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## Five Scientists to Join The New York Botanical Garden’s World-Class Plant Research Staff, Adding a Diverse Range of Expertise to Advance Its Work in Addressing the Dual Biodiversity and Climate Crises

### Research Specialties of New Assistant Curators Include Invasive Plant Ecology, Aquatic Plant Evolution, Plant Structure, and Computational Biology



Plant scientists joining The New York Botanical Garden as Assistant Curators in 2024 are (left to right) Evelyn Beury, Ph.D.; Ana María Bedoya, Ph.D.; Aleca Borsuk, Ph.D.; and JianJun Jin, Ph.D.

**Bronx, NY**—The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) announced today that five scientists are joining NYBG’s world-class plant research staff, adding a diverse range of expertise to advance the work of NYBG Science to find actionable, nature-based solutions to Earth’s dual climate and biodiversity crises. Among the research specialties of the new scientists, all of whom will have the title of Assistant Curator, are invasive plant and global change ecology, the evolutionary biology of aquatic plants, plant structure and function, and computational biology. Four of the new Assistant Curators will join NYBG in 2024, with the fifth curator arriving in 2025.

“I am thrilled to share the exciting news about the expansion of our NYBG Science staff,” said Mauricio Diazgranados, Ph.D., Chief Science Officer and Dean of NYBG Science. “These talented young scientists bring new areas of expertise to our team. Their

contributions will play a vital role, along with the rest of the team, in shaping the future of NYBG Science and furthering our impact on environmental action.”

NYBG welcomes the following new Assistant Curators in 2024, who will start at various times later this year, beginning in July:

**Evelyn Beaury, Ph.D.**

Dr. Evelyn Beaury is an invasive plant and global change ecologist motivated by creative and actionable research projects that address knowledge gaps and stakeholder needs in conservation science. In her research, Dr. Beaury uses geospatial analysis to study the major drivers of biodiversity loss and their interactions, particularly the spread of invasive plants, climate change, and habitat loss due to land use change. She is most excited about research that simultaneously addresses important scientific questions and applied needs in environmental management and policy. Dr. Beaury received a B.A. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Colorado and a Ph.D. in Organismic and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

**Ana María Bedoya, Ph.D.**

Dr. Ana María Bedoya is a plant systematist and evolutionary biologist focusing on plants living in aquatic ecosystems such as river rapids and waterfalls. Dr. Bedoya investigates the impact of landscape change on the evolution of neotropical plants. Through field work and research in herbaria, she incorporates genomic, morphological, and anatomical data with modern analytical tools to investigate large-scale evolutionary patterns and the evolutionary processes that underlie them. Dr. Bedoya has a B.Sc. in Biology and M.Sc. in Biological Sciences from the Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia, and completed her Ph.D. in Biology at the University of Washington.

**Aleca Borsuk, Ph.D.**

Dr. Aleca Borsuk brings mechanical engineering expertise to the study of plant structure and botanical diversity. She studies plant structure and function across Earth’s diverse environments to understand how leaf anatomy promotes carbon assimilation, provides resistance to environmental stress, and informs sustainable technologies modeled on natural processes, or biomimicry. Her approach uses recent innovations in three-dimensional imaging and computer modeling combined with benchtop experiments, fieldwork, and greenhouse studies. Dr. Borsuk received a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering, with a minor in Botany, from the University of Hawai ‘i at Mānoa and a master’s degree in Environmental Science and Ph.D. from the Yale School of the Environment.

**JianJun Jin, Ph.D**

Dr. JianJun Jin has expertise in plant systematics, genomics, and computational biology, primarily focused on exploring plant diversity and developing innovative methodologies to

advance our understanding of the field. Dr. Jin investigates both theoretical and practical questions about how biodiversity originates and is maintained, and how to quantify it. This involves the development of new models, methods, and software tools that contribute to the broader biodiversity research community. Dr. Jin has a B.S. in Biology from Jilin University (Changchun, China) and a Ph.D. in Molecular Biology from the Chinese Academy of Science (Beijing) and Kunming Institute of Botany.

These Assistant Curators are joining one of the greatest plant science research programs in the world. The work of NYBG scientists takes them near and far, from studying plant DNA in the Botanical Garden's state-of-the-art laboratory in the Bronx to exploring ecosystems in dozens of countries across the globe. NYBG's collections, including the William and Lynda Steere Herbarium and LuEsther T. Merz Library, comprise one of the most significant holdings of botanical knowledge in the world. The research of NYBG scientists is foundational to addressing the dual climate and biodiversity crises because plants and fungi offer solutions that the world needs now.

Information about the fifth curator will be available later this year. To learn more about NYBG Science, visit <https://www.nybg.org/plant-research-and-conservation/>

### **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.

The New York Botanical Garden is located at 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, New York 10458. For more information, visit [nybg.org](http://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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