ISAACSON, MILLER

NYBG

Chief Science Officer and Dean of the International Plant Science Center
New York Botanical Garden
New York, NY

The Search

The New York Botanical Garden ("NYBG"), one of the world's great centers for plant and fungal research and conservation, seeks a dynamic and collaborative leader to serve as its next Chief Science Officer and Dean of the International Plant Science Center ("Chief Science Officer"). With a venerable history, and prestigious and extensive research program, this institution is a leading advocate for the plant kingdom and a leader in the study of plant diversity, endangered species, and habitats on a global scale. An institution builder, leader, and passionate communicator, the new Chief Science Officer will have the extraordinary opportunity to direct both a team of world-renowned scientists and the scientific and conservation work of NYBG.

NYBG pursues its mission through the wide-ranging research programs of the International Plant Science Center ("IPSC"), including its world-class herbarium and library collections; its role as a museum of living plant collections arranged in gardens and landscapes across its National Historic Landmark site; and its comprehensive education programs in horticulture and plant science. NYBG seeks a Chief Science Officer with intellectual weight and considerable research credibility in botany, life science, environmental science, or a related field, who sees opportunities across disciplines of science for introducing more applied research into the portfolio.

The Chief Science Officer will lead strategic positioning and planning for Science at NYBG and must be a fluent and enthusiastic interpreter of plant science to a broad audience. Specifically, the Chief Science Officer will provide research direction for NYBG that will contribute significantly to: advancing plant diversity science; exploring opportunities arising from the interaction of humans and plants; addressing the intersecting climate and biodiversity crises; and ensuring the IPSC is financially sustainable. This direction illustrates a broadening of the scientific goals of the Garden as it seeks to actively identify ways its science can play a more impactful role in developing solutions to environmental challenges and in promoting the value that plants contribute to human well-being.

NYBG has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this search. All confidential inquiries, referrals, and nominations should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

The New York Botanical Garden

Established in 1891, NYBG is distinguished by the beauty of its landscape, collections, and gardens, and the scope and excellence of its programs in horticulture, education, and science. NYBG was inspired by an 1888 visit that eminent botanists Elizabeth Britton and her husband Nathaniel Lord Britton took to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, near London. The Brittons believed New York should have a great botanical garden to advance public understanding of plants, be a repository of rare and valuable specimens, and lead original research in botanical science. Because of its picturesque terrain, freshwater Bronx River, rock-cut gorge, and 50 acres of old-growth forest, the Garden was sited on the northern half of Bronx Park.

Today, the 250-acre garden—the largest in any city in the United States—is a National Historic Landmark. NYBG encompasses 50 specialty gardens and collections comprising more than one million plants, the Nolen Greenhouses for Living Collections, and the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, the nation's preeminent Victorian-style glasshouse. Highlights include the award-winning Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden, considered to be among the world's most sustainable rose gardens; the Native Plant Garden, celebrating the diversity of northeastern North American plants; and 30,000 distinguished trees, many more than 200 years old. More than one million visitors annually enjoy the grounds, view innovative exhibitions, and participate in educational programs that are larger and more diverse than those of any other garden in the world.

During the 129 years since its founding, NYBG has carefully stewarded a stunning urban oasis, created one of the world's most comprehensive plant research and conservation programs, amassed unrivaled research collections, and, as a living museum, taught millions of visitors of all ages to love and respect the plants of the world.

The New York Botanical Garden is committed to preserving and protecting the planet's biodiversity and natural resources and enhancing human well-being by educating, training, and empowering the next generation of Earth's caregivers—in partnership with both local and global communities. NYBG is also committed to an inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible work environment, and further recognizes that diversity in the workforce fosters excellence in the mission of advocating for the plants of the world. Leveraging the strong foundation of existing policies and practices, NYBG works to advance inclusivity, diversity, equity, and accessibility and aspires to continue to cultivate a workforce and institution that is as diverse as the communities they serve and the audiences they engage.

Leadership

Jennifer Bernstein is a proven leader with exceptional management experience in fundraising and board development for prominent cultural, educational, and environmental organizations. She leads the world-renowned New York Botanical Garden, as the institution's CEO and William C. Steere Sr. President.

Ms. Bernstein's leadership is driving fiscal, reputational, and programmatic growth at NYBG. Since joining the Garden in 2021, she has launched a new strategic and comprehensive master site planning process that will revitalize more than 100 acres of NYBG property, welcomed five new trustees to NYBG's Board of Trustees, and helped solidify the institution's financial position.

