

## **PLANT PEOPLE Season Two Episode Four ‘A River Runs Through The Bronx’ Transcript**

**JENNIFER BERNSTEIN NARRATION:** One of my favorite places to walk here at NYBG is the Thain Family Forest.

It’s an old growth forest, both ancient and alive. For thousands of years, it’s been home to all kinds of plants and animals, and has weathered many literal storms and changes. But its source of life has stayed the same: The Bronx River.

What you might not realize is that without this river, NYBG as we know it might not be here at all.

**TODD FORREST:** The New York Botanical Garden was founded in 1891, by a coalition of people including Nathaniel and Elizabeth Britton.

**JENNIFER NARRATION:** This is my colleague Todd Forrest, Arthur Ross Vice President for Horticulture and Living Collections at NYBG.

**TODD:** And they were drawn to this site primarily because of the magnificent beauty of its natural features, including the 50-acre old growth forest, then called the Hemlock Grove, and of course the Bronx River and its gorge.

And that was very unusual for a 19th century botanical garden to sort of have nature, first and foremost be the determinant of the way the garden was arranged and laid out. And it was so brilliant and so prescient, and we are all the beneficiaries of that thoughtful decision.

**JENNIFER NARRATION:** But despite its importance, the story of the Bronx River almost didn't have a happy ending. Industrialization that began in the 19th century brought railroads, factories, and more people to the Bronx and Westchester County just north of the city. It also brought waste to the river. As recently as the 1980s, people were calling the Bronx River an “open sewer.”

**TODD:** I think one of the things I find so remarkable about the Bronx River as sort of a symbol of nature more broadly, is that the affronts on it were so intense and so long in duration that it would be hard to imagine that nature could in any way

survive that. But in relatively little amount of time and a relatively little amount of effort, the river is completely different.

It comes back fast, and what we've seen is just doing a little bit of work to kind of claw back some of the negative impacts that we've had, opens up like an exponential amount of natural energy.

**JENNIFER NARRATION:** Welcome to Plant People. I'm Jennifer Bernstein, CEO and The William C. Steere Sr., President at the New York Botanical Garden. In this episode: the revival of the Bronx River; the plants, animals, and humans that depend on it; and your part in its future.

**JENNIFER:** Todd, it's so great to have you here on the podcast. Welcome.

**TODD:** Thank you very much. I'm thrilled to be here.

**JENNIFER:** So just to get us started, could you describe your role here at NYBG?

**TODD:** Sure. I am head of Horticulture and Living Collections.

And as such, I have broad oversight over three program areas that are related. One is the care and feeding of the living collections that have been assembled over the 250-acre landscape and in our glass houses since the Garden's founding. And those living plant collections were assembled to serve our program of education and research, and then ultimately to create moments of delight for people who visit the Garden.

I also work with a team who does the ecological restoration of the 50-acre old growth Thain Family Forest at the heart of the Garden, and that is a program that's really more about nature than it is about horticulture, but it does combine elements of both.

And then lastly, I work with the amazing team of Bronx Green-Up, who has since 1988 been involved in the creation of more than 300 urban green spaces in the Bronx. And they're a wonderful part of the horticulture team and they sort of take our horticulture expertise out into the community. So they are, in many ways, the New York Botanical Garden's Bronx-facing face.

**JENNIFER:** Wonderful. So, I know you've heard this joke a thousand times but... your name is Todd Forrest, and you're the head of horticulture here at the New York Botanical Garden. Is that how you became a plant person?

**TODD:** Maybe so. There's a whole concept called nominative determinism and I can't claim to not have been the beneficiary. But when people ask me if I changed my name, my pat answer is 'no but I'm thinking of it'.

**JENNIFER:** Yeah. Well, I think it's delightful. How did you first become interested in plants?

**TODD:** So, I grew up in suburban New Jersey, a short train ride away from lower Manhattan. And I was born with this fascination with nature, but there wasn't a whole lot of nature around me. So for me, a mysterious dark forest was a single white oak tree, in a little scrubby woodland behind my house.

And I spent my kind of younger years in New Jersey riding my bike to the Great Swamp, which is an amazing National Wildlife Refuge, not too far from where I grew up, and just immersing myself. But I had no role models, no adults in my life who shaped their lives around nature... a few gardeners and a few people who liked to fish.

