

Call for Artist Proposals HORTICULTURAL HEROES

OVERVIEW

New England Botanic Garden is seeking artists to create portraits of diverse leaders in the field of horticulture. Each portrait highlights a different hero in the botanical world and celebrates the stories of horticulture thought leaders whose contributions have influenced their communities, whose research has pushed the boundaries of plant knowledge, and whose actions have helped to further the field of horticulture locally and worldwide. These ten new artworks will join the current collection of twenty horticultural hero portraits. The collection may be displayed outside of New England Botanic Garden as a traveling exhibition or at the Garden during observance months, such as Black History Month or Women's History Month. Successful proposals will emphasize a passion for promoting diversity in horticultural leadership, will seek to portray the heroes' distinctive story in a visually unique manner, and will showcase mastery of the artist's craft. Portraits can be created using any two-dimensional archival medium that can be hung on a wall. A \$600 stipend will be provided for each completed portrait.

ABOUT THE COLLECTION

Horticultural Heroes celebrates thought leaders in the world of gardening, botany, horticulture, and conservation who have championed their causes throughout history. From the establishment of green oases in major cities to the preservation of essential ecosystems, these leaders have contributed to groundbreaking advancements and discoveries in the plant world. This collection of portraits created by local artists, honors the stories and celebrates the contributions of diverse leaders in the world of horticulture past and present, near and far, familiar and unknown. *Horticultural Heroes* is designed to educate viewers, inspire the next generation of environmental stewards, and encourage unity within the horticultural community, while providing a platform for local artists to display their talents. Every garden starts with a seed, every hero begins with a cause, and every artwork starts with inspiration.

Visit <https://nebg.org/hort-heroes/> for a list of horticultural heroes featured in the current collection.

TIMELINE

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| • Proposal submission deadline | August 23, 2024 |
| • Proposals chosen & participants notified: | August 30, 2024 |
| • Artist agreements due: | September 6, 2024 |
| • Artist biography and artist statement due: | October 15, 2025 |
| • Completed artwork delivered to NEBG: | December 2– 6, 2024 |

GUIDELINES

Artists will submit a completed proposal form to Lea Morgan, Manager of Exhibitions at New England Botanic Garden, via email at lmorgan@nebg.org by **August 23, 2024**. In the proposal, the artists will identify three heroes from the selection list that they propose to portray. NEBG will then work with the chosen artists to finalize their proposal assignments. If a potential artist has a hero they are particularly inspired to portray, they can emphasize this in their proposal in a paragraph describing their connection to that hero. Portraits can be created in any two-dimensional archival medium that can be hung on a wall and must not exceed 15 pounds. Artists must provide proven mastery of the media they propose to utilize through examples showcased on their website, social media platform, or digital portfolio.

Artists will receive a \$600 stipend for their completed artwork once it is delivered to NEBG. The stipend covers all materials, framing, shipment or delivery of artwork to NEBG, and the artist's time. Artworks are due to Lea Morgan, Manager of Exhibitions at 11 French Drive, Boylston, MA, by **December 6, 2024**. The artwork must be finished, dried, cured, framed and matted (if appropriate), and fitted with hanging hardware ready to be displayed upon delivery to NEBG. Artists are responsible for safely delivering the completed artwork to NEBG through hand delivery, an art delivery service, or insured shipping. Once the artwork is delivered to NEBG and the artist receives the payment, NEBG will own the artwork, and it will not be returned to the artist. The artwork may be displayed at any time at NEBG or another organization as part of a traveling exhibition. New England Botanic Garden reserves the right to use all images, renderings, and models to promote and interpret the exhibition in print or electronic formats.

HORTICULTURAL HEROS

The artist will choose three heroes from the horticultural world. For more information about each hero, please see the list at the end of this document.