Ms. Bernstein cares deeply about protecting the environment and was especially attracted to the Garden's long history in plant research and conservation. Before joining the Garden, Ms. Bernstein was Chief Development Officer and interim Chief Operations Officer at NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council). She is now driving NYBG's role as a civic institution that propels the world's understanding of the critical role of plants to our lives and to a healthy and thriving natural world. Ms. Bernstein is a member of the Women's Forum of New York and on the board of the City University of New York's Lehman College Foundation.

Earlier in her career, Ms. Bernstein led fundraising and development for major New York cultural and educational institutions, including as leader of advancement at Pace University and in roles at Playwrights Horizon and Roundabout Theatre.

With the full support of the Board, Ms. Bernstein has identified the scientific enterprise as an essential element of the Garden's growth. NYBG has the unique opportunity to serve multiple roles--as a cultural institution, a resource in the local community, and a leader in the search for solutions to the world's pressing problems.

Strategic Plans

The 125th Anniversary Strategic Plan, published in June 2016, focused on: creating a green urban oasis; connecting gardening to the arts and humanities; teaching science to city kids; saving the plants of the world; anchoring the community; business activities; management and institutional needs; and funding for the Garden.

NYBG's next strategic plan, currently being finalized, builds upon prior initiatives and focuses on the following areas: (1) investigating, elevating, and amplifying the importance of plants to help solve the climate and biodiversity crisis; (2) becoming a leading online global resource through unparalleled collections, horticultural knowledge, and plant science expertise; (3) responding to the interests and opportunities of the Bronx borough—a diverse, vibrant, immigrant and multi-ethnic community that is emblematic of today's America; (4) inspiring more diverse audiences to seek beauty, knowledge, and wellbeing in the natural world through education and experiences that can only be found at the Garden;

and (5) being a model in the cultural and nonprofit sector, making the Garden a premier place to work and a highly resilient, environmentally sustainable, collaborative, and effective organization.

Science at The New York Botanical Garden

NYBG is responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis by conducting field, laboratory, and collections-based research on plants and fungi and their habitats and by taking institutional action to protect them. The New York Botanical Garden is a world leader in plant research and conservation, using traditional and cutting-edge tools to discover, understand, and preserve Earth's vast botanical diversity. NYBG's scientific programs contribute to three elements of effective conservation: discovering biodiversity; engaging and training; and exploring solutions to environmental and other problems found in the plant world. Over the past thirty years, NYBG has made extensive investments in modernizing and expanding the International Plant Science Center, which is comprised of: The William and Lynda Steere Herbarium (the second largest herbarium in the world); The LuEsther T. Mertz Library; The Plant Research Laboratory, which includes The Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Program for Molecular Systematics and The Plant Genomics Program; The Institute of Systematic Botany; The Institute of Economic Botany; The Graduate Studies Program; and NYBG's publishing program. The Science Division of NYBG encompasses several departments and programs and includes more than 50 Ph.D.-level faculty members, post-doctoral researchers, graduate students, and highly trained technical staff.

NYBG scientists explore plant and fungal diversity and this research provides the foundation for all of plant science – basic and applied. The cornerstones of this foundation are the collections in the herbarium, library, living collections, and laboratory. The Garden's LuEsther T. Mertz Library and William and Lynda Steere Herbarium are known not only for the breadth of their holdings, but for setting the highest standard for curatorial excellence, as well as for making these collections available to the world and searchable in both physical and digital form. The Steere Herbarium houses 7.8 million specimens, representing all groups of plants and fungi from around the world, and is a global resource with more than 4 million of its specimens digitized. The LuEsther T. Mertz Library is the largest botanical and horticultural library in the Western Hemisphere, with more than 11 million archival items spanning 10 centuries, along with 19 special collections including rare books and folios and extensive digital collections. These are key resources for understanding the effects of climate change on plants and fungi. The Plant Research Laboratory, which includes The Plant Genomics Program and Cullman Program, focuses on exploring the genes responsible for evolutionary innovations in plants and the global scientific effort to assemble the evolutionary tree of life for all plants. Research in the Institute of Economic Botany centers on the documentation and conservation of useful plants, including those that are global resources with great economic impact as well as species used regionally by Indigenous peoples and local communities. Scientists in the Institute of Systematic Biology study the origins, patterns, and conservation of plant and fungal diversity, and data generated by curators in the Institute of Systematic Botany provide the basis for IUCN conservation assessments of species and ecosystems.