And so I ended up falling into a career in horticulture by getting a minimum wage job unloading trucks at a nursery outside of Portland, Maine. And at that time, all of a sudden the world of plants, which had been a kind of neutral green backdrop, snapped into clear focus. And I was off and running and I have never looked back.

**JENNIFER:** That's great. Well, you've made a wonderful life working with plants. Today we're going to talk about a specific part of the Garden's landscape and the broader landscape, which is the Bronx River. So for listeners who may not know, where does the Bronx River flow?

**TODD:** So, the Bronx River is New York City's only freshwater river, which means it's the only river in New York that has fresh water along much of its length in New York City. And it flows about 24 miles from the Kensico Reservoir, just north of White Plains in Westchester County, New York, into the East River.

**JENNIFER:** Great. And what is the geological history, its ecological importance?

**TODD:** Well, the Bronx River in the New York Botanical Garden and the Bronx River almost bisects the Garden into east and west exactly. It runs north south through the Garden and its journey to the East River.

**JENNIFER:** About a mile, right?

**TODD:** It's about a mile of river frontage through the Garden itself. And actually, the river in the Garden is geologically very interesting because it flows through what's called the Bronx River Gorge, which is a steep walled deep V-shaped ravine, which is geologically very young.

And since our whole part of the world was covered by a mile or more of ice about 15,000 years ago or so, there are very few rivers in our part of the world that are steep-walled kind of ravines. Most of them were kind of gouged out into a U-shape by the glaciers. And the theory is, is that sometime after the main period of glaciation, either because of an earthquake or because of an ice dam or because of a glacial lake was created.

And when it broke up, it actually followed the path of least resistance, which was an old fault line, which goes through the middle of the New York Botanical Garden. The river has been an important part of human history, really, since Native American times.

A huge source of food, of water, of course. Its floodplain would have supported agriculture. And then since European times, the river has gone the way that so many rivers in our country have gone. Started off as a way of moving around, a source of water, and then because it runs primarily through very densely populated areas, has over time become very mal-impacted by human activity.

**JENNIFER:** So this is a plant podcast. So I have to ask, how is it that rivers can be bellwethers or impact the health of plants? And of course the other living things in and around them.

**TODD:** I've been thinking a lot about rivers recently. You asked me how I got into horticulture as a career, and one of the sources of inspiration was, I love to fish,

and I always have. I think my favorite thing about fishing has been about standing in rivers.

Rivers are in many ways symbolic of human relationships with nature, and rivers in many ways encapsulate all of the complexity of natural systems. And so rivers create floodplains, those floodplains carry sediments that have been brought from other parts of the watershed, and they're deposited within shallow areas along the rivers, and that becomes really fertile grounds for the growth of native plants.

Some of the most incredible forests in the world are effectively floodplain forests. Think about the Brazilian Amazon. Obviously the nutrients in the water brought to any landscape by a river, are really great for plant life.

And the rivers themselves are the home to an amazing array of animals: fish to aquatic microorganisms, to wading birds and other animals that depend on the river for their food.

**JENNIFER:** You know, when you walk into the forest today, you're surrounded by this old growth beauty. It's teeming with life.

The river is absolutely gorgeous. But at one point, it was one of the most polluted bodies of water in the state. So can you talk a little bit about that story? How did it get bad? And then how did it get better?

**TODD:** Yeah, as I said, rivers are in many ways... they encapsulate relationships to nature in a pretty remarkable way. Everything that people do, every bit of material that we produce, every bit of waste that we produce, will end up in a river.

And so over time, rivers in urban areas become quite polluted because they're very convenient ways of removing waste. So if you have industry established in a city, which of course all cities established industry to support the people who live there, often rivers are used to bring the waste products of those industrial processes away.

And so urban rivers become very polluted very quickly just by virtue of how useful and helpful they are to people. And the Bronx River is no exception. As New York City and Westchester County grew up around it, the river was lined with farms and factories and it was dammed twelve times or more to create mills to generate all

sorts of goods including sawmills and grist mills, a snuff mill for tobacco, but also things like paintworks and bleachworks and all of those industrial endeavors added terrible pollution to the river over a long period of time.

And then just people living in dense congregation; they produce a lot of human waste and often rivers are used to carry that human waste away, and the Bronx River was no exception. So by the turn of the 20th century, the river, which had been called a clear sparkling stream and had been actually a famous and important trout stream in the 18th century and early 19th century, by the turn of the 20th century was really an open sewer, and terrible in terms of its ecological health, but also terrible in terms of its impact on human health.

