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Tickets Are on Sale Now for *Wonderland: Curious Nature* at The New York Botanical Garden, Inspired by the Beloved Classics *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass, And What Alice Found There*

NYBG's All-New, Garden-Wide Exhibition Will Feature a Magnificent Flower Display, Fantastical Tea Parties, Exciting Night Experiences, and Artworks by Contemporary Artists Inspired by Wonderland

The Immersive and Enchanting Exhibition Will Span Three Seasons, Running from May 18 through October 27, 2024



Bronx, NY—Tickets are on sale now for *Wonderland: Curious Nature*, an all-new exhibition for 2024 at The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG). The presentation will combine horticultural and contemporary art installations like never before, evoking the spirit of exploration and the uncanny, unbelievable, and unfamiliar nature of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. From May 18 through October 27, 2024, visitors of all ages will step into a one-of-a-kind botanical experience that grows curiouser and curiouser as they follow the White Rabbit on an immersive, Garden-wide journey through settings, sights, and scents inspired by the classic tale and its sequel, *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*. A magnificent flower display, contemporary art installations, fantastical tea parties, and exciting night experiences await the curious and adventuresome at heart. Organized by curator and scholar Jennifer R. Gross, in collaboration with NYBG, the exhibition will showcase the work of contemporary artists working in diverse media, including FoldHaus,

Patrick Jacobs, Andre Kong Studio, Abelardo Morell, Yoko Ono, Beverly Semmes, Alyson Shotz, Agus Putu Suyadnya, and Paula Wilson. Tickets for *Wonderland: Curious Nature* are now on sale at <https://www.nybg.org/event/wonderland-curious-nature/>.

Through three seasons, *Wonderland: Curious Nature* at NYBG will transcend the confines of traditional exhibitions, seamlessly blending breathtaking floral displays with contemporary art, all set against the backdrop of NYBG's 250-acre landscape, landmark buildings, and lush natural beauty. The Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden will be one of many horticultural highlights, bursting into flower in June, with thousands of roses looking their best through September, as if cued by a conductor or commanded by a queen.

Nearly 160 years after its first publication, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and its heroic protagonist remain touchstones for imagination and wonder across generations and around the world. The beloved tale serves as an inspiration for NYBG's exhibition, combining horticulture, contemporary art, and archival objects to evoke the events and settings brought to life in the *Alice* stories, while also examining the scientific, botanical, and cultural context that produced them.

Down the Rabbit Hole in and around the Conservatory

In the Leon Levy Visitor Center, a White Rabbit fashioned entirely out of plants will greet visitors. Created by Mosaïcultures Internationales de Montréal (MIM), a Canadian company dedicated to modern interpretations of the art of “mosaiculture,” a blend of sculpture and horticulture, the nearly 12-foot-tall rabbit is one of their fantastical installations, which have been shown at botanical gardens and attractions in North America, Europe, and Asia.

A horticultural wonderland awaits visitors in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory and the surrounding area. Featured plants include those found in a traditional English garden alongside plants that are seemingly plucked from the imagination.

The living component of the *Wonderland* exhibition in the Haupt Conservatory will represent a journey that begins in a beautiful flower garden and continues through displays of some of the truly wonderful oddities of the plant world—plants that reveal that nature is filled with fantastic life. Visitors will meander through a display of the giant tropical water lily *Victoria amazonica* and other aquatic species before entering a manicured landscape with an English double border. The experience evokes the famous water lily house and walled garden at Oxford University, one of the places that inspired the fanciful tales of Alice and the unforgettable characters she encounters. Familiar favorites like larkspur and foxglove will be combined with more uncanny choices such as the Canary Island-endemic *Echium wildpretii*, commonly known as tower-of-jewels.

As the orderly walled garden begins to come undone, visitors will find themselves inside a mysterious rabbit hole and emerge to behold giant leaves and miniature plants. This bold garden of colorful wonders will feature some of the most fetchingly odd plants from NYBG's collections. Devil's tongue from China, giant milkweed from Africa, and *Myrmecodia*, a

plant from Australia that serves as a home to colonies of ants, will be just some of the many bizarre but beautiful plants featured in this Wonderland Garden.

Outside, on the Conservatory Lawn, the boundaries of botanical art are challenged by more than 100 topiaries in geometric shapes. Nearby, kinetic mushroom sculptures by FoldHaus Art Collective, that dazzled audiences at the Burning Man festival and around the world, change size at random, as if they are breathing. At night, the sculptures' colorful, moving LEDs beckon visitors to linger in this magical dreamscape with the iconic Conservatory dome as a dramatic backdrop.

A World of Wonderment throughout the Garden Grounds

Nature is the original wonderland. The New York Botanical Garden's 250-acre National Historic Landmark landscape invites visitors to find their "inner Alice," as they explore the work by contemporary artists inspired by and reflecting the context of the stories in surprising ways.

Along the edge of the Thain Family Forest, artist Alyson Shotz uses mirrors in a new work commissioned by NYBG, *Fragmented Forest*, to invite visitors to engage nature through shifting perspectives created by sunlight and wind. Nearby, Japanese artist, performer, and peace activist Yoko Ono's *Play it By Trust* is a game of chess like no other. All the oversized pieces and the large playing board itself are a single color, challenging traditional aspirations for gamesmanship and competition, creating a thought-provoking twist on the centuries-old game that plays a memorable role in *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*.

Inspired by Alice's uncanny growth spurt that sends her catapulting through the roof of a garden cottage, Britain-based Portuguese architect Andre Kong presents *homegrown*, his own version of such a home that will be constructed with bricks made entirely of mycelium, the rootlike, branching network of fungal threads. Ecovative Design, a leading biomaterials company that develops high-performance, environmentally-conscious packaging and building materials using mycelium, will work in partnership with Andre Kong studios to create the mycelium bricks for Kong's design.

