

NYBG

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NYBG's State-of-the-Art Edible Academy Dedicated Today, Dramatically Expanding Its Garden-based Education Program for Children, Teachers, and the General Public

Addressing the National Concern about Childhood Obesity, the Three-Acre Campus Doubles NYBG's Capacity to Teach People How to Grow, Harvest, and Prepare Healthful Produce



Cutting the ribbon to open NYBG's Edible Academy were (left to right): Tom Finkelpearl, Commissioner, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs; William D. Rueckert, President, Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation; Gregory Long, CEO and The William C. Steere Sr. President, NYBG; Bill de Blasio, Mayor, New York City; Maureen K. Chilton, Chairman, NYBG Board of Trustees; Carrie Reborra Barratt, CEO- and President-Designate, NYBG; Annie Novak, Manager of the Edible Academy, NYBG; and Toby Adams, Gregory Long Director of the Edible Academy, NYBG.

Bronx, NY, June 14, 2018—Marking a major expansion of its acclaimed garden-based education program, The New York Botanical Garden dedicated its new \$28 million Edible Academy in a festive ribbon-cutting ceremony today, featuring NYBG leaders, government officials, corporate and foundation donors, and dozens of Bronx schoolchildren. The indoor-outdoor campus, designed by the distinguished architecture firm Cooper Robertson at the cutting edge of sustainable technology, allows the Botanical Garden's edible gardening program for children, families, teachers, and the general public to operate year-round, doubling its capacity.

During the ceremony, students from two Bronx elementary schools presented a ceremonial “first harvest” of plants from the gardens of the Edible Academy. Joining NYBG Chairman Maureen K. Chilton and Chief Executive Officer and The William C. Steere Sr. President Gregory Long for the ribbon cutting at the entrance to the Edible Academy were state, city, and Bronx public officials. Participants included New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl, among others.



The indoor-outdoor campus of the new Edible Academy now allows NYBG’s edible gardening program to operate year-round. © Robert Benson Photography

The Edible Academy opens to the public with a weekend celebration on Saturday and Sunday, June 16 & 17. With the existing Ruth Rea Howell Vegetable Garden as its centerpiece, the Edible Academy features a 5,300-square-foot classroom building with a demonstration kitchen and a high-tech classroom; a teaching greenhouse; two outdoor pavilions for programs, including one at treetop level offering a vista of the Garden’s old-growth forest and the Bronx River; a tiered lawn amphitheater designed to seat 350; and spacious gardens where children, educators, and other visitors will learn about plants and grow and harvest their own produce.



The Edible Academy Classroom Building includes a Demonstration Kitchen Classroom to show children, families, teachers, and the general public how to cook with edible plants. © Robert Benson Photography

“We have long dreamed of expanding the Ruth Rea Howell Vegetable Garden,” said Maureen K. Chilton, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of The New York Botanical Garden. “With the opening of the Edible Academy, we will now be able to offer even more educational resources, impacting the lives of countless children as they learn about gardening, plant science, and healthful living. I would like to thank all of the generous

donors, both public and private, who have contributed to the creation of the Edible Academy. Because of your efforts, the dream is now a reality.”

The Edible Academy builds on NYBG's decades of success in providing children the opportunity to connect with nature, dating from the founding of the Children's Gardening Program in 1956. A bigger, broader range of educational programs and activities will double the number of people who can be served from 50,000 to 100,000 annually. In addition to existing programs for school groups and families, the Edible Academy will be able to offer new after-school programs, expanded teacher training, cooking demonstrations, distance learning, and special events.

“The Edible Academy is the ideal place for teaching the principles and best practices of organic vegetable gardening and for discovering the pleasures and benefits of eating fresh vegetables and then taking those lessons home to your family,” said Gregory Long, Chief Executive Officer and The William C. Steere Sr. President of The New York Botanical Garden.

The opening of the Edible Academy comes at a time of heightened national concern about childhood obesity and related diseases such as diabetes. The area around NYBG has one of the highest rates of food insecurity in the nation, with lack of access to fresh, affordable fruit and vegetables and high rates of obesity-related ailments. Extensive research has shown, however, that children who plant and harvest their own produce develop important life skills and are more likely to eat fresh fruit and vegetables.

The City of New York, including the Mayor's Office and City Council, provided \$8.6 million for the Edible Academy through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. The State of New York, through the leadership of the New York State Senate and New York State Assembly, provided \$2.5 million for the Edible Academy.

“Though New York City offers students access to parks, cultural institutions, and educational experiences unlike anywhere else, opportunities to learn about agriculture in our urban jungle can be a little harder to find,” said New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. “That's why we're proud to support The New York Botanical Garden's newly expanded Edible Academy. Now, more children, educators, and families can use this extraordinary resource to better understand the connections between diet, well-being, and the stewardship of our planet.”

“Programs like the Edible Academy are essential investments for our future,” said New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson. “Kids need an education beyond the classroom, and teaching them how to make smart, healthy eating choices is a skill they will carry for the rest of their lives. By targeting children when they are young, and by making these healthy food choices more accessible, we can help create good lifelong practices that will help set the kids in this program up for success. I congratulate The New York Botanical Garden on this

momentous expansion of its already stellar educational offerings, an addition the New York City Council was proud to support.”

