

NYBG

ANNUAL REPORT
2020

NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN





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Letter from J. Barclay Collins II



Dear Friends:

On behalf of everyone at NYBG, both Trustees and staff, I send best wishes that you and your loved ones are safe and well. We share our collective and immense gratitude for your extraordinary dedication to the Garden during this unprecedented year.

Our remarkable NYBG community is resilient, a testament to the power of plants in challenging times to connect people and provide inspiration. We have heard from so many of you with heartening thoughts, warm wishes, and reflections on NYBG as a place of beauty and respite, discovery and learning, research and conservation.

In this Annual Report, you will see a small sampling of our accomplishments during a year no one could have foreseen. Until it was cut short by the COVID-19 crisis, our 2019–20 fiscal and programmatic year was one of our most successful in recent history. It brought a blockbuster installation of the *Holiday Train Show*[®] and exciting botanical discoveries by our scientists. Unfortunately, we were forced to close our gates in mid-March to comply with the government-mandated shutdown, curtailing the run of *The Orchid Show: Jeff Leatham's Kaleidoscope*, which was receiving rave reviews and record attendance, and postponing our much-anticipated Yayoi Kusama exhibition in order to ensure the safety of our visitors and staff.

The dramatic pivot from the first three-quarters to the fourth was remarkable—due to the extraordinary efforts of staff across all Garden departments that continued throughout spring and led up to planning for our reopening in July. From caring for our living collections, ensuring the security of our 250-acre landmark landscape and facilities, and working remotely to bring the Garden to millions of admirers digitally, to establishing a network of community farm hubs distributing food to our neighbors, and implementing new safety protocols, staff showed fortitude, creativity, and an unwavering commitment to the Garden and our Bronx neighbors. It was in many ways the staff's finest hour.

The restoration of the iconic palm dome of the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory continued throughout the year as well. Although the building undergoes restoration every 20 years, the palm dome project took on added meaning this year as one of the most recognizable symbols of the Garden itself, ensuring the collections housed underneath, which were restored and revitalized as part of the project, will thrive for generations to come.

The Garden is an anchor for so many as a urban oasis in New York City and a virtual oasis for those across the globe. We are immensely grateful to you, our visitors, members, and donors, near and far. During our temporary closure our dynamic online programming reached new audiences across the country and around the world. Our science programs continued unabated. As our physical gates are welcoming back visitors on-site, our virtual gates continue to engage broader participation digitally as well.

Your generosity and dedication are essential to the Garden's survival. We deeply appreciate your continued support, and we value your loyalty more than ever as we envision NYBG's bright future.

With sincerest good wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Barclay Collins II". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

J. Barclay Collins II
Chairman of the Board

GARDEN EXPERIENCE

FY 2020 was a year of resiliency and new challenges, and the Garden leveraged it as an opportunity to reflect on the power of public gardens and green spaces in people's lives. With programs, including new digital offerings, that appeal to a growing audience of visitors from around the world, the Garden is more far-reaching than ever. Through our living plant collections, global science research initiatives, innovative exhibitions, and exceptional educational programs, we have fostered a unique space that continues to connect people to plants, nature, art, and science.

Fiscal Year 2020 Highlights



NYBG at Home

While our physical gates were closed temporarily, our virtual gates remained wide open. We stayed connected to our dedicated audience through NYBG at Home, a new content hub on our website that showcases our rich collections, creative educational programs, and the sights and sounds of the seasons. NYBG science, horticulture, and education staff reminded us of the power of the natural world to inspire hope.



Preparing to Reopen

With the welcome news that NYBG would be able to reopen outdoor collections and several other amenities in July as part of New York Forward's Phase Four guidelines, dedicated staff across the Garden worked diligently in May and June to develop and implement protocols to promote a safe and enjoyable experience for all. Initiatives included requiring staff and visitors over the age of two to wear face coverings; increasing sanitization of public and staff areas; daily health screenings for on-site staff; requiring timed-entry tickets purchased in advance; and operating at a reduced capacity.

18th Annual Orchid Show

The Orchid Show: Jeff Leatham's Kaleidoscope (scheduled February 15–April 19, 2020; closed March 16) was designed by Jeff Leatham, artistic director of the Four Seasons Hotel George V in Paris. Leatham's design for *The Orchid Show* drew inspiration from kaleidoscopes, using dense plantings of orchids to create masses of color, and celebrating flowers with unique patterns and textures. More than 14,000 orchids and other tropical plants were featured, including many plants from NYBG's permanent collection.



