations reveal how scientists use modern tools such as DNA fingerprinting as well as classic techniques of plant exploration, and how they are studying such topics as 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 in New York City of the original forest that once covered most of the New York metropolitan area. The **Arthur and Janet Ross Conifer Arboretum**, 37 acres around the Conservatory, exhibits 250 specimens of the world's temperate pines, spruces, and firs as they live in the wild. This collection, the first planted at 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 learn new skills and even 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 Pine Tree Café** presents a menu of sandwiches, pizza, salads, soups, desserts, and beverages.

No matter the weather, there is plenty to see and do at The New York Botanical Garden. For more information, visit nybg.org or call 718.817.8700.

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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. 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

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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