And so people started to work on fixing the river, and surprisingly, the Bronx River Parkway, which runs right along the river, was created first as a way of protecting the river from the surrounding city. It moved some of those industrial uses and the shanties and all of that away from the river and created a sort of ribbon-like parkland, which gave the river a little room to breathe.

At the time that they started to create the Bronx River Parkway, they also started to modernize the sewer system and some of the human waste and other human things that went into the river were brought elsewhere to newly established waste treatment plants. And so, that conversion from industrial wasteland to open sewer happened gradually, and it ultimately was pushed to where it is today by the Clean Water Act of 1972, and by the growth of a very vigorous environmental movement in the Bronx and in the urban areas of Westchester County.

**JENNIFER:** So let's talk about that because they're still very relevant to the work that we're doing today. There have been a coalition of organizations and community leaders who have contributed to the cleaning up of the Bronx River: the Bronx River Alliance, NYBG, WCS [Wildlife Conservation Society] and many others. Can you talk about that coalition and the effect that it's had on the modern health of the river?

**TODD:** The people in the Bronx and Westchester County who have devoted their professional lives and in many ways their personal lives to the river have

absolutely transformed the river from open sewer to celebrated urban wildland and to a place where--

**JENNIFER:** We've got dolphins, right?

**TODD:** The dolphins have made their way in and beavers. But it's also-- the river and its corridor, through the Bronx particularly, but also in Westchester for many of the people who live nearby, that's the only nature that they have in their lives. And so the river has gone from open sewer to celebrated kind of urban natural land because of the work of several organizations.

And the one that we have to, of course, credit, I think most is the Bronx River Alliance, which was formed in 2001. It was an organization that really has its roots in 1974, with a series of individuals who put together what's called the Bronx River Restoration, because they saw how terrible it was and it was led by a woman named Ruth Anderberg who lived in the Fordham section of the Bronx.

And she kind of galvanized the communities along the river, elected officials within both Westchester County and New York City, to start to take away the most obvious signs of degradation.

**JENNIFER NARRATION:** After the break, we'll learn how the Bronx River was transformed from a so-called "open sewer" into the beautiful body of water we enjoy today. Plus, we'll reveal the connection between your garden and your local watershed. We'll be right back.

[BREAK]

**JENNIFER NARRATION:** Welcome back to Plant People. I'm Jennifer Bernstein. On his way to meet me, Todd just so happened to find an important piece of history on a colleague's desk. It's a copy of the original Bronx River watershed management plan from 1978.

**JENNIFER:** It's a little bit of kismet that you found it when you did.

**TODD:** Yeah, maybe there is an organizing principle behind the entire world.

**JENNIFER:** Well, on the cover of this Bronx River restoration preliminary master plan, there is a man and he's carrying a tire. Exactly. Yeah. So that must have been the most emblematic problem

**TODD:** You know, everybody loves to hate a tire in a river, and the Bronx River was very fruitful of tires. 21,000 tires removed from the area just outside of one small bit of park in the southern part of the river in the Bronx.

**JENNIFER NARRATION:** NYBG was part of the original coalition that put together this plan.

**TODD:** There were lots of people who got together to work on it, including the New York Botanical Garden and the WCS, the Zoo. Everyone recognizing that the river connects us and that we all benefit from a cleaner river, both the institutions along it, the people who live nearby it, but also the people who recognize that in their lives, they want to do good for the environment. And by taking care of their own spaces, they're actually taking care of the river. And they're benefiting people downstream, both literally and figuratively.

**JENNIFER:** So at the beginning, they were really focused on removing the most conspicuous kinds of waste.

**TODD:** There's really kind of harrowing photographs of whole cars being lifted out by cranes.

You know, the really obvious signs of human degradation were the first things that these folks attacked and dealt with. The idea being that if you start to make the river look like a healthier wild ecosystem, then you can convince people to do more work to actually make it a healthy, functional, wild ecosystem.

**JENNIFER:** Yeah, and then that work has continued now over decades and the river is getting better as time goes on. That foundation, removing the most conspicuous types of pollution, creating a sense of community commitment to the river because it's a place that people can use for recreation and to find the respite that we all find in the natural world, it created the foundation for what we're able to



focus on today, which is the more modern and in some ways, less easy to understand kinds of pollution.