28th Annual Holiday Train Show®

The *Holiday Train Show*® (November 23, 2019–January 26, 2020) delighted visitors in a new and innovative space. With the Haupt Conservatory's iconic palm dome under restoration, the exhibition was reimagined in a spacious tent on the Conservatory Lawn. The new layout allowed visitors to get closer to the buildings and enjoy details not seen before. With Central Park as the featured landmark, the big lawns were made of moss, and a downed tree root from the Thain Family Forest was turned into a waterfall.

The New York Botanical Garden is a treasured green oasis in the borough of the Bronx, with more than 50 specialty gardens, an old-growth forest, extensive and diverse plant collections, and floral displays, both outdoors and under glass, that connect visitors to the natural world. The Garden maintains its living collections through the application of best practices in horticulture and plant health care. Its Nolen Greenhouses propagate tropical, orchid, and desert plants for seasonal displays, education programs, and scientific research.



Palm Dome Restoration Continued

NYBG continued a large-scale restoration of the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory’s iconic palm dome and two adjacent galleries. The renovation has included repair of the upper dome, renovation and cleaning of the interior, support upgrades to internal systems including the central pool and electrical systems, the palm collection, and the external parterres. Important plants were sent to the Nolen Greenhouses for rehabilitation and propagation, and a new design was developed to enhance the collection’s health, beauty, and value for interpretation in the Palms of the World Gallery.





Essential Care of the Garden

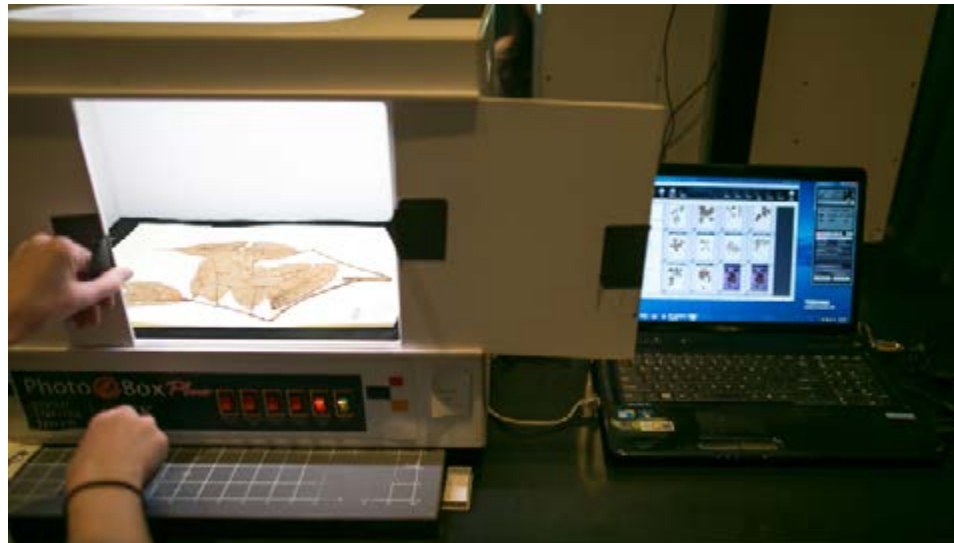
When the Garden closed temporarily to the public and most employees in mid-March, spring was already underway, with no intention of pausing like the world outside our gates. NYBG's horticulture team likewise did not pause in their care for our irreplaceable living collections, both outdoors and under glass. Other essential employees remained on-site to ensure the security of our 250-acre landmark landscape and facilities.

Largest Botanical Exhibition at NYBG

NYBG presented its largest botanical exhibition ever, *Brazilian Modern: The Living Art of Roberto Burle Marx* (June 8–September 29, 2019). The extensive Modernist Garden on the Conservatory Lawn featured thousands of tropical plants, ranging from towering palms to colorful bedding plants, a sculptural water feature, and patterned pathways, conceptualized by famed landscape architect and Burle Marx protégé Raymond Jungles. The living exhibitions were complemented by a display of 12 original works of art by Burle Marx, including paintings, drawings, lithographs, and textiles, in the Mertz Library's Art Gallery, while an exploration of the Garden's long history of plant research in Brazil was displayed in the Britton Gallery.



