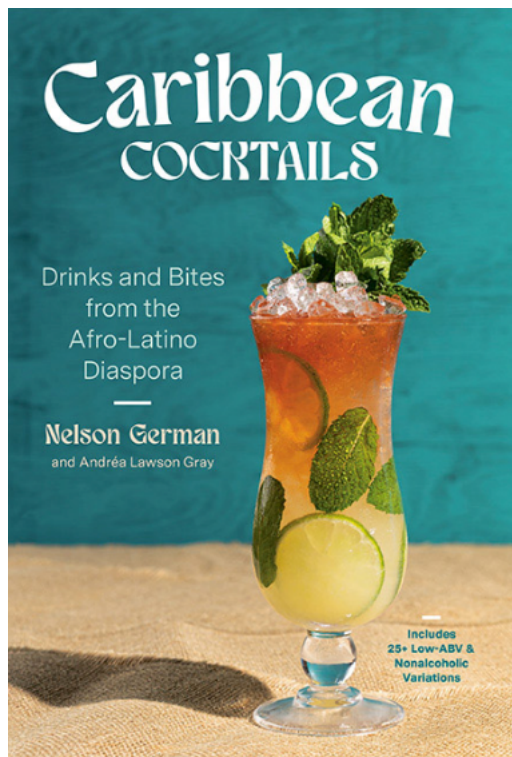


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***Botanicals in Caribbean Cocktails* Discussion and Demonstration Brings Together Culinary Experts, Cultural Storytelling, and Hands-On Learning at NYBG**

Ticketed Event Takes Place at NYBG's Edible Academy on Thursday, September 17, 4–6 p.m.

Bronx, NY—Celebrate Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month at the New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) with ***Botanicals in Caribbean Cocktails***, an inspiring discussion and



demonstration honoring cultural traditions, botanical heritage, and community at NYBG's Edible Academy on Thursday, September 17, 2026, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Join Afro-Dominican Chef Nelson German and culinary anthropologist Andréa Lawson Gray, co-authors of *Caribbean Cocktails: Drinks and Bites from the Afro-Latino Diaspora*, along with herbalist and NYBG's Associate Director for the Everett Children's Adventure Garden Arvolyn Hill, for a dynamic conversation on blending tradition, modern mixology, and the cultural connections of botanicals. Then, get hands-on as you learn to make Mamajuana, a spiced herbal infusion often recognized as the national drink of the Dominican Republic. Chef Nelson guides guests through the ritual of crafting this traditional blend, layering rum, red wine, and honey with tree bark, herbs, and spices. Sip and savor its bold flavors while discovering the stories behind the ingredients. Guests will take home their own blend to steep and

enjoy over time. Copies of *Caribbean Cocktails: Drinks and Bites from the Afro-Latina Diaspora* will be available for purchase and signing at the event.

For more information and to register, visit <https://www.nybg.org/event/botanicals-in-caribbean-cocktails/>. Tickets are \$61 for Members and \$68 for Non-Members.

For Chef Nelson, drinks and food are about connection, whether it's sharing stories over cocktails on a stoop in Washington Heights or gathering with friends under the warm,

buzzy lights of his restaurants. In his debut book, *Caribbean Cocktails*, he shares his Afro-Latino roots and personal journey of discovery through a culinary lens.

“I saw what I was doing with drinks wasn’t just creative,” says Chef Nelson. “It was cultural reclamation. It was time to bring the full weight of our flavors and stories into the cocktail glass.”

About the Speakers

Chef Nelson German is the Executive Chef and Owner of Oakland’s acclaimed Sobre Mesa and alaMar Dominican Kitchen & Bar, and Executive Chef and Partner at Meski, the Afro-Ethiopian-Latin restaurant in San Francisco co-founded by Draymond Green and Guma Fassil. A proud Dominican-American born in Manhattan’s Washington Heights, Chef Nelson tells the story of the African and Caribbean diasporas through soulful, modern cuisine that blends ancestral flavors with global technique. Trained in some of New York City’s top kitchens, he has become a leading voice in Afro-Latin cooking since relocating to the Bay Area. He compete on *Top Chef* Season 18 and has been featured in *Food & Wine*, *The Washington Post*, *Glamour*, and more. A James Beard Foundation-recognized chef and of *Plate Magazine*’s “Chefs to Watch,” Chef Nelson is also known for his community-driven approach, using his platform to uplift others, foster connection, and bring people together through food.

Andréa Lawson Gray is a chef, writer, and James Beard Award-winning cookbook author known for bringing the flavors, history, and energy of Latin America and the Caribbean to contemporary audiences. With more than two decades of experience in professional kitchens, she collaborates closely with chefs to translate culinary tradition into bold, accessible food and drink. She is the co-author of the award-winning *Convivir: Modern Mexican Cooking in California’s Wine Country* (Abrams, 2025) and *Celebraciones Mexicanas: History, Traditions, and Recipes* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2013).

Arvolyn Hill is the Associate Director of the New York Botanical Garden’s Everett Children’s Adventure Garden. Arvolyn has been working in outdoor education since 2015 in New York City. In 2019, she participated on the Lawrence Hall of Science Best Environmental Education Teaching Learning Expertise Sharing (BEETLES) Emerging Leader cohort in California where she learned best practices from experts in the field. She also received the Critics’ Choice Award from the National Science Foundation’s STEM Dive Challenge in 2020 for her role in the cohort. Arvolyn is an avid Community Herbalist and studied at Twin Star Connecticut’s School of Herbalism and Energetic Studies. She has taught Herbalism workshops for New York Botanical Garden Continuing Education, Brooklyn Botanical Garden, Museum of Natural History, and The Cloisters. She also holds a Degree in Pan African Studies from Drew University. In 2023, Arvolyn was selected as TEDx speaker at the TEDxCUNY conference presenting on Environmental Education as Empowerment.

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 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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