

NYBG

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The New York Botanical Garden Names Jennifer Bernstein as CEO and The William C. Steere Sr. President

Incoming Chief Executive Officer Brings Extensive Management and Fundraising Experience in the Cultural, Educational, and Environmental Sectors



Bronx, NY – The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) has announced that not-for-profit executive Jennifer Bernstein will become its Chief Executive Officer and The William C. Steere Sr. President, effective September 1, 2021.

Bernstein is a proven leader with exceptional management experience in fundraising and board development for cultural, educational, and environmental organizations. She joins the Botanical Garden from NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) where she served as Chief Development Officer and Interim Chief Operations Officer.

“I’m honored to join The New York Botanical Garden, a world-renowned institution fueled by the spirit of New York City in its advocacy for the plant world,” said incoming CEO and The William C. Steere Sr. President Jennifer Bernstein. “I am committed to the Garden’s mission to protect the planet’s biodiversity and natural resources, and I am humbled by the opportunity to partner with its esteemed Board of Trustees and to lead its talented, dedicated staff in this critical work.”

Bernstein’s leadership will drive fiscal, reputational, and programmatic growth and help to usher in a new era at the institution. She brings two decades of non-profit management and fundraising experience, most recently at NRDC, a leading international not-for-profit that works to safeguard the Earth—its people, its plants and animals, and the natural systems on which all life depends. At NRDC, Bernstein designed and executed an ongoing \$1 billion fundraising campaign while overseeing a team of nearly 100 professionals. Previously, she led record fundraising efforts at Pace University and managed individual and corporate giving at the Playwrights Horizons theater in Manhattan. She also served in various capacities at Roundabout Theatre Company, New York University, and CCS Fundraising.

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“I am highly confident that Jennifer Bernstein will lead us forward into an exciting and impactful future, building upon the extraordinarily solid foundation we have at NYBG,” said J. Barclay Collins II, Chair of The New York Botanical Garden’s Board of Trustees. “She brings enormous energy, enthusiasm, and expertise to her role. Her exceptional professional experience in arts and culture, education, and environmental protection presents a unique and valuable confluence of expertise for our institution. Our Board is excited to work with her to frame how this next generation will advance in innovative ways the Garden’s mission in science, education, and horticulture, and in community engagement.”

Bernstein’s appointment as the 10th leader of the 130-year-old institution followed an extensive, nine-month, international search that included a diverse and wide range of prospects.

To ensure a smooth transition between administrations, Bernstein will be working closely with J.V. Cossaboom, NYBG’s Interim CEO and President. “I think I can speak for the staff in saying we are looking forward to working with an energetic and focused leader like Jennifer,” said Cossaboom.

Bernstein received her undergraduate degree from the College of Santa Fe and her master’s degree from the New York University Stern School of Business.

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 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.

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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

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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