

# NYBG

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## **Newly Restored Palm Dome of The New York Botanical Garden's Enid A. Haupt Conservatory Celebrated Today in Ribbon Cutting with NYBG Leaders, Government Officials, and Project Donors**

The Iconic Haupt Conservatory, Featuring Many New Species in the Dome's Redesigned Palms of the World Gallery, Reopens to the Public on Tuesday, September 22, 2020



The newly restored palm dome of NYBG's Enid A. Haupt Conservatory was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on September 14, 2020. Shown are (left to right): Larry E. Condon, Trustee of the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust; New York City Council Member Ritchie J. Torres; NYBG Chairman J. Barclay Collins II; Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.; New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Gonzalo Casals; and NYBG Interim President and CEO and Director of the Garden J. V. Cossaboom. (NYBG Photo)

**Bronx, NY**—The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) celebrated today the newly restored palm dome of its iconic Enid A. Haupt Conservatory with a ribbon-cutting ceremony that featured NYBG leaders, government officials, and project donors as the 118-year-old glasshouse prepares to reopen to visitors. The \$18 million restoration project, which began in April 2019, upgraded the infrastructure of the dome, home of the Haupt Conservatory's celebrated Palms of the World Gallery, to ensure that the palms on display continue to thrive. The project also provided an opportunity for NYBG horticulture curators to redesign and replant the collection to highlight the history of tropical plant research at NYBG and the ecological and economic importance of the palm family.

Joining NYBG Chairman J. Barclay Collins II and Interim President and CEO and Director of the Garden J.V. Cossaboom for the ceremony were New York City Council Member Ritchie J. Torres; New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Gonzalo Casals; Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.; and Larry E. Condon and Jay Beckner, Trustees of the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust; among other distinguished guests.

“For 118 years, visitors from our local communities here in the Bronx and around the globe have delighted in the treasures contained in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory,” said NYBG Chairman J. Barclay Collins II. “On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the entire NYBG community, I thank our public-private partnership of funders for their substantial financial support, which made this restoration possible. Their commitment will ensure that generations to come will find inspiration and connection to plants and learn about their essential role in our own lives and the sustainability of life on this planet.”

The Haupt Conservatory, which has been closed since March 15, 2020, due to COVID-19, will reopen to the public with very limited capacity on Tuesday, September 22, as part of phase 2 of NYBG’s reopening, in accordance with the latest State and New York Forward requirements for businesses and cultural institutions, CDC guidelines, and OSHA standards. Advance purchase of timed tickets is required. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit our website at [nybg.org](https://nybg.org).

### **Restoration Upgraded Dome Infrastructure While Respecting Landmark Status**



The \$18 million restoration project, which began in April 2019, focused on the central dome of the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, atop the Palms of the World Gallery. (NYBG Photo)

Constructed by Lord & Burnham Company and completed in 1902, the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory is considered one of the most superb glasshouses of its time. It was designated a New York City landmark in 1973.

The Palms of the World Gallery is one of the Conservatory’s 11 interconnected galleries, which feature different habitats and plant specimens from around the globe, including tropical rain forests, Old World and New World deserts, and

aquatic plants and vines, as well as seasonal galleries that are used for beloved annual floral displays, including *The Orchid Show*, and special exhibitions such as *KUSAMA: Cosmic Nature*, scheduled to open in spring 2021.

Conservatory restoration projects occur approximately every 20 years. The newly completed restoration, which was led by Jan Hird Pokorny Associates and Silman Structural Engineers, focused on the central dome that soars above the Palms of the World Gallery, comprising the cupola, upper dome, drum (or compression ring), and lower dome. Interior scaffolding and a temporary horizontal work surface erected below the dome drum and an enclosed cylinder around the exterior of the drum and portions of the lower and upper domes enabled the work to take place efficiently while providing a weather-proof barrier to safeguard the tropical plants that remained in the Gallery below.

Using leading-edge materials and technologies, the restoration makes the building more energy efficient while respecting its landmark status. The painted wood cladding around the drum and the wood cornice—originally constructed with rot-resistant, first-growth bald cypress that is now very rare—were replaced with cast and extruded aluminum components that are durable and require less maintenance. Structural repairs to the compression ring were completed, and a new high-performance metal coating was applied to all structural members to protect them from future deterioration. Elements of the dome's infrastructure that were upgraded included lighting, the electrical system, and the mechanical operation of the dome's windows. In addition, the Conservatory's heating system and public restrooms were renovated, including the addition of two single-use restrooms; improvements were made to the building's exhibition and path lighting; and bluestone pavers in the palm dome and the Conservatory Courtyards were repaired.