The breadth of plant science goes from fungi and lichens to green algae and all major lineages of land plants. NYBG scientists have expertise in the morphology, evolution, and diversity across these groups of fungi and plants. The depth of NYBG science goes from exploring plant and fungal diversity within a region to cataloging human use of plants, discovering new species, unraveling the relationships of plants using morphology and molecules, sequencing plant genomes, developing bioinformatics pipelines, and using artificial intelligence to accelerate plant discovery. Details of the Science Division at NYBG can be found here.

NYBG scientists generate and use floristic inventories and taxonomic studies that provide critical data for conservation assessments and sustainable development goals. Investigations into the evolution and patterns of diversity of plants and fungi provide key information for agriculture, bioenergy, and understanding fundamental biological processes that underpin all life. NYBG science is funded by endowments, federal agencies, private foundations and individuals, and the institutional operating budget.

Science Education and Engagement

NYBG draws the brightest students into its Graduate Studies Program as it is a recognized international contributor to scientific research and the training of the next generation of plant scientists. The Program is operated in conjunction with six affiliated universities and trains Ph.D. and master's students who are conducting studies in systematics, genomics, economic botany, and other related fields. More information on the Graduate Studies Program can be found here.

NYBG communicates and connects with a broad audience about NYBG science through programming, initiatives, and training activities. Programming includes Gallery talks (in person and online), facilities tours and open houses, in-person seminars, and online webinars (internal and external speakers). The semi-permanent science exhibition Saving the Plants of the World: Science in Action has been installed in the Britton Rotunda and Gallery for several years. NYBG also engages the public through the New York City EcoFlora project. As part of an IMLS-funded initiative, NYBG is coordinating with four partner institutions (Chicago Botanic Garden, Denver Botanic Gardens, Desert Botanical Garden, and Marie Selby Botanical Gardens) to engage community scientists to observe, collect, and compile information about plants and their relationships with other organisms, using the online app iNaturalist. In the four years of the New York City EcoFlora project, nearly 28,000 community scientists have contributed more than 780,000 observations of 12,000 species of plants, fungi, and animals. NYBG's internship program provides research experiences for 20-30 post-graduate, college, and high school students each year. More information on NYBG's education and outreach can be found here.

Financials

The annual science budget hovers around $7,500,000 and has been largely funded by a combination of endowment income, private fundraising, federal grants, and institutional operating budget. Private

fundraising is an area of opportunity for NYBG science, especially as we begin to pursue more applied research addressing issues of environmental concern. NYBG scientists have been very successful in securing NSF grants yet recognize the need to keep pace with technological advances and diversify their funding portfolio to find solutions for the 21st century. The Chief Science Officer will continue this conversation helping to identify funders who share an interest and passion for the work of the Garden.

The Chief Science Officer and Dean of the International Plant Science Center

Reporting directly to NYBG's President and CEO, the Chief Science Officer will direct and oversee the activities of the various components of the IPSC. Reporting to the Chief Science Officer are eight direct reports: the Director of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library; the Director of the William and Lynda Steere Herbarium; the Director of the Institute of Economic Botany; the VP for Science Administration and Director of Graduate Studies; the Director of the Institute of Systematic Botany; the Director for Laboratory Research; and an Administrative Assistant.

Leadership Opportunities and Challenges for the Chief Science Officer

The Chief Science Officer will lead NYBG into its next scientific iteration, building on existing research and collections programs. The Chief Science Officer will push the boundaries of current scientific efforts by developing new research directions, identifying projects to address the climate and biodiversity crises, building on NYBG's reputation as a leader in international plant conservation efforts, and articulating a compelling new understanding of botanical research to a lay audience. The Chief Science Officer will commit to an inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible environment, and will recognize that diversity fosters excellence. Specifically, the Chief Science Officer will:

Provide vision and strategic leadership

Building on the existing assets of the research and collections programs, the Chief Science Officer will lead all constituencies in a continuing discussion about the future of science at NYBG. The Chief Science Officer must articulate and drive an aspirational vision for the organization that ensures leadership in research, education, and conservation. The Chief Science Officer will develop innovative research directions that establish IPSC as a leader in addressing a wide range of challenges facing society. The Chief Science Officer will ensure that the vision engages and inspires staff, Board, and community supporters, and that IPSC activities are consistent with the strategic implementation of that vision.