- Anne Spencer
- Asa C. Sims
- Beatrix Jones Farrand
- Edmond Albius
- Ethel Earley Clark
- Gladys Tantaquidgeon
- Ietef Vita "DJ Cavem"
- Jeanne Baret
- Dr. James Chester Raulston
- John W. Boyd Jr.
- Judith Motley Low
- Junius George Groves
- Katherine (Kate) Olivia Sessions
- Lady Bird Johnson
- Leah Penniman
- Dr. Marie Clark Taylor
- Maria Sibylla Merian
- Mary Agnes Chase
- Sidney Frazier
- Sylvester Owens
- Suzanne Simard
- Vandana Shiva
- William John Anderson, Jr.
- Ynés Mexía

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

To submit a proposal, please fill out the **HORTICULTURAL HERO ARTIST PROPOSAL FORM** below and email it to Lea Morgan, Manager of Exhibitions, at lmorgan@nebg.org by **August 23, 2024**. Proposals will be reviewed and chosen participants will be notified by August 30, 2024.

HORTICULTURAL HERO ARTIST PROPOSAL FORM

**Please submit to Lea Morgan, Manager of Exhibitions by email lmorgan@nebg.org*

Artist Contact Information

Artist Name _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Proposal Details

Top three hero choices

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What inspired you to choose your top choice of hero(s)? _____

What medium do you propose to utilize? _____

Please describe your experience with this particular medium: _____

Please provide a link to your website or social media platform: _____

**If you do not have a website or social media platform to showcase your work, please send a digital portfolio showcasing your artwork in the medium relevant to your proposal. This can be a PDF or Word document with images, via a Dropbox shared folder, or another succinct, easy-to-view platform.*

Please provide your artist biography and/or attach your resume along with your completed proposal form.

HORTICULTURAL HEROES



Anne Spencer (1882 – 1975)

Anne Spencer was an African American poet, teacher, civil rights activist, and gardener. She was an important figure of the Harlem Renaissance, a cultural movement which celebrated the artistic contributions of African Americans during the 1920s and 1930s. Spencer's legacy in gardening is just as remarkable as her literary impact. She transformed her home in Lynchburg, Virginia, into a beautiful garden oasis that became a gathering place for prominent figures of the Harlem Renaissance. Today, her garden, known as Edankraal, is recognized as a National Historic Landmark and stands as a testament to her passion for gardening and her role in fostering a space for African American artistic and intellectual expression during a pivotal period in American history.

Asa C. Sims (1891 – 1972)

Asa C. Sims' passion for horticulture and agriculture started as a teenager when he enrolled in agriculture classes at Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, now Hampton University. Three decades later, Sims was the General Manager of the university greenhouse and an Extension Educator, teaching classes about plants out in the community. He traveled through rural and urban areas of Virginia and North Carolina, teaching landscaping, beautification, and floriculture. Sims also grew and cultivated his own plants for his thriving Sims Florist business. The nursery on his two-acre estate housed hundreds of flowers that were used in arrangements featured in commercial and residential spaces. In 1932 he was a founding member of the Negro Garden Club of Virginia and served as its state advisor.

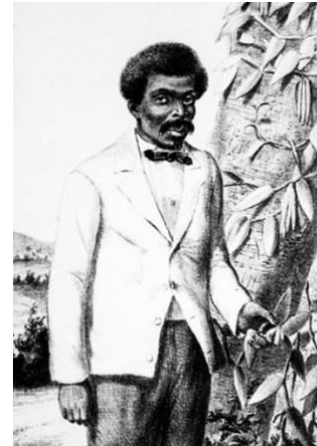


Beatrix Jones Farrand (1872 – 1959)

Beatrix Jones Farrand was a pioneering female landscape architect and the only female founding member of the American Society of Landscape Architects. She designed over 110 gardens, including those at the White House and the Morgan Library & Museum in New York City. She collaborated frequently with the architecture firm McKim, Mead & White and designed gardens at The Mount in Lenox, MA. Many of her gardens live on including Dumbarton Oaks in DC, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden in Mount Desert Island, ME, and more.

Edmond Albius (1829 – 1880)

Edmond Albius was a horticulturalist who revolutionized the cultivation of vanilla. Albius was born into slavery on the island of Réunion. At the age of 12, he developed a method for hand-pollinating vanilla orchids which allowed for the cultivation of the plant on a larger scale outside of its native Mexico. Despite receiving little recognition during his lifetime, his innovation had a profound impact on the global vanilla industry and his method continues to be used in vanilla cultivation today.