In a time of rapid, unprecedented global change, the plant diversity that sustains life on Earth is imperiled as never before in human history, threatened by deforestation, accelerating species extinction, and desertification. The New York Botanical Garden is at the forefront of addressing this biodiversity crisis by applying sound science toward ecosystem conservation, drawing upon the institution's prodigious scientific resources.



Herbarium Digitization

The William and Lynda Steere Herbarium staff continue to focus on providing access to the collections for study by Garden scientists and by the worldwide botanical community, on improving the condition of the collections to ensure their preservation, and on providing information about the collections to those who need it and in the form required. Making information from the Garden's specimens accessible to the widest possible audience continues to be a major goal of the Herbarium. In FY 2020, 605,000 specimens were newly digitized and were added the Garden's C.V. Starr Virtual Herbarium. We added geocoordinates to approximately 32,471 records for which this information was not provided on the specimen label. The database now holds 4,418,327 specimen records, of which 3,619,276 are available on the Garden's website in a fully searchable database, and 3,616,400 images and other multimedia items.

Library Digitization

In addition to its prestigious physical collections, the LuEsther T. Mertz Library has built an extensive digital library and continues to make substantial contributions to the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL)—more than 4,000,000 pages have been contributed to BHL since it was founded in 2005. These contributions include the digitization and uploading of content held by the Mertz Library, including transcriptions of letters as part of the National Endowment for the Humanities-funded John Torrey project, as well as other books and journals from the collection. They became even more relevant with the closure of the Garden in March, making access to online resources even more critical to the research community.





Photo by Presley Dovo, Department of Forests, Vanuatu

Preserving Biocultural Knowledge in Vanuatu

Tafea Province, an area comprising five islands in Vanuatu's southern range, is a priority for biological and cultural conservation due to the endangerment of its flora and fauna and the erosion of the traditional knowledge, languages, and cultural practices based on this biological diversity. Drs. Michael Balick and Greg Plunkett and their local partners continued their floristic, systematic, ethnobotanical, and biogeographic studies, and worked with their colleague Prof. K. David Harrison of Swarthmore College to create a "Talking Dictionary" of Tafean languages, which will document the associated linguistic data and plant use. Here Dr. Plunkett discusses the Talking Dictionary with speakers of the Naka language in North Tanna, who will be identifying plants and digitally recording local names for the project.



Improving Cultural Inclusivity and Awareness in Health Care

Dr. Ina Vandebroek and her partners continued exploring, recording, and identifying the plants used for health and well-being among Caribbean and Latino communities living in New York City. This work calls attention to the need for acknowledging the central role that these plants play in the lives of these communities, and the potential of traditional knowledge for improving health care and food security, and for conserving Caribbean biocultural heritage. Medical students and health care providers were trained to improve their cultural understanding and integration through the development of new curriculum modules on medicinal plant identification and the adoption of culturally relevant colloquial medical terms.

The New York Botanical Garden is one of the country's foremost environmental education institutions for students of all ages and abilities. The Education division underwent a major transformation in spring of FY 2020 due to the COVID-19 shutdown—from robust on-grounds, in-person programs that were running at full enrollment until mid-March to an exclusively online and digital presence. Staff quickly transitioned educational offerings in exciting and meaningful ways.



Adult and Children's Education Programs Go Virtual

During this time, Children's Education provided online, web-based resources to students, teachers, and families on the NYBG at Home website, including plant science educational materials, tutorials and videos for at-home activities, and materials for teachers that complemented remote-learning school instruction.

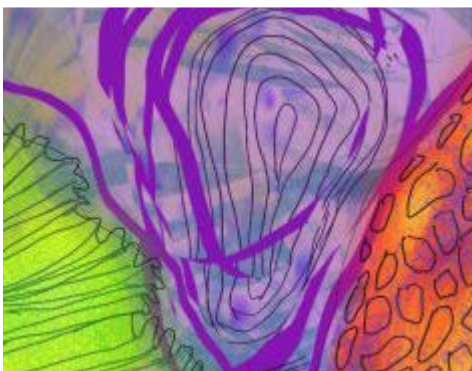
Adult Education pivoted quickly to turn offerings online via Zoom. Student reception has been outstanding, and we now have an active international student body. By early May, our online classes and lectures had been widely featured on media platforms such as *Travel and Leisure*, *Martha Stewart.com*, *House Beautiful*, *Top Ten Reviews*, and *Apartment Therapy*. By June 30, there were more than 1,400 registrations.