“There’s no better way to learn than getting your hands dirty. With the opening of this remarkable new facility, there’s no better place to get your hands dirty than the Edible Academy at NYBG,” said NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelparl. “From the new gardens and greenhouse, to education facilities and even a performance venue, these new sustainably designed, earth-friendly features will make this a year-round destination for students, families, and other visitors. We’re proud of the city’s investment in this project, and look forward to watching as future generations develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the environment, its connection to the food we eat, and the health of our neighbors and communities.”

“The obesity crisis has a stronghold in the Bronx, where there is a lack of resources to promote and teach the values of healthy eating, but this new Edible Academy will tackle the issue head-on. It takes partnerships among families, community groups, government, cultural institutions, and others to tackle obesity and improve access to healthy food and better eating habits. I congratulate NYBG on this expansion and look forward to a strong partnership to improve health outcomes in the Bronx,” said Councilmember Ritchie Torres.

“I am proud to have allocated \$1.5 million in state funding to The New York Botanical Garden to support the construction of a new state-of-the-art and environmentally sustainable facility for the Edible Academy. As a result, more children can participate in this crucial program addressing childhood obesity and teaching healthy eating practices to our Bronx families. We must continue to invest in our children’s health and well-being and provide them with access to the tools to stay healthy,” said New York State Senator Jeffrey D. Klein.

“The opening of the Edible Academy has presented The New York Botanical Garden with the opportunity to offer more educational resources to the children of New York City, where they will gain knowledge about health, wellness, and the influence food has on our bodies,” said New York State Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie. “By making an investment in the Edible Academy, the Assembly seeks to ensure that our children will have the ability to effectively make use of the living world around us for generations to come while also fostering the skills necessary to understand the vital role nutrition plays in our lives.”

This major addition to the Garden’s built environment is opening as Gregory Long prepares to step down as the Garden’s CEO and President at the end of June. During his transformational 29-year tenure, the institution has completed capital projects totaling \$350 million, including new buildings and gardens, renovated historic structures, and restored landscapes and gardens. Carrie Reborá Barratt, Ph.D., currently Deputy Director for Collections and Administration at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, will succeed him, beginning July 1.

Innovative and Sustainable Design Elements Are Combined with a Farm-like Setting

As designed by the esteemed New York architecture firm Cooper Robertson, the Edible Academy campus has the feel of a modern farm, with rows of plantings at its center and simple building structures inspired by the vernacular forms of agricultural barns and sheds.

Sustainable components of the Edible Academy's campus include a green roof for the classroom building, geothermal wells for heating and cooling, a freestanding solar pavilion to help power the facility, and composting toilets, all designed to minimize the environmental impact of the facility and support one of the largest educational gardening programs in the United States. The Edible Academy's sustainability features are designed to meet the criteria for certification as a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold project.

The major components of the Edible Academy include:

- **Ruth Rea Howell Vegetable Garden**
Established in 1993, the Howell Vegetable Garden is a collection of three gardens—**Green Thumb Garden, Global Garden, Children's Gardening Program Garden**—with a variety of beds where visitors roll up their sleeves and dig in. The Vegetable Garden provides daily activities and programs to engage children and adults of all ages in planting, tending, and harvesting crops.
- **Classroom Building**
The Classroom Building features the **Demonstration Kitchen Classroom**, with capacity of up to 35 participants, **Palm Family Edible Academy Technology (E.A.T.) Lab**, with capacity of up to 35 participants, and a **Green Roof** of succulents to detain stormwater and add insulation, reducing the energy needed to heat and cool the building.
- **Greenhouse**
The teaching greenhouse, with maximum sun exposure, temperature control, and a shading system, provides an ideal space and controlled growing conditions for the propagation of thousands of seedlings throughout the year.
- **Pauline Gillespie Gossett Overlook Pavilion**
The Gossett Overlook Pavilion, situated adjacent to the Classroom Building, provides a dramatic view of the Bronx River waterfall and Thain Family Forest, the largest remaining old-growth forest in New York City. Many of the Edible Academy's garden-based education lessons and cooking demonstrations take place in this open-air pavilion, with capacity of up to 72 participants.

