

NYBG

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NYBG's Winter Exhibition *Wild Medicine in the Tropics* Highlights the Healing Power Of Plants in the Warmth of the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory

Highlights During the Exhibition's January 20–February 25, 2018, Run Include Valentine's Weekend Events, Family Programming, and the Botanical Art Exhibition *Out of the Woods: Celebrating Trees in Public Gardens*



The Upland Tropical Rain Forest Gallery in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory is home to many of the medicinal plants featured in *Wild Medicine in the Tropics*.

Bronx, NY—The curative bounty of the rain forest is the focus of The New York Botanical Garden's winter exhibition, *Wild Medicine in the Tropics*, opening on January 20 and running through February 25, 2018. The exhibition draws on the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory's richly varied permanent collection of tropical trees, exotic flowers, and desert succulents to underscore the essential role that plants play in human health.

With interpretive signage 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 Botanical Garden's major seasonal shows—when the climate in the Conservatory is an 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.

Mankind Has Long Used 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. 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.

Programs and Activities Enhance NYBG's Tropical Experience in Wintertime

During *Wild Medicine in the Tropics*, visitors can also enjoy special programs and activities to round out their tropical Garden experience. On **Valentine's Weekend**, Saturday and Sunday, February 10 & 11, roaming guides will be on hand from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. to talk about the many plants at the Garden that have been used as aphrodisiacs, and from 1 to 5 p.m., a professional poet will craft special poems for visitors. At 1 & 3 p.m., expert chocolatier Roni Sue will lead mini-seminars about chocolate and tastings at NYBG Shop. In Ross Hall, a screening of the romantic comedy *Love, Actually* will start at 1 p.m. From 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., the Hudson Garden Grill, the Garden's full-service dining destination, will feature a special *prix fixe* menu along with its seasonal winter menu; reservations are available on OpenTable.com or by calling 646.627.7711.

Also on Valentine's Weekend, visitors can get a rare behind-the-scenes look at the William and Lynda Steere Herbarium, the Garden's research collection of 7.8 million preserved plant specimens, the second-largest in the world. The Steere Herbarium will hold an open house on Sunday, February 11, from 12 to 3 p.m., featuring not only some of the Herbarium's most prized and historic specimens but also plants with romantic associations such as reputed aphrodisiacs, orchids that have evolved ingenious ways to attract pollinators, and more.

At the Everett Children's Adventure Garden, **Wintertime Wonders** will allow children of all ages to take a closer look at the wonders of plants and animals in winter. In the Children's Adventure Garden's cozy Discovery Center, kids will make bark rubbings and a necklace made of buds, count tree rings, and head 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 23–Sunday, March 18; starts at 1:30 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. on weekends and runs until 4:30 p.m.)

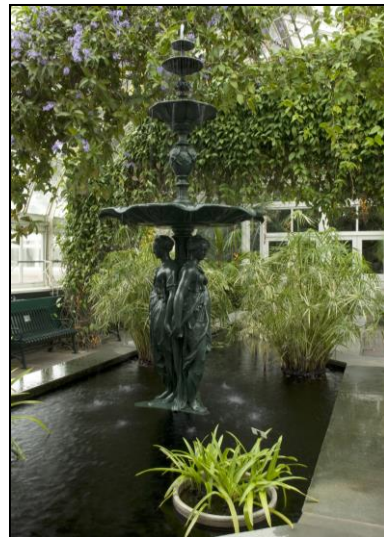
Take an Ecotour of the World in the Comfort of the Conservatory



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 collection of palms. The ***Palms of the World Gallery*** 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. Many plants such as cycads are survivors of great evolutionary changes, little changed from 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. 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 dangle 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. Visitors follow a winding path through the gallery, where 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.

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 known 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, Offer Much to See and Do

Celebrating the wonder of trees, the contemporary botanical art exhibition *Out of the Woods: Celebrating Trees in Public Gardens* is on view in the Ross Gallery until April 22, 2018. Presented in conjunction with the American Society of Botanical Artists (ASBA), 42 contemporary drawn and painted works from 38 artists showcase a wide array of trees and the ways they are seen. A jury of art and horticulture experts chose the works from more than 200 international entries.



© Esmée Winkel, Leiden's 300-Year-Old Tulip Tree in Autumn (2016)
Liriodendron tulipifera, Hortus Botanicus Leiden, Leiden, The Netherlands
Watercolor on paper

Botanical art possesses a unique power among fine art forms to educate about plants and promote ecological awareness. The artistry with which each specimen is rendered inspires viewers to take greater notice of the awe-inspiring qualities of the trees around them. A hawthorn or magnolia might draw attention when in flower, but the botanical artist sees more: a gnarled root, the rainbow hues of lichen, or the cherry-red clusters of seeds.

Included in the exhibition are works depicting several trees found at NYBG and created by instructors in NYBG's Botanical Art &

Illustration Certificate Program: Ingrid Finnan's Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*) and Snake Branch Spruce (*Picea abies* 'Virgata'); Betsy Rogers-Knox's Goldenrain Tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*); and Carol Woodin's Yellow Magnolia (*Magnolia* 'Elizabeth'). Media include watercolor, oil, graphite, colored pencil, and ink.

In conjunction with *Out of the Woods*, NYBG is presenting several one-day workshops dedicated to basic watercolor techniques used in botanical art and illustration. Attendees of all skill levels will learn to capture the beautiful colors and unique details of different botanical subjects. On Saturday, January 28, the "Seed Pods" workshop explores the craggy textures and desolate beauty of winter seed pods. "Market Flowers" studies the warm tones of flowers available in corner markets, even in winter's cold; two separate sessions will be held on Sunday, February 11 and Sunday, February 25. Weekend Watercolor workshops take place from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Garden (\$105/Non-Members; \$95/Members).

Another indoor exhibition is ***Saving the Plants of the World: Science in Action***, located in the Britton Science Rotunda and Gallery of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library Building. For more than a century, NYBG scientists 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. This ongoing exhibition offers visitors a glimpse of their groundbreaking work. Photographs, diagrams, unusual plant specimens, and artifacts from explorations in remote locales bring to life research into a variety of plant types, including ferns, conifers, and lichens, using modern tools such as DNA analysis as well as classic techniques of plant classification. Over a length of more than 20 feet, a colorful mural traces the fascinating evolution of plant life stretching back hundreds of millions of years.

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 (for more information or to register, go to nybg.org/adulted or call 718.817.8747). **NYBG Shop** offers a wide assortment of items for garden enthusiasts, nature lovers, and souvenir seekers, and the **Pine Tree Cafe** features a variety of light fare, including sandwiches, salads, snacks 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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Exhibitions in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory are made possible by the Estate of Enid A. Haupt.

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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. Through February 16, 2017, the Garden is open Tuesday through Sunday and Monday from 10 a.m. to 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 pricing, 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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