

# NYBG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 11, 2019

## **NYBG Launches New Program, Combining Horticultural Therapy and Gardening Activities, to Help Veterans Heal Their Minds and Bodies**

The THRIVE Program Will Be Run in Collaboration with the Resilience and Wellness Center at the James J. Peters Veterans Administration Medical Center in the Bronx



The Edible Academy at The New York Botanical will be the site of a new horticultural therapy program for veterans. ©Robert Benson Photography

**Bronx, NY**—Using its expertise in both gardening and horticultural therapy, The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) is launching a new program that will harness the power of nature to help heal the minds and bodies of veterans who are being treated for a wide range of mental and physical health challenges.

In collaboration with the Resilience and Wellness Center (RWC) at the James J. Peters Veterans Administration Medical Center in the Bronx, NYBG will provide a specially designed combination of horticultural therapy and gardening activities to as many as 300 veterans over the next three years. The new program—called Therapeutic Horticulture and Rehabilitative Interventions for Veteran Engagement, or THRIVE—is supported by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Beginning in January 2020, groups of up to 10 veterans will come to NYBG for four weekly, three-hour sessions with a registered horticultural therapist, consisting of seasonally-based activities such as planting, seed-starting, watering, weeding, cooking, and nutrition education. The sessions will take place at NYBG's Edible Academy—a three-acre campus of gardens, classrooms, a teaching greenhouse, and other facilities that opened in 2018—where children, families and the general public learn about growing and cooking fresh fruit and vegetables.

“The Botanical Garden’s history has always been tied to plants and their benefits for humanity,” said Carrie Reborá Barratt, Ph.D., CEO and The William C. Steere Sr. President of The New York Botanical Garden. “The Garden established a program at the end of World War I for veterans just coming back from war who needed a leg up on a career, who wanted to learn a new skill, or who recognized that being with plants for a day would make them feel better about the world at large. The THRIVE program commemorates The New York Botanical Garden’s program to help veterans returning from service.”

The weekly sessions at the Edible Academy are designed to complement the RWC’s existing schedule of services for veterans and contribute to their overall well-being by fostering a healthy and active lifestyle. The RWC’s mission is to combat increasing rates of suicide and opioid addiction and overdose in veterans through innovative programs that stress a holistic approach to treating the mind and body. Veterans in the program typically face a number of health and personal challenges, ranging from service-related mental health issues to rehabilitating from physical injury and re-acclimating to civilian life.

Research has shown that participation in garden-based activities can result in lower blood pressure; decreased pain and the need for pain-relieving medication; lower levels of depression, stress, and anxiety; and improved range of motion, cognition, and mood. NYBG’s Adult Education Horticultural Therapy Certificate Program, which is accredited by the American Horticultural Therapy Association, is known nationwide for teaching innovative techniques and approaches that use plants and the environment to heal and rehabilitate.

The THRIVE program will run from January through October for a three-year pilot phase. At the end of each monthly series of sessions, there will be a weekend celebratory event at the Edible Academy for the veterans and their families, and those who complete the program will receive a complimentary NYBG family membership for one year so they and their families can continue to enjoy the wellness benefits of NYBG’s gardens and programs.

Through the THRIVE pilot, NYBG aims to create a program that can be replicated at other botanical gardens, nature centers, or parks that seek to offer veterans physical and mental healing through horticultural therapy and gardening practices.

### **About The New York Botanical Garden**

The New York Botanical Garden is an iconic living museum, a major educational institution, and a renowned plant research and conservation organization. Founded in 1891 and now a National Historic Landmark, it is one of the greatest botanical gardens in the world and the largest in any city in the United States, distinguished by the beauty of its diverse landscape and extensive collections and gardens, as well as by the scope and excellence of its programs.

## About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. Our vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities. To learn more, visit [www.ims.gov](http://www.ims.gov) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services [Grant # MA-20-19-0677-19].

*The views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this press release do not necessarily represent those of the Institute of Museum and Library Services.*

###

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](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:** Stevenson Swanson, 718.817.8512, [sswanson@nybg.org](mailto:sswanson@nybg.org)