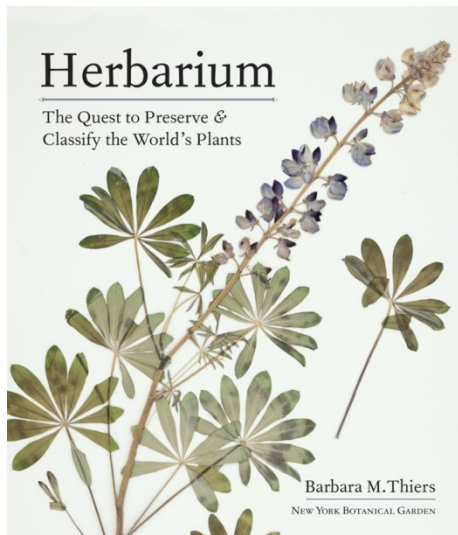


NYBG

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NYBG Herbarium Director Barbara M. Thiers, Ph.D., Explores the Fascinating History and Development of Plant Research Collections in a New, Richly Illustrated Book

***Herbarium: The Quest to Preserve and Classify the World's Plants* Is Now Available from Timber Press and The New York Botanical Garden**



Bronx, NY—For nearly six centuries, scientists have preserved and archived plant specimens in a type of research collection known as a herbarium. In her new book, ***Herbarium: The Quest to Preserve and Classify the World's Plants*** (Timber Press and The New York Botanical Garden, \$40), Barbara M. Thiers, Ph.D., Vice President and the Patricia K. Holmgren Director of the William and Lynda Steere Herbarium at The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG), not only explores the history of these fascinating collections but also makes an impassioned argument for their future.

Richly illustrated with photographs and archival material from the collections of The New York Botanical Garden and a wide range of other institutions, *Herbarium* is a stunning must-read for ardent plant fans and would-be conservationists. Thiers draws upon her 39-year tenure at the Steere Herbarium—which, with 7.8 million specimens, is the second-largest research plant collection in the world—to deliver an accessible but painstakingly researched introduction to the world of plant preservation and conservation.

In *Herbarium*, Dr. Thiers explores the history of the natural world as revealed by herbarium specimens, which are made by pressing and drying plants, mounting them on archival paper, and labeling each with the plant's scientific name, the time and place where it was collected, the scientist who collected it, and other data. She also delves into the lives of the botanists who made these collections possible, including Charles Darwin, George Washington Carver, and Lewis and Clark. In doing so, she uncovers the thrilling stories of lesser-known plant collectors, such as Jeanne Baret, the herbalist who disguised herself as a man to circumnavigate the globe, and Alice Eastwood, only the second female curator at the California Academy of Sciences, who ran into a burning building to save the Academy's most important herbarium specimens during the San Francisco earthquake and fire in 1906.

In addition, Dr. Thiers examines the role herbaria play in the modern world. These collections provide insights into the future of our ecosystems, allowing scientists to predict how biodiversity will shift in the face of global warming. In fact, herbaria might be the key to preserving plant life endangered by climate change. Dr. Thiers emphasizes that the work of herbaria is ultimately the work of conservation, as it "highlights one of our better human impulses: to save things for the future, not just for ourselves but for generations to come."

About the Author

Barbara M. Thiers, Ph. D., is Vice President and the Patricia K. Holmgren Director of the William and Lynda Steere Herbarium at The New York Botanical Garden, President of the American Society of Plant Taxonomists, and Past President of the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections.

Ordering Information: *Herbarium: The Quest to Preserve and Classify the World's Plants* is available in person or [online](#) at NYBG Shop or through Workman Publishing Company at www.workman.com (\$40.00, hardcover).

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The New York Botanical Garden is a museum of plants, an educational institution, and a scientific research organization. Founded in 1891, the Botanical Garden is one of the world's preeminent centers for studying plants at all levels, from the whole organism down to its DNA. Garden scientists conduct fundamental research on plants and fungi globally, as well as on the many relationships between plants and people. A National Historic Landmark, the Garden's 250-acre site is one of the greatest botanical gardens in the world and the largest in any city in the United States, distinguished by the beauty of its diverse landscape and extensive collections and gardens, as well as by the scope and excellence of its programs in horticulture, education, and plant research and conservation. Learn more: nybg.org

The New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, New York 10458

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.

Media Contact: Stevenson Swanson, sswanson@nybg.org