What is challenging the river now?

**TODD:** There are really three kinds of pollution that negatively impact the river today. The first is what they call floatables, but trash. The things that you see.

**JENNIFER:** Yeah, floatables is kind of a nice term for it...

**TODD:** Yeah, floatables is better than trash. Although, 21,000 tires don't float, but they're still in the category of floatable. Or cars, pretty sure, don't float. But anyway, so just think of trash and the things that kind of end up in the river because people throw them outside of their car window or for whatever reason.

And then you have nutrient loading, from things like lawn fertilizers. And what that does is that increases the growth of algae in the river and as that algae dies, it takes up oxygen from the river.

So really the problem with nutrient loading is reduction in dissolved oxygen and the inability of the river to sustain life. And then the last major pollutant that we're still dealing with, are fecal coliform bacteria, bacteria that come from human waste. And those things are less easy to see.

The floatables you can see, but you can't really see low levels of dissolved oxygen and you can't really see fecal coliform bacteria. And those are issues that still plague the river. The river is enormously more clean than it was a generation ago and 50 years ago and a hundred years ago.

**JENNIFER:** Yes and people, they canoe on it, they kayak, they fish.

**TODD:** Yeah, it's a wonderfully active recreation site for people in Westchester and in the Bronx. It is still a river that it is not advisable to swim in. And one of the goals of the Bronx River Alliance and the Bronx River Parkway Reservation Conservancy, of the organizations devoted to the river, is to clean the river up so that someone who is in the South Bronx, who wants to take a swim on a hot August day, can, without any worry about their own health, just walk over to this

amazing river, take a dip, which is one of the great human experiences that you can have. And shouldn't everybody in the Bronx have that experience?

**JENNIFER:** Yeah, that's a beautiful North Star. It would have been unimaginable to think about a goal of having the Bronx River be a place for swimming when this project first began. And now that's within reach.

**TODD:** It's within reach. And all it's going to take is concerted effort, and having more people aware of what the issues are, and more people coming together to bring their own particular expertise, or their own particular passion, to those solutions.

**JENNIFER:** So let's talk about how we got focused on this in recent times. We were going through a strategic planning exercise and one of the priority initiatives that emerged from that is what we call the Bronx River Watershed Health and Resilience Program, which you lead.

So can you talk a little bit about that origin story?

**TODD:** We've worked really hard to take care of the river within the Garden's 250 acres. Our little mile stretch of river is taken care of as well as possible, within the riparian zone, the area right along the riverbanks.

So we've been managing invasive species. We've been doing what we can to promote the health of the river as it flows through the garden; the area over which we have most control. We've also been changing our horticulture practices by reducing our fertilizer use and doing lots of other things, to make sure that we are not harming the river through our own work, taking care of our own collections and our own landscape.

And one August day, a couple of years ago, we were actually doing some work along the river, removing some invasive species, clearing some debris that had fallen into the river, that had floated down into the river, so that people could canoe down. And the staff who were doing that work saw some fish piping, and I didn't know what the word piping meant.

I learned it. There's some little oxygen in a river or in a water body that a fish, instead of taking in oxygen through its gills, has to try to breathe oxygen through the air outside of the water. So...

**JENNIFER:** They sort of come up for air.

**TODD:** They come up for air and you can see them putting their little fish mouths outside of the river. And at first it was one or two, and then it was many and then it was kind of a constant stream. And of course we recognized this as a problem and we immediately alerted the Bronx River Alliance and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Riverkeeper, everybody we could.

There was some problem upstream. We didn't know what it was. And this is the first time in more than 20 years of working in and around the river I had seen this.

So we had the epiphany that we could be perfect in our work caring for the river within the confines of the New York Botanical Garden. But if people just upstream are not working alongside us, we will not be successful. And so that was the first thought and of course we have worked closely with the Bronx River Alliance since it was established in 2001; with the Bronx River Restoration since it was established in 1974.

So we've had a long relationship with folks who are working expressly on the Bronx River, but it hasn't been an institutional priority of ours to serve those groups in a way that takes advantage of our particular strengths as an institution.

And so that was really the idea. How do we as an institution use our educational strength, our scientific knowledge, our convening power to help finish the work that had been started to clean up the river by spreading the message to audiences that the Bronx River Alliance might not have access to in ways that we do.