Teacher Professional Development

The Professional Learning for Teachers Program was running at or near full capacity prior to March 2020 for Institutes, including Seedlings Institute for Early Childhood Educators and The Art of Science. Both programs were offered during summer 2019. Staff developed workshops, in partnership with Math for America, which were focused on Citizen Science Phenology. In recent surveys, 98% of teachers said they would use the suggested activities in their classrooms.



Humanities Institute Expands Offerings

The Humanities Institute continued to offer interdisciplinary programming and fellowship opportunities while broadening awareness and use of the Mertz Library. In mid-March, the Institute quickly transitioned its programs and research collaborations into the digital realm, creating new cross-disciplinary pathways in the environmental humanities and offering its popular weekly Science-Conservation-Humanities Seminars online in webinar format. Freely accessible to a growing and international public, these online webinars became an important forum for discussion at the intersection of science and humanity, focused on topical questions of this age, from climate justice and environmental stewardship, to urban health and food security. Since moving online, the Humanities programs and webinars have been recorded, archived, and shared in the NYBG Humanities Lecture Library.

NYBG is an anchor institution in the Bronx that provides a variety of education and outreach programs to one of the nation's most underserved communities. Recognizing that communities in the Bronx are among the most severely impacted by COVID-19 in New York City, NYBG's Edible Academy and Bronx Green-Up, which provide gardening education and assist in the creation of urban community gardens, consolidated their efforts in order to provide important support for our neighbors.

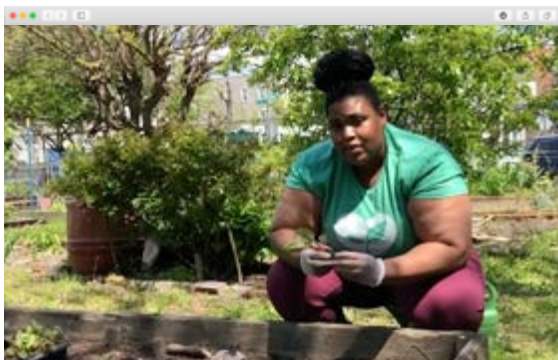


Plant Donations Lifted Spring Spirits

Working long hours to save people's lives in the battle against COVID-19, the doctors, nurses, and other essential employees at Montefiore and Jacobi medical centers in the Bronx had little chance to get out and enjoy spring's bright flowers. So we brought the flowers to them. In late April, 400 potted plants that were originally destined for NYBG were delivered to the medical centers, where they brought some much-needed cheer to the facilities' nursing stations.

Bronx Green-Up

Bronx Green-Up (BGU) is NYBG's signature community outreach program, which has helped establish more than 300 gardens since it began in 1988, inspiring residents to improve their communities through greening projects. Last year, BGU hosted 280 events, including 23 workshops, and provided assistance for 67 community gardens, schools, and greening partners, reaching 2,251 people. In fiscal year 2020, 532 community residents volunteered 1,596 hours in growing and harvesting produce in the borough's gardens and farms.





Tackling Food Insecurity in the Bronx

To address both the immediate need for healthful produce and the long-term problem of food insecurity, Bronx Green-Up (BGU) is coordinating a collective network of community gardens and farms to greatly increase the local production and distribution of fresh fruit and vegetables. This new initiative, the Bronx Community Farm Hub system, comprises 18 neighborhood gardens and farms in Crotona/Belmont, Highbridge, Longwood/Hunt's Point, South Bronx, North Bronx, and Morrisania. These neighborhood gardens and farms have long been partners with BGU and leaders in their neighborhoods and wider community, organizing community markets, advocating for their communities, and running youth and health programs. NYBG's Edible Academy is another one of the new Bronx Community Farm Hubs and the only one located on the NYBG campus.



Edible Academy Food Donations

Bronx Green-Up is providing many of the raw materials of vegetable gardening, including NYBG compost, seeds, and more than 10,000 seedlings grown at NYBG's Edible Academy; the latter were grown in addition to the seedlings that would have been part of the educational programming, but that programming was suspended. Garden beds throughout the Edible Academy that are typically planted and cared for by our program participants have been repurposed to grow food for donations. The plants that would have been featured in our culinary workshops or gone home with students were instead harvested and processed for distribution via partner organizations working to address the food emergency, including POTS (Part of the Solution); James J. Peters Veterans Administration Medical Center; and Title I Partner Schools. Throughout spring and by the end of FY 2020 in early summer, NYBG donated more than 2,000 lbs. of produce to these organizations to help with the food shortage crisis in the Bronx.



