

NYBG

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Storm Severely Damages Beyond Repair Historic Himalayan Pine Tree at The New York Botanical Garden; Efforts Are Underway to Preserve Its Legacy

Arborists Will Remove the Damaged Tree as Part of NYBG's Collections' Management and Conservation Processes



Bronx, NY— During the storm on the early morning of Saturday, August 18, 2018, lightning struck and severely damaged The New York Botanical Garden's majestic Himalayan pine (*Pinus wallichiana*) in the Arthur and Janet Ross Conifer Arboretum and the Leon Levy Visitor Center, adjacent to the Pine Tree Cafe. No one was injured and no facilities were damaged. Todd Forrest, Arthur Ross Vice President for Horticulture and Living Collections, and his team of arborists arrived on the scene immediately and determined that the tree is beyond saving and will have to be removed. A Facebook Live briefing held at the Visitor Center on Tuesday, August 21, at 1 p.m., will be an opportunity to gain more insight into NYBG's collections' management and conservation processes and answer questions.

"The entire NYBG community mourns the loss of this great and mighty tree, whose stately presence has welcomed millions of visitors to our urban oasis throughout its life," said Carrie Rebora Barratt, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer and

William C. Steere Sr. President of The New York Botanical Garden. "Among the tens of thousands of trees that grace the Garden's historic landscape, the Himalayan pine was one of our most beloved. While the tree will have to be removed, its legacy will live on."

As part of NYBG's collections' management process, nearly 20 years ago NYBG staff took some scions (a type of cutting) from high in the Himalayan pine's canopy and had them grafted onto eastern white pine seedlings. One of these scions was planted on a hillside just behind the parent tree, where it grows today. One day, it may match the grace and beauty of the original specimen. It will serve as a living reminder of the Garden's commitment to conservation.

Planted in 1903, the Himalayan pine had grown to be nearly 80 feet tall, with a diameter of nearly three feet. It was a living tribute to NYBG's long and distinguished history of bringing plants from

around the world to the Bronx to delight visitors and serve NYBG's conservation and education programs.

Himalayan pine is native to the snowy foothills of the Himalayas. It is celebrated for its graceful, pendulous branches and long, silvery-green needles. The Garden's tree had particularly long needles and cones, a fact not lost on long-serving NYBG Trustees Arthur and Janet Ross, who visited this tree regularly and loved it so much that they decided to support the ongoing restoration of the Conifer Arboretum that now bears their name. This tree was so important to the Garden that the Visitor Center was designed around it.

Garden scientists are preparing herbarium specimens and preserved tissue samples of the Himalayan pine, so the species' evolutionary history can be better understood.

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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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