It turns out that about 20 percent of our annual visitors live in zip codes that are within the Bronx River watershed, and about 20 percent of our Member households live in zip codes that are within the Bronx River watershed. So we already have a significant population of people who trust us, who ostensibly care

about the river, who we have access to in ways that maybe other organizations do not.

**JENNIFER:** And everybody lives in a watershed because a watershed is the area of land on which everything that goes into the ground eventually flows into a river.

**TODD:** Everybody is within a watershed. If you think of a watershed as the entire sum area of land that feeds a particular water body. So you can have a watershed around a small lake or a small pond and then you have the Mississippi River watershed. And so every drop of rain that falls or every flake of snow that falls ultimately will end up in that water body.

**JENNIFER:** So how big is the Bronx River watershed?

**TODD:** About 60 square miles. And it extends again from northern Westchester County. Much of it is beneath the Kensico Reservoir, which was created as part of the New York City drinking water supply system. Then it extends in a pretty linear fashion from there all the way to the East River.

**JENNIFER:** So people who are gardening in Westchester, for example, you know what they're putting in their landscape might flow into the river. Right?

**TODD:** Right. And that's a connection that I think most even well-meaning, and informed gardeners don't necessarily always make in their gardening.

And the way that I think about it as a gardener and as head of Horticulture here at the Garden is that everything that we put in the ground, in our garden, we are putting into a watershed. We are putting into the larger environment.

So even if we don't see that connection, even if we're far, far away from whatever watershed our garden is part of, we are still contributing to the pollution of that watershed potentially. But the flip side of that is if we are smart and thoughtful and informed in the way that we garden, we're actually contributing to cleaning up that watershed, to benefiting that watershed.

And that's the sort of tact that we're taking in our work within the garden itself, and that we're hoping to communicate to all of the enthusiastic gardeners who take care of land within that 60-square-mile watershed.

**JENNIFER:** So part of what we're doing with this effort is educating our visitors and our members about gardening practices that they can use that will be more supportive to the health of the river. Right?

**TODD:** Yeah, the goal is to both educate people about better practices, but also, to help people understand and become enthusiastic about their larger connection to nature. I think about this a lot because, you know, gardening as a pastime is still one of the most popular activities in America.

Lots of people garden, whether it's growing a house plant in their apartment, or taking care of a lawn in Westchester, people really do engage with nature through their gardens and through plants. And we want to be able to help those people understand that the simple act of gardening, whatever joy they get from gardening, they can get that joy while benefiting the larger environment, while benefiting the watershed instead of damaging it.

**JENNIFER:** Might make it more joyful.

**TODD:** I think it does. And we see this a lot with pollinator plants. People are really focused on how their gardens can serve and support pollinators. And that is wonderful. And it is so gratifying to be in your garden and to see a butterfly or a moth or a bee visiting the plants that you've planted.

There's really an immediate sense of gratification. So this is a little more subtle. Not applying excessive amounts of fertilizer because you don't want the Bronx River, which might be 10 miles away from your house, to go through low oxygen events in the middle of a hot summer.

**JENNIFER:** Yeah, it is more subtle, but I think it's beautiful, particularly because, you know, we talk about environmental justice, right? And the Bronx is an environmental justice community. It's a community where there's an undue burden from negative environmental impacts, here in the Bronx. And, you know, if you

don't live here or work here, you might feel like that's unfortunate, but not your problem to solve. But we are part of a broader ecosystem. And so we can help contribute to the solutions in the places that need it the most through the efforts that we're making, even small efforts like this.

**TODD:** I think it's one of the purest win-win kind of concepts that I can think of. I really understand and value the role that gardening plays. For individuals, for people, for their mental health, it gives people an opportunity to exercise their creativity. There are so many documented benefits of gardening, at any scale for people.

And so that's fantastic that you can benefit yourself through gardening; and with very subtle changes. And mostly starting with some awareness of the way your garden connects to the larger world, you can also benefit people that you will never meet.

The equation that you can, you know, do genuine good for the larger environment and for other people while satisfying your own personal passions and interests. That's a pretty great calculation.

**JENNIFER:** Yeah. So, I don't think we can talk about the river without talking about knotweed. It's plaguing the riparian zone in our landscape and beyond. Can you say a word about knotweed and what to do about it, Todd?

**TODD:** You know, knotweed is a very difficult thing to manage. Anybody who gardens, in places where knotweed is abundant, knows it's kind of the super plant. It's got these really dense rhizomes that go very deep in the soil. It's basically impossible to dig out.

