

NYBG

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The Science Behind Food Crops and the Evolving Techniques of Cooking with Vegetables Are Featured in Engaging Displays As Part of NYBG's Exhibition *Around the Table: Stories of the Foods We Love*

Multi-faceted, Garden-wide Presentation Celebrating Plants as Foundational to All Culinary Customs Runs June 4 through September 11, 2022



Steam, Sear, Sauté: 150 Years of American Vegetarian Cookbooks showcases cookbooks and colorful seed catalogs from NYBG's LuEsther T. Mertz Library. (Photo by Ben Hider/The New York Botanical Garden)

Bronx, NY—Engaging exhibits about the science behind food crops and the evolving techniques home chefs have used in cooking with vegetables are on display in the LuEsther T. Mertz Library Building at The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG). Mixing science and art, these offerings are important components of *Around the Table: Stories of the Foods We Love*, NYBG's institution-wide, multi-faceted exhibition that celebrates the cultural, horticultural, environmental, and historical significance of what we eat and examines the art and science of foodways and food traditions, many dating back thousands of years. *Around the Table* is on view from June 4 through September 11, 2022.

Sowing Resilience: Origins and Change in Agriculture in the Elizabeth Britton Science Gallery on the fourth floor of the Mertz Library Building examines how humans have domesticated wild plants over millennia, selecting for useful traits and developing inventive agricultural methods to create the food crops upon which humanity relies. Among other objects on display, the exhibit features plant products, seeds, agricultural tools, colorful illustrations, and many preserved plant specimens from NYBG's William and Lynda Steere Herbarium, the second-largest plant research collection in the world, with more than 7.8 million specimens.

Sowing Resilience also highlights the work of NYBG scientists and those affiliated with other institutions to study and understand the history and future of agriculture. The exhibit probes how we can use the lessons from our ancient and recent past—from preserving traditional and Indigenous methods of agriculture to utilizing new genetic technologies—to provide insight into creating a resilient food system that can feed our growing planet in the face of the climate crisis and other environmental challenges. Featured plants include staples such as corn, rice, wheat, and soy, alongside their wild relatives, brought together to highlight the importance of agrobiodiversity.

The adjoining Nathaniel Lord Britton Science Rotunda features *Recipe Roundtable*, an interactive activity inviting visitors to connect with the themes of *Around the Table* by answering prompts on recipe cards that will then be displayed throughout the Britton Science Rotunda. Recipe card prompts vary from inviting drawings of favorite veggies to reflections on culturally important plants and ingredients.

In the Rondina and LoFaro Gallery on the Mertz Library Building's sixth floor, *Steam, Sear, Sauté: 150 Years of American Vegetarian Cookbooks* showcases 19th- and 20th-century plant-based cookbooks from the LuEsther T. Mertz Library's William R. Buck Cookbook Collection. With a particular emphasis on cookbooks that highlight the ways home chefs' relationships to vegetables have changed through time, *Steam, Sear, Sauté* also includes a selection of colorfully illustrated seed catalogs from the Mertz Library, the world's most important botanical and horticultural library, with more than 11 million archival items spanning 10 centuries.

In addition to the Mertz Library Building exhibits, *Around the Table* offers expansive installations of living edible plants; an African American Garden curated by Dr. Jessica B. Harris, the leading scholar of foods of the African Diaspora; the work of contemporary artist Lina Puerta; and 30 tables designed by Bronx-based artists. Programming for all ages includes "Around the Kids' Table" in the Everett Children's Adventure Garden, Wellness Wednesdays with the NYBG Farmers Market, weekend celebrations, and more. The exhibition provides opportunities to discover the diversity and beauty of plants that are grown for cuisine around the world, to uncover the botanical origins of the foods people think they know, and to cultivate deeper understanding of the environmental and social impacts of food choices.

For more information about *Around the Table: Stories of the Food We Love* or to purchase tickets, please visit <https://www.nybg.org/event/around-the-table-stories-of-the-foods-we-love/>.

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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

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