**Ethel Earley Clark (1899-1976)**

Ethel Earley Clark was the first president and a founding member of the Negro Garden Club of Virginia. In 1927, she established the Big Lick Garden Club, one of Roanoke's first Black gardening clubs. As a self-taught master gardener, Clark focused on beautifying neglected Black neighborhoods, championing conservation efforts, and promoting community improvement. She and the club worked with white counterparts to increase garden spaces within the cities, leading to significant growth of Black garden clubs across Virginia.

Gladys Tantaquidgeon (1899 – 2005)

Gladys Tantaquidgeon was a Mohegan medicine woman, anthropologist, and tribal elder. She was a pioneering ethnobotanist who dedicated her life to preserving and promoting Mohegan tribal traditions and knowledge of herbal medicine. Tantaquidgeon's extensive research and documentation of traditional Mohegan medicinal plants and remedies have made significant contributions to the fields of anthropology and ethnobotany. In addition to her scholarly work, she was a key figure in the cultural revitalization of the Mohegan Tribe and played a crucial role in the establishment of the Tantaquidgeon Museum, the oldest Native American-owned and operated museum in the United States. Tantaquidgeon's legacy continues to inspire and educate people about indigenous culture and traditional medicine.





Itef Vita “DJ Cavem”

Itef Vita, also known as “DJ Cavem”, is an award-winning artist, educator, and vegan chef known for promoting eco-consciousness and sustainable living through his music and community work. He uses his platform to raise awareness about food justice, healthy eating, and environmental sustainability, particularly in underserved communities. In addition to his music, Vita is an experienced urban gardener and permaculturist, collaborating on numerous urban farming and garden projects to promote food sovereignty and healthy living in urban areas. His work has earned him recognition as a pioneer in the "ecohop" genre and as a leading voice in the intersection of music, sustainability, and community activism.

Jeanne Baret (1740 – 1807)

Jeanne Baret was a French botanist who became the first woman to circumnavigate the globe in 1769. In 1766, she joined a French expedition led by Louis Antoine de Bougainville disguised as a man, since women were not allowed on French navy ships at the time. During the voyage, she collected and documented more than 6,000 plant specimens, contributing significantly to the field of botany. She is credited with discovering one of the expedition’s most significant finds, *Bougainvillea brasiliensis* (purple bougainvillea), and her accomplishments are still celebrated today. In 2012, more than two centuries after her death, a newly discovered South American species, *Solanum baretiae*, was named in her honor.



Dr. James Chester Raulston (1943 – 1996)

Dr. James Chester (JC) Raulston was a renowned horticulturist, plant breeder, and educator. He is best known for founding the North Carolina State University Arboretum, now known as the JC Raulston Arboretum, in 1976. Dr. Raulston dedicated his life to expanding the diversity of plant material available in the southeastern United States and inspiring the next generation of horticulturists through his teaching and mentorship. His efforts introduced and popularized numerous plant species, helping to enrich landscapes and gardens, and left a lasting impact on the world of horticulture. Dr. Raulston was also an advocate for the LGBTQ community. He organized an informal network of LGBTQ horticulture professionals and held group meetings in his home, fostering an inclusive, welcoming safe space for all plant enthusiasts to gather.

John W. Boyd Jr.

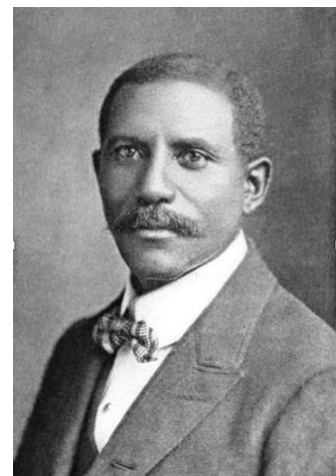
John W. Boyd Jr. is known for his significant contributions to agriculture and civil rights. As the founder and current president of the National Black Farmers Association (NBFA), Boyd has been a tireless advocate for the rights of Black farmers, fighting against discrimination and advocating for access to resources and opportunities. Under his leadership, the NBFA has been instrumental in bringing national attention to the challenges faced by Black farmers and has played a pivotal role in promoting policies to address issues of discrimination within the agricultural sector. Boyd's work has been recognized nationally, and he continues to be a vocal and influential figure in both the agricultural and civil rights communities.