Increase visibility and broaden NYBG's public profile

Using this prestigious platform, the Chief Science Officer will serve as a voice of influence in the community and will be charged with advancing NYBG's position as a local, regional, national, and global leader in plant diversity research and education. The Chief Science Officer will amplify our research efforts and is expected to contribute to the enhancement of the NYBG community at large and continue to build

NYBG's reputation for excellence. The Chief Science Officer will represent the IPSC's work to both scientists and non-scientists and to leaders at the highest levels of the academic, business, nonprofit, and government communities, as well as Garden members, supporters, and funders so that NYBG is recognized as a thought leader and partner. The Chief Science Officer will convey NYBG's past successes, while emphasizing the importance and impact of NYBG science on current needs and emerging topics in the world today. The Chief Science Officer will ensure the local community in the Bronx is engaged in the work of NYBG and that programs address the needs of the Garden's home, as well as those of the global community.

Manage the scientific enterprise

NYBG staff members are exceptional in their passion and dedication to the Garden and its mission. The Chief Science Officer must encourage the ongoing success of NYBG staff by staying abreast of trends in the field and identifying new opportunities for NYBG science. The next Chief Science Officer will be an astute manager who will provide leadership to IPSC faculty and staff. The Chief Science Officer will maintain efficient and effective systems that support the work of the IPSC, encourage efficient and impactful collaboration, make certain the work of the IPSC is coordinated and integrated across science departments, and that developmental and funding opportunities for the team are widely available. The Chief Science Officer will foster a strong, mutually reinforcing scientific community by promoting interdisciplinary collaborations, innovative and creative research partnerships, skills and knowledge transfer, and mentoring. The leader will have the opportunity to make important hires that open new areas of scientific focus.

The Chief Science Officer will also work with the appropriate individuals to review the overall science budget on an annual basis and help to determine resource allocation and spending. The Chief Science Officer must ensure that IPSC's operating budget remains aligned with available resources, ensure that IPSC embraces good business practices, and that the financial model is sustainable and serves its mission and strategic objectives.

Work effectively with peers across NYBG and the broader scientific community

With the benefit of an institution-wide perspective, the Chief Science Officer will be well-positioned to maintain and build upon relationships across NYBG in order to catalyze initiatives that combine and leverage the many areas of excellence among the NYBG staff. The Chief Science Officer will identify new areas for synergistic activity across NYBG and will nurture and build upon a thriving intellectual community between NYBG scientists and external partners. In addition, the Chief Science Officer will strengthen and build upon connections between NYBG and the broader scientific community in ways that lead to fruitful interdisciplinary collaborations in plant sciences. This includes positioning NYBG for participation in larger, multi-institutional grant activity and interdisciplinary team-science collaborations. The Chief Science Officer will lead NYBG in maintaining and establishing productive external partnerships ensuring the IPSC team leads responses to emerging scientific issues and opportunities while using historic strengths and

novel approaches. The Chief Science Officer will also strengthen relationships with industry and corporate partners as well as other aligned academic and research organizations and federal agencies.

The Ideal Candidate

The successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities:

- A Ph.D. in the life sciences or an appropriately related field;
- Track record of driving science and research towards real-world impact;
- An appreciation of the importance of modern molecular, genomic, and data-driven approaches to plant biodiversity, systematics, economic botany, and related areas;
- A dynamic, collaboratively minded individual with proven abilities in interdisciplinary research team-building and institution-building;
- Demonstrated entrepreneurial abilities;
- Leadership experience in a research organization or university research program focused on conservation, biodiversity, or other related fields;
- The ability to effectively manage organizational change while working in a collaborative environment;
- Demonstrated commitment to excellence, equity, educational opportunity, and to building and inspiring diverse faculty and staff as individuals in a scientific and creative community;
- The ability to recruit, motivate, inspire, and retain talented faculty and staff; a commitment to engage collaboratively with faculty and respond effectively to their concerns;
- The ability to be a spokesperson at the highest level of international bio-politics and an international ambassador for plant research while also communicating effectively to a lay audience;
- Proven skills as a senior manager; the ability to provide successful oversight of people, budget, and space; and,
- A collegial approach; a demonstrated ability to work effectively across all levels of a large, complex organization, and to engage a broad range of individuals and constituencies.

To Apply

The New York Botanical Garden has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm to assist in this recruitment. Review of candidates will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Nominations, inquiries, and applications, including a letter of interest describing the individual's qualifications for the position and curriculum vitae, should be sent electronically and in confidence to:

Jackie Mildner, Partner
Andrew Lee, Partner

ISAACSON, MILLER

Alexandra Lolavar, Associate
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To apply, please visit: imsearch.com/8752

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