Curiouser and Curiouser in the Library Building and Ross Gallery

The exhibits in the LuEsther T. Mertz Library Building expand upon the global appeal of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, fostering connections to the childlike wonder of the character Alice, who is undeterred in the face of the unfamiliar.

The Victorian period, when *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was originally published, was one of great excitement and curiosity, as new technologies, scientific breakthroughs, and discoveries revolutionized how people saw the world and understood nature. Through 19th-century publications, objects, and gadgets—and examples of early *Alice* editions—the exhibition displays will examine the stories through a modern lens by juxtaposing the historical context with the work of contemporary artists. Cuban artist Abelardo Morell's

photography brings new life and dimension to the pages of original *Alice* manuscripts. Figures set within garden landscapes are recorded in video and photography by New York-based artist Beverly Semmes, evoking the imaginative horizons available to everyone reading the classic tales.

Additional works on display will include the miniature worlds of artist Patrick Jacobs, fantastical and futuristic dreamscapes by emerging Indonesian painter Agus Putu Suyadnya, and the short video, *Sunflower Love*, by video and performance artist Paula Wilson, offering a contemplation of identity through humanity's connection to nature. Selections from NYBG's Mertz Library collections and specimens from the William and Lynda Steere Herbarium will tell fascinating stories of mind-altering plants, which were of great interest in the Victorian era and continue to be the subjects of cutting-edge scientific research today.

Would You Like an Adventure Now? Programming for All Ages

The multi-seasonal exhibition will be complemented by a vibrant offering of public programming. The exhibition will start with It's Always Teatime Opening Weekend on Saturday and Sunday, May 18 and 19, 2024 on Daffodil Hill, with award-winning, site-integrated theater company We Players. Visitors will take a seat alongside *Wonderland* royalty at the Queen's Tea, race the White Rabbit, or have a lovely chat with Alice herself. Croquet and other lawn games, hat-making, pop-up tea demonstrations, and more are among the other fun activities.

A rich array of self-guided tours and other programs will provide lively experiences Garden-wide both during the day and at night. A self-guided scavenger hunt will invite visitors to explore the art installations and search for the Cheshire Cat as they traverse the Botanical Garden grounds. On Saturdays, Sundays, and select holiday Mondays, favorite characters such as the Mad Hatter, the Red Queen, and the White Rabbit will spring from the page and find a home at NYBG. At the Everett Children's Adventure Garden Pop-Up, *Wonderland: Wonder Thyme* will encourage children to explore the natural world from new perspectives inspired by Alice's storybook adventures.

Wonderland Nights will be a must-see evening event for adults 21 and over, on June 1 and 15, September 20 and 21, October 4, 5, 18, and 25, 2024, from 7 to 10 p.m. *Wonderland* comes to life after hours with staged performances, cocktails, and more.

Fantastic Fungi Weekend on Saturday and Sunday, September 14 and 15, 2024, will bring together creative voices in the worlds of food, healing, design, and the performing arts who are inspired by, or make use of, fungi in their work.

Eat This and Drink This—Dining Options During the Exhibition

Throughout the Botanical Garden, opportunities for themed refreshment will abound, from special lunches and full afternoon tea parties at the Hudson Garden Grill to "The Looking Glass," a pop-up food and bar experience on the Visitor Center patio. Whether looking for a

hearty meal, a sweet “unbirthday” treat, a savory nibble, or an inventive handcrafted cocktail, all will find something delightfully *mad* to spark their curiosity and whet their appetites.

About the Guest Curator

Guest curator Jennifer R. Gross, Ph.D., is an independent curator and art historian. Most recently, she curated a retrospective on artist and poet Mina Loy for Bowdoin College and an exhibition of the work of contemporary artists Ashley Bryan and Paula Wilson for Colby College Museum of Art. The Founding Director of the Hauser & Wirth Institute, a nonprofit supporting research and artist archives, Dr. Gross has also served as Chief Curator at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum and the Seymour H. Knox, Jr., Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at Yale University Art Gallery.

About The New York Botanical Garden

The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) has been a connective hub among people, plants, and the shared planet since 1891. For more than 130 years, NYBG has been rooted in the cultural fabric of New York City, in the heart of the Bronx, its greenest borough. NYBG has invited millions of visitors to make the Garden a part of their lives, exploring the joy, beauty, and respite of nature. NYBG’s 250 acres are home to renowned exhibitions, immersive botanical experiences, art and music, and events with some of the most influential figures in plant and fungal science, horticulture, and the humanities. NYBG is also a steward of globally significant research collections, from the LuEsther T. Mertz Library collection to the plant and fungal specimens in the William and Lynda Steere Herbarium, the largest such collection in the Western Hemisphere.

The plant people of NYBG—dedicated horticulturists, enthusiastic educators, and scientific adventurers—are committed to helping nature thrive so that humanity can thrive. They believe in their ability to make things better, teaching tens of thousands of kids and families each year about the importance of safeguarding the environment and healthy eating. Expert scientists work across the city, the nation, and the globe to document the plants and fungi of the world—and find actionable, nature-based solutions to the planet’s dual climate and biodiversity crises. With eyes always looking forward, they train the next generation of botanists, gardeners, landscape designers, and environmental stewards, ensuring a green future for all. At NYBG, it’s nature—or nowhere.

For more information about *Wonderland: Curious Nature*, visit our website at <https://www.nybg.org/event/wonderland-curious-nature/>.

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LUESTHER T. MERTZ CHARITABLE TRUST
Providing leadership support for year-round programming at NYBG

Exhibitions in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory are made possible by the Estate of Enid A. Haupt.

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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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