Financial Report



Revenue & Expenses

Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, which ended on June 30, 2020, marked the 32nd consecutive year that The New York Botanical Garden has balanced its operating budget. This report provides a summary of revenue and expense on a cash basis and preliminary balance sheet results. Despite many challenges, we balanced the operating budget and maintained a strong balance sheet through a year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was a financial year unlike any other in the 129-year history of the Garden. The first three quarters of the year performed on plan in terms of finances, visitation, exhibitions, and scientific activity. On March 16, 2020, the Garden was closed to the public in accordance with New York State executive orders and guidance related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Garden remained closed for the remainder of the fiscal year.

In aggregate, FY 2020 revenue totaled \$74,231,000, decreasing by \$5,464,000 or 6.8% from FY 2019. The decrease was primarily caused by a reduction in earned income caused by the closure.

Visitor-based revenue in FY 2020 was driven by *Brazilian Modern: The Living Art of Roberto Burle Marx*, the *Holiday Train Show*, and *The Orchid Show: Jeff Leatham's Kaleidoscope*. *Kusama: Cosmic Nature* was rescheduled to 2021. Attendance totaled 615,376 visitors, earned income grossed nearly \$19,331,000 or 26% of gross revenue, and the total number of memberships was 48,876.

Endowment performance experienced significant volatility during the course of the fiscal year from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. Market value as of July 1, 2019 was \$331,757,000. By the end of the fiscal year, investment return climbed back to end +2.07%. The market value stood at \$325,382,000 at June 30, 2020. The endowment draw totaled \$16,657,000, which was an effective spending rate of 5.0% of the beginning balance.

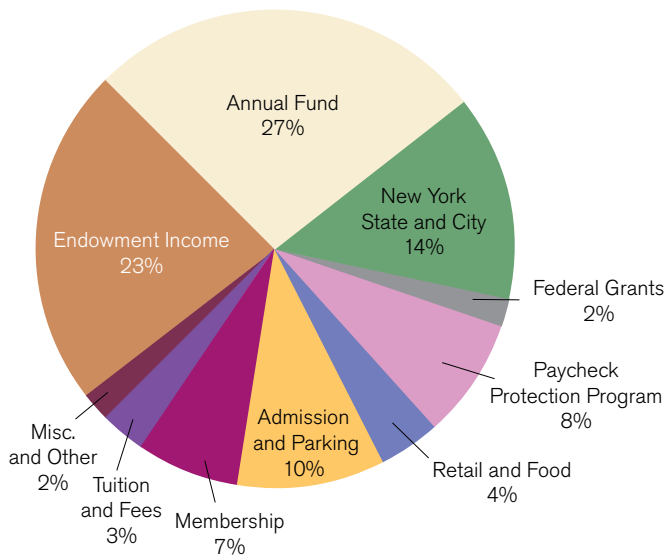
Government support stood steady at the City level through the Department of Cultural Affairs. State funding through the Zoos, Botanical Gardens, and Aquariums Program, and funding for research grants awarded by the Federal National Science Foundation remained relatively flat. The Garden obtained support through the Federal Paycheck Protection Program in April 2020.

In aggregate, FY 2020 expenses totaled \$74,145,000, lower by 6.8% when compared to the prior year. This drop was accomplished through a variety of measures in the last quarter of the fiscal year. The goal was to keep as many people employed as possible, to comply with safety regulations, and to preserve the long-term health of the institution. The mix of expenses remained constant with approximately 79% going toward programs and public services and 21% toward administration and fundraising.