- **Susan P. and Coley Burke Amphitheater**
 The Burke Amphitheater, with seating capacity of up to 350, featuring a terraced lawn and stage with the Bronx River and Thain Family Forest as a backdrop, hosts events, cooking demonstrations, and performances.
- **Solar Pavilion**
 This open-air pavilion, featuring an array of photovoltaic panels to capture solar energy, is designed as a gathering place for many of the Edible Academy's garden-based education lessons, with capacity of up to 54 participants.
- **Geothermal Wells**
 To increase efficiency and reduce NYBG's carbon emissions in heating and cooling the Classroom Building, a series of eight hydronic wells uses Earth as a sustainable heat source in winter and a heat exchanger in summer by taking advantage of naturally moderate groundwater temperatures. The wells are 465 feet deep.
- **Stavros Niarchos Foundation Entry Plaza**
 The Niarchos Foundation Entry Plaza provides welcoming access to the Edible Academy and offers a spectacular view of all of the campus components. Seasonal edible plantings flank the entrance gate.
- **Wamsler Phillips Plant Nursery**
 The Wamsler Phillips Plant Nursery, an essential part of the Edible Academy's educational mission, serves as a conditioning area for seedlings propagated in the Greenhouse and destined for the many gardens.
- **Royce Family Meadow Garden**
 The Royce Family Meadow Garden features winding paths and a diverse palette of native perennial shrubs and herbaceous plants. It will attract beneficial insects and provide rich opportunities for participants in all Edible Academy programs to observe the important relationships between plants and animals.
- **Jean W. Douglas School Garden Demonstration Area**
 The Douglas School Garden Demonstration Area, designed to inspire teachers to incorporate garden-based education programs on their campuses, includes planting beds, a compost station, and Munchy, a topiary caterpillar.
- **Kate Solomon Family Apiary**
 The Solomon Family Apiary, viewable from the Overlook Pavilion, is home to two hives with thousands of honeybees that aid plant pollination as well as production of delicious honey.

- **Rappaport Family Toolshed**

The Rappaport Family Toolshed houses the Edible Academy's inventory of garden tools and equipment.

- **Service Yard**

This area is utilized by Edible Academy staff for staging events and as a work space to support programming initiatives.

The following features are adjacent to the main Edible Academy campus:

- **Barnsley Beds**

This collection of eight garden beds includes a combination of ornamental arrangements inspired by legendary English garden designer Rosemary Verey and the potager garden style, as well as traditional rows featuring varieties of particular crop groups. A long-term crop rotation plan and companion planting techniques will promote a healthy garden.

- **Event Lawn**

This semi-circular lawn, framed by the Barnsley Beds, will be a venue for a variety of Edible Academy programming.

- **Green Zone with Edible Academy Restrooms**

The Green Zone—featuring the Green Materials Recycling Center, a project of NYBG Trustee Diane Katzin—is NYBG's hub for recycling plant-based debris and other organic materials to produce compost and mulch. The Edible Academy Restrooms feature composting toilets, helping to protect the watershed by reducing water consumption.

- **Butterfly Tram Stop**

A covered stop provides access to and from the Edible Academy, Garden announcements and orientation, as well as shelter during inclement weather.

As of June 14, select naming opportunities that support Edible Academy programming remain available.

Tours and Activities Planned for the Edible Academy Opening Weekend Celebration

Edible Academy Opening Weekend Celebration activities on Saturday and Sunday, June 16 & 17, include tours of the Edible Academy, hands-on gardening activities for children, a Makers Station where children can decorate a harvest bag with botanical stamps, a chance to meet the Global Gardeners and learn about their internationally inspired beds, and more. Chefs

from Edible Academy partners Blue Apron and Sabra Dipping Company will lead family-friendly culinary workshops featuring ingredients fresh from the garden that will inspire participants of all ages, with samples shared following each workshop.

Adding to the opening celebration will be curator-led tours highlighting the Edible Academy's sustainable building practices and the innovations they will bring to the Garden's programming, booksignings with local authors, and live music with family-friendly songs and dancing.

To raise awareness in the area around NYBG about the Edible Academy and its mission to promote plant-based nutrition, the Garden distributed 2,000 vouchers to Bronx community organizations valid for free admission during the weekend celebration.

Members of NYBG's Education and Edible Academy Committees

Caroline A. Wamsler, Ph.D., is Chairman and Mrs. Edith B. Everett, Mrs. Andrew Heiskell, and Mrs. Nicholas J. Sakellariadis are Honorary Chairmen of NYBG's Education Committee. Committee members include: R. Ellen Avellino, Kim Bendheim, Cynthia D. Brodsky, Maureen K. Chilton, Mrs. Jonathan C. Clay, Jacqueline H. Dryfoos, Aramina Vega Ferrer, Ph.D., Amy Goldman Fowler, Ph.D., Charlotte Frank, Ph.D., Jill Joyce, Diane Katzin, Edith W. Kean, Lynden B. Miller, Susan R. Palm, Mrs. Jean Putzer, Hon. Dianne T. Renwick, Karen L. Rosa, Pola Rosen, Ed.D., Joanna B. Schulman, Sara Lee Schupf, Kate Solomon, Beth Taylor, Karen Washington, and Mrs. B. Robert Williamson, Jr.

Caroline A. Wamsler, Ph.D., is Chairman of the Edible Academy Committee. Committee members include: Ashley Abess, Mrs. Coleman P. Burke, Coleman P. Burke, Maureen K. Chilton, Mrs. Jonathan C. Clay, Amy Goldman Fowler, Ph.D., Emma and Todd Goergen, Robert F. Gossett, Jr., Carla Hall, Jill Joyce, Nathalie Kaplan, Alexandra Lebenthal, Amy Todd Middleton, Jill and Alan Rappaport, Deborah Goodrich Royce, Gail Simmons, Kate Solomon, and Beth Taylor.

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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, 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, 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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