Funding for the palm dome restoration project included \$13 million from the City of New York, including the Mayor's Office, City Council, and the Bronx Borough President; \$3 million from the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust; and \$850,000 from the State of New York's Empire State Development Corporation.

### **Palms of the World Gallery Redesigned and Replanted with Existing and New Plants**

The Palms of the World Gallery displays New World and Old World palms, cycads, ferns, warm-climate monocots, and a variety of ground covers. Several specimens were cultivated from seed collected by NYBG horticulturists and scientists in the field. Palms present a particular set of challenges when cultivated indoors because most varieties have primary growing points on top of their stems. Some inevitably grow too tall for the enclosure, requiring their removal and replacement with younger specimens.

The palm dome restoration gave NYBG horticulturists the opportunity to not only carry out essential horticultural work in the Gallery but also curate the collection, adding new educational themes and increasing its plant diversity. The plan developed by Marc Hachadourian, NYBG's Director of Glasshouse Horticulture and Senior Curator of Orchids, and Tropical Plant Curator Emerita Francisca Coelho protected important specimens while introducing many species not previously represented in NYBG's collection. Nearly 180 plants in the Gallery were preserved in place or transplanted during the restoration process, and dozens of new palm species have been added.



The redesigned Palms of the World Gallery highlights the importance of the palm family and NYBG's history of tropical plant research. (NYBG Photo)

The combination of existing and new species in the replanted palm collection highlights the history of tropical plant research at NYBG and the economic and ecological importance of the palm family, as well as providing visitors with the latest information on palm evolution and diversity and conservation efforts.

Among the new palms in the collection are the petticoat palm (*Copernicia macroglossa*), a Cuban species whose name reflects its layers of drooping foliage beneath a crown of vibrant green fronds; Bailey's Fan Palm (*Copernicia baileyana*), often considered one of the most beautiful palms because of its lush, fan-shaped foliage; and the parasol palm (*Licuala orbicularis*), a low-growing plant with tightly pleated leaves that is native to the Southeast Asian island of Borneo.

One species that is both a former and new resident of the Palms of the World Gallery is *Wallichia disticha*, a palm native to Northeast India and Myanmar that dies after flowering. The previous specimen in the Gallery flowered in 2008 and was then removed. However, the seeds that resulted from that flowering were cultivated in NYBG's Nolen Greenhouses for Living Collections, and now one of those young plants has joined the collection in the renovated palm dome.

Garden visitors can gain an added perspective on the Palms of the World Gallery with NYBG's Palm Dome Interactive Mobile Guide. The Mobile Guide creates an immersive experience and

includes soil-to-ceiling views augmented with audio and video, providing information about what the visitor is observing and never-seen-before views of the tops of towering palms.

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

Founded in 1891, The New York Botanical Garden is the most comprehensive botanical garden in the world and an integral part of the cultural fabric of New York City, anchored in the Bronx. Visitors come to the Botanical Garden to connect with nature for joy, beauty, and respite, and for renowned plant-based exhibitions, music and dance, and poetry and lectures. Innovative children's education programs promote environmental sustainability and nutrition awareness, graduate programs educate the next generation of botanists, while engaging classes inspire adults to remain lifelong learners. The 250-acre verdant landscape—which includes a 50-acre, old-growth forest—and the landmark Enid A. Haupt Conservatory support living collections of more than one million plants. Unparalleled resources are also held in the LuEsther T. Mertz Library, the world's most important botanical and horticultural library with 11 million archival items spanning ten centuries, and the William and Lynda Steere Herbarium, the largest in the Western Hemisphere with 7.8 million plant and fungal specimens. Committed to protecting the planet's biodiversity and natural resources, Garden scientists work on-site in cutting-edge molecular labs and in areas worldwide where biodiversity is most at risk.

### ***Leadership Support for the 2020 Palm Dome Restoration:***

#### ***LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust***

*Larry E. Condon*

*John J. Hoffee*

*Jay Beckner*

#### ***The City of New York***

*Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.*

*Mayor Bill de Blasio and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs*

*New York City Council Member Ritchie J. Torres*

#### ***The State of New York***

*Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the  
Empire State Development Corporation*

*The Palm Dome Interactive Mobile Guide is made possible by Bloomberg Philanthropies.*

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The New York Botanical Garden is located at 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, New York 10458. For more information, visit [nybg.org](http://nybg.org)

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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