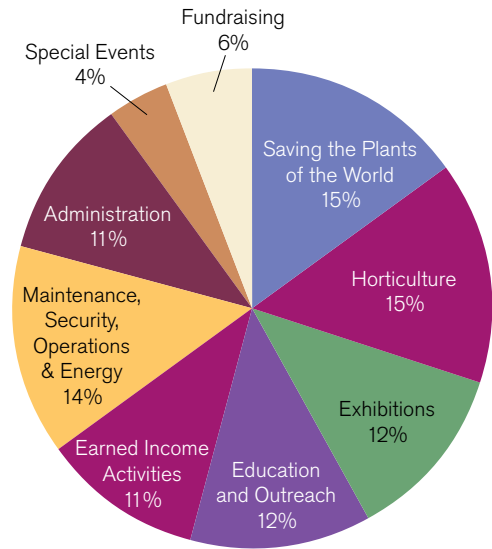
Standard & Poor's

On April 9, 2020, Standard & Poor's revised the outlook to negative from stable for more than 60 U.S. nonprofits, citing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainties surrounding the ultimate economic fallout. On November 30, 2020, S&P reaffirmed the NYBG A+ underlying rating. The outlook on the rating remains negative, continuing to reflect uncertainty around the duration and fiscal pressures caused by the pandemic. The majority of other nonprofits rated by S&P also continue to have negative outlooks.

Fiscal Year 2020 Revenue \$74.2 Million



Fiscal Year 2020 Expenses \$74.1 Million



Net Assets

Net assets represent all assets less all liabilities. Net assets include the total book value of land, buildings, and equipment constructed or purchased by the Garden net of accumulated depreciation and debt, as well as endowment funds and other long-term investments. In FY 2020, the net assets of The New York Botanical Garden decreased by \$9,522,000 from \$530,893,000 to \$521,271,000, due to decreases in pledge receivables and reductions in long-term investments.

The Board and the management staff of the Garden, as fiduciary stewards of these assets, understand that responsible financial management is a critical obligation to the institution and its donors. The Garden's President and CEO, the Director of the Garden, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Controller are responsible for maintaining internal control over financial reporting for the Garden and have designed and instituted such internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that financial reporting is accurate and reliable. Finally, this report was prepared during the annual audit process, and as such, is still subject to change until the audit is completed.

We thank the members of the Finance, Audit, and Investment Committees and their respective Chairs: John Thain, Florence Davis, and Malcolm Nolen. Their hard work and commitment have been key to the success of the Garden.

J. Barclay Collins II
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J.V. Cossaboom
Director of the Garden

Sarah A. Gillman
Chief Financial Officer

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Committees of the Board and Corporation

As of June 30, 2020

J. Barclay Collins II, in his capacity as Chairman, is an ex officio member of all committees.

Carrie Reborá Barratt, Ph.D., in her capacity as President, is an ex officio member of all committees except the Audit Committee.

Wilson Nolen and Maureen K. Chilton, in their capacity as Chairmen Emeriti, are ex officio members of all committees.

Craig Vosburg, in his capacity as Treasurer, is an ex officio member of the Executive, Finance, and Investment Committees.

Dianne T. Renwick, in her capacity as Secretary, is an ex officio member of the Executive Committee.

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HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The New York Botanical Garden inspires people to value and steward the plants of the world.

Founded in 1891, NYBG 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. More than one million people visit the Garden each year 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 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.

There are numerous ways in which you can help NYBG continue to flourish:

- A gift to the **Annual Fund** provides essential support for all of NYBG's programs in horticulture, education, and plant research and conservation. Gifts of \$25,000 or more are recognized through our President's Circle. To make a contribution, or for more information, please contact J. Tim Landi at 718.817.8555 or tlandi@nybg.org
- Join the **Garden Patrons Program** by making a tax-deductible gift of \$1,500 or more. In addition to Member benefits, Patrons receive invitations to exclusive lectures featuring scientists, world-renowned horticulturists, and landscape designers, as well as special viewings of exhibitions. For more information, please call 718.817.8553 or e-mail gardenpatrons@nybg.org
- Become a **Member** and enjoy benefits that include free admission, guest passes, parking passes, and discounts at the NYBG Shop and on extensive education programs. Please contact Melanie Patterson at 718.817.8725 or mpatterson@nybg.org
- Include the Garden in your estate plans and become a member of the **Perennial Society**. Bequests and other planned gifts support the Garden's endowment and provide critical funding for the Garden's future. Members of the Perennial Society receive invitations to events, lectures, and an annual luncheon. Please contact Lisa Sifre at 718.817.8545 or lsifre@nybg.org
- Double or triple your contribution with a **Corporate Matching Gift**. Many businesses provide matching funds to augment your support. Please contact your company's human resources department to find out if your company participates.

Learn more at nybg.org



NYC Cultural Affairs 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.

NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

2900 Southern Boulevard • Bronx, NY 10458-5126 • 718.817.8700 • nybg.org