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New York Botanical Garden Debuts a *Día de los Muertos* Celebration of Memory, Life, and Renewal This Fall from October 3 through November 2, 2026

Colorful Artistic and Floral Installations Joined with Music and Craft Programs on Select Days to Embrace the Beauty of Fall and Honor the Memory of Loved Ones



(Left to right) A visitor places an item of remembrance on the ofrenda; visitors admire the *La Catrina* sculpture and her dress made of flowers, on view at NYBG's *Día de los Muertos* this fall (Images by Marlon Co/NYBG)

Bronx, NY—From October 3 through November 2, 2026, the rich traditions of **Día de los Muertos** come to the New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) for a celebration of memory, life, and renewal, with vibrant marigold and dahlia blooms and a colorful *ofrenda* (altar of remembrance). Friendly spirit guide animals (*alebrijes*) based on wildlife found at NYBG lead the way along a trail in the Everett Children's Adventure Garden to joyful encounters with artfully arranged *calaveras* (brightly decorated skulls and aluminum skeletons) and a larger-than-life *Catrina* adorned with flowers. Celebrate loved ones past and present with music and crafts on weekends while experiencing moments of reflection among fall's golden foliage and festive pumpkins. Weekend programming includes live music, dance performances, and hands-on workshops inspired by the holiday. The festivities culminate

with a finale weekend that includes a *Día de los Muertos* Parade, cultural activities, food offerings, and communal remembrance.

“We are honored to introduce this new fall experience at NYBG,” said Jennifer Bernstein, Chief Executive Officer and The William C. Steere Sr. President of the New York Botanical Garden. “*Día de los Muertos* showcases the beauty of this important tradition through horticulture, art, and community while providing meaningful opportunities for reflection and connection in the Garden.”

Inspired by Mexico’s beloved holiday honoring the lives and memories of departed loved ones, the month-long experience, set amid the spectacular colors of autumn, offers visitors a chance to learn about and appreciate the holiday’s significance while enjoying one of New York City’s most beautiful fall destinations. Centered around the symbolic connections between plants, pollinators, memory, and seasonal change, the celebration explores rich cultural traditions while highlighting nature’s cycles of life and renewal.

A centerpiece of the experience is a large, multi-tiered community *ofrenda* where visitors may share memories of loved ones and contribute personal reflections throughout the season. The top three tiers of the *ofrenda* are curated by Blanka Amezkua, a Bronx artist from Mexico, while the large bottom two tiers allow visitors to add their own items of contemplation and remembrance, either from home or created at the Garden with pieces from a nearby Remembrance Table.

Colorful pathways decorated with suspended *papel picado* banners guide guests of all ages through a landscape filled with *calavera* vignettes, flowers, seasonal pumpkins, monarch butterfly highlights, and whimsical, large cut-out representations of *alebrijes*, the vibrant spirit guide creatures of Mexican folk art, such as an owl, a squirrel, a hawk, and a rabbit, that accompany souls. Surrounding floral displays feature seasonally inspired plantings, especially marigolds, whose brilliant orange blooms play a central role in *Día de los Muertos* observances. The *alebrijes* are drawn by Edgar Flores, known as Saner, a Mexican street artist, illustrator, and graphic designer. His work is influenced by the pre-Hispanic iconography, myths, and shape-shifting *nahual* folklore.

In many Indigenous Mexican traditions, the arrival of monarch butterflies during the holiday season is associated with the return of ancestral spirits. Educational displays and roaming butterfly puppets celebrate both the cultural significance of these remarkable insects and their extraordinary annual migration.

The celebration features an extensive lineup of performances and activities on various days throughout October, including live mariachi music, folk dance performances, puppet processions, and hands-on workshops exploring *Día de los Muertos* art forms and botanical

traditions. On Sunday, November 1, visitors are invited to join the *Día de los Muertos* Parade, a procession led by musicians, dancers, and larger-than-life puppets featuring *La Catrina*, skeleton figures, and monarch butterflies. The day features live performances, dance instruction, cultural activities, crafts, food offerings, and communal remembrance.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.nybg.org.

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 135 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.

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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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