You need a backhoe or an excavator to dig it out. It grows in flood plains and places where application of herbicides is probably not advised. And it grows in these really dense monocultures that prohibit the growth of all other plants. We have been experimenting over the past 20 or so years with partners in the Bronx River Alliance and the New York City Parks Natural Resources Group to establish kind of methods for maybe not eliminating knotweed, that might be too high a bar,

but to weakening it enough so that other desirable native species will grow and thrive, and that may be ultimately over time will outcompete knotweed.

So what we do is we cut it back repeatedly multiple times a season, creating a little space. And then over-planting; planting at a density you never would plant in a normal garden, native tree species, floodplain species in our case, and other maybe native shrubs that might outcompete and shade the knotweed.

And we're seeing some success, but what we were really learning – and I think this is true of almost all urban natural areas – if we're serious about restoring biodiversity that has been lost to human activities over time...

If we're serious about improving nature's ability to do all the great things it does for people in cities, then we have to commit to caring for that nature long-term. We have broken it, therefore we have to buy it.

**JENNIFER:** That's funny. So, you're saying that knotweed is a long-term problem, and so investing in understanding over time what can work, even if it can't be completely eliminated, is the approach that we're taking. Is that right?

**TODD:** Which sounds a lot like gardening.

**JENNIFER:** Yeah. So what are some of the native species that you're planting to try to outcompete?

**TODD:** So we're planting floodplain tree species primarily. The founding botanists came to the garden in the 1890s, and the very first thing they did is just to write down all of the native plants that grew here. So we have this great record from the 1890s of what was here. And so part of our effort in our restoration process within the forest is to maybe re-establish some things that are missing, or to bulk up populations of some things that dwindled over time.

So within the floodplain, because of the knotweed, a lot of the native floodplain tree species, things like silver maple, things like American elm, things like, platinus, plane tree or sycamore. They're not here either at all or in the same abundance they once were. So we're trying to plant as many of those as possible within the floodplain.

**JENNIFER:** That's great. You know, Todd, you've been at NYBG a long time, 26 years is that it?

**TODD:** It'll be 27 years in June.

**JENNIFER:** 27 years in June. And I'm sure you have many wonderful memories of various parts of the landscape. Is there a memory you have about the river that particularly stands out?

**TODD:** Yeah, there are so many memories, but there was a moment several years ago, it was actually October 29th, 2022.

And October 29th, 2022 was the 10-year anniversary of Sandy, Superstorm Sandy, which was incredibly damaging really across the Northeast, but particularly at the New York Botanical Garden.

So I spent that day wandering around some parts of the Garden, and I ended up in the beautiful patio behind the Stone Mill, which is a Lorillard building that was built in 1840 that used the power generated by the river to grind tobacco into snuff.

October is beautiful at the Garden. And it was just the right time of day when the sun was coming at the right angle. The leaves were still on the trees. They were in full fall color. And I remember seeing the water of the river, the sparkling little rapids that are behind the Stone Mill, catching that autumnal light and reflecting it against a rock outcrop that's right across the river from the Stone Mill.

And it was at that moment that I realized that the Garden, this choice of the site for the Garden, that the Garden's founders made in the 1890s, is a permanent gift to people who come here; and that little moments like that, little moments of seeing just the beauty of nature and realizing that we all have a role in protecting and promoting, and ensuring that future generations have the opportunity to have those moments...that's the great thing about the New York Botanical Garden.

**JENNIFER:** That's wonderful. Well, you've done so much over your long tenure to make this a beautiful and welcoming place. We thank you for that. And thank you for being on the podcast.



**TODD:** It was fun. Alright, what else can we talk about? Let's talk about trees. How much time do you have?

**JENNER NARRATION:** If you're interested in learning more about the Bronx River's ongoing restoration, head to [BronxRiver.org](http://BronxRiver.org).

There, you'll find the Bronx River Alliance's Intermunicipal Watershed Plan. You can also check out how NYBG is involved -- we'll put a link in our show notes.

And if you don't live in the Bronx or Westchester but want to know what you can do for your local watershed, please consider checking out a community organization near you.

In our next episode, we'll bring you the dirt on potting soil. We'll learn why some soil mixtures are actually bad for the planet, and what you can do to nurture your plants without sacrificing sustainability.

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