**Judith Motley Low (1841 – 1933)**

Judith Motley Low was a pioneering figure in horticulture and a trailblazer for women in the field. Throughout her career, she focused on promoting horticultural education and advocating for women to pursue careers in the field. Her efforts were instrumental in breaking gender barriers within the industry. In 1901, she founded the Lowthorpe School in Groton Massachusetts, where women could study residential garden design. The school was incorporated in 1909, with Low as the president, and a board of directors made up entirely of women. In 1945, the school merged with Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), creating the basis for RISD's Landscape Architecture Department.

Junius George Groves (1859-1925)

Known as “The Potato King of the World”, Junius George Groves, was a self-made man who, by 1902, was out-producing everyone else in potato farming. Starting as a sharecropper, he used his profits to invest in land, livestock, and a sawmill. By 1900, he was buying and shipping potatoes, fruits, and vegetables extensively throughout the United States, Mexico, and Canada. He was also a community leader, founding organizations and a golf course for Black citizens. His legacy as a pioneering figure in American agriculture and a generous community leader continues to inspire many to this day and left a lasting legacy in American agriculture.





Katherine (Kate) Olivia Sessions (1857 – 1940)

Kate Sessions was a pioneering horticulturist, botanist, and landscape architect known as the "Mother of Balboa Park" in San Diego, California. She was a key figure in the development of the city's urban landscape and is credited with introducing many ornamental plants and trees to Southern California, leaving a lasting impact on the botanical diversity of the region. Sessions was the first woman to graduate from the University of California with a degree in science and her legacy includes the extensive horticultural development of Balboa Park. She established the first nursery in the area at the park and contributed to its landscaping, creating a horticultural showcase.

Lady Bird Johnson (1912 – 2007)

Former First Lady Lady Bird Johnson was a passionate advocate for beautifying public spaces and conserving natural resources. She was instrumental in promoting environmental causes, particularly through her efforts to beautify highways and roadsides with wildflowers. She played a significant role in the Highway Beautification Act of 1965, which aimed to control outdoor advertising, improve the scenic beauty of highways, and preserve natural splendor. In 1982, she founded the National Wildflower Research Center in Texas. Her work and dedication to environmental conservation have left a lasting impact on the country, and she is remembered as a pioneer in the urban beautification efforts and environmental movements.



Leah Penniman

Leah Penniman is a Black Kreyol educator, farmer, author, and food justice activist from Soul Fire Farm in Petersburg, New York. She is known for her work in promoting food sovereignty, Black and Brown land ownership, and sustainable farming practices. Penniman co-founded Soul Fire Farm in 2010 with the mission to end racism and injustice in the food system and reclaim ancestral connections to the land. She is the author of *Farming While Black*, a comprehensive guidebook that combines the wisdom of African ancestors with sustainable farming techniques. Penniman has received numerous awards and recognitions for her work in advocating for agricultural and environmental justice, and she continues to inspire and empower marginalized communities through her tireless dedication to creating a more equitable and sustainable food system.

Dr. Marie Clark Taylor (1911 – 1990)

Dr. Marie Clark Taylor was a pioneering figure in horticulture and botanical research. She was the first Black woman to earn a PhD in botany and the first woman of any race to earn a PhD at Fordham University in any field. She was also the Head of the Botany Department of Howard University for much of her career. Taylor studied photomorphogenesis (how the light spectrum affects plant growth patterns) and conducted groundbreaking research on plant diseases and their prevention. Throughout her career, she worked tirelessly to promote diversity and inclusion in the field of horticulture, inspiring and mentoring countless individuals.

**Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717)**

Maria Sibylla Merian was a German naturalist and is credited as the first European to directly document observations about insects. In 1699, she led a self-funded scientific expedition to Dutch Surinam to study tropical insects and their native plants. Her findings included information on the medicinal use of plants and animals and were published in *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensis* (The Transformation of the Insects of Suriname) in 1705. Merian's work introduced the idea that insects hatch from eggs and her studies on insect lifecycles and their relationships to plants made significant contributions to the field of ecology.

Mary Agnes Chase (1869-1963)

Mary Agnes Chase was an American botanist who specialized in agrostology, the study of grasses. She became the senior botanist at the United States Department of Agriculture and was known as the "foremost grass specialist in the world." Apart from her work in botany, Chase was an active suffragist and part of the "Silent Sentinels" movement. She retired in 1939 but continued to maintain her role as the custodian of grasses at the US National Herbarium until her death.



**Sidney Frazier**

Sidney Frazier has an impressive résumé, with titles such as King of Camellias, horticulturalist, and minister. He started working at Middleton Place, the home of America's oldest landscaped gardens, in Charleston, SC, at 16, gaining skills in various areas including horticulture. By the 1980s, he was Vice President of Horticulture and managed all 65 acres. His expertise in camellias grew after the loss of historic camellias following Hurricane Hugo in 1989. Using air-layering, he successfully propagated one of the lost camellias and aims to cultivate the other two before retiring. Frazier shares his knowledge at garden clubs, workshops, guided walks, lectures, and on local television.

Sylvester Owens (1897-1989)

Sylvester Owens, also known as the "Azalea King", gained recognition for his work at Biltmore, the former Vanderbilt estate in Asheville, NC. Initially hired as a chauffeur, he transitioned to the role of assistant gardener and was eventually promoted to Head Gardener. In 1951, *Ebony* Magazine named Owens "The Azalea King", acknowledging his expertise in azalea culture. In 1961, Owens and the Biltmore gardening staff received the President's Award at the Southeastern Rhododendron Show. Owens retired in 1964 but continued to share his horticultural knowledge with the public.

**Suzanne Simard**

Suzanne Simard is a renowned forest ecologist known for her groundbreaking work on tree communication and the complex network of relationships between trees. She is a professor of forest ecology at the University of British Columbia and has conducted extensive research on the "wood wide web" – the intricate system of fungal networks that connect trees and facilitate communication and resource sharing in forests. Her work has challenged traditional views of competition and cooperation among trees, highlighting the interdependence and mutual support that exists within forest ecosystems. Simard's research has significantly contributed to our understanding of the role of forests in climate regulation and sustainable land management.

Vandana Shiva

Vandana Shiva is an environmental activist based in Delhi, India. She is known for her advocacy of agricultural and food advancements and her work in engaging women in farming through the movement of "ecofeminism." In 1991, she founded Navdanya, a national movement focusing on protecting the diversity and integrity of living resources, promoting organic farming and fair trade, and establishing over 40 seed banks across India. Shiva has advised governments in India and globally and currently holds influential positions in organizations focusing on the future of food and organic farming.



William John Anderson, Jr. (1876-1959)

William John Anderson, Jr. of Shoreham, Vermont, was a distinguished horticulturist and agriculturist known for his significant contributions to the cultivation of apples. Anderson's innovative techniques and meticulous approach to horticulture led to the development of several successful apple varieties, which significantly bolstered the local agricultural industry. By the 1930s, he was cultivating 3,500 apple trees, primarily MacIntosh and Northern Spy cultivars. After achieving success as an apple orchardist, Anderson also pursued a career in public service. He was the second Black person to serve in the Vermont House of Representatives, holding this role from 1945 to 1949.

Ynés Mexía (1870 – 1938)

Ynés Mexía was a Mexican-American botanist known for her significant contributions to the field of botany. Despite beginning her scientific career at the age of 51, Mexía made a remarkable impact by collecting and identifying thousands of plant specimens, many of which were previously unknown to science. Over the course of her career, she discovered around 500 new species of plants. Her expeditions took her to various locations in North and South America, including the Andes Mountains and the Amazon rainforest, where she ventured into remote and challenging environments to collect samples. Mexía's work not only expanded the scientific understanding of plant biodiversity but also paved the way for further research in the field of botany.

