



**New England
Botanic Garden**
AT TOWER HILL

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

New England Botanic Garden expands *Horticultural Heroes* exhibit, celebrating diverse voices in the field through art and story

This captivating portrait collection and other exciting programming come to the Garden this February and March

BOYLSTON, MA, January 15, 2025 – [New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill](#) is excited to announce the expansion of its [Horticultural Heroes](#) exhibit, a travelling portrait collection that pays homage to the groundbreaking contributions of thought leaders in horticulture, botany, conservation, environmentalism, agriculture, and food justice. The expansion features ten new portraits that celebrate diverse voices, both historic and contemporary, in the field of horticulture. These portraits, commissioned from talented artists from across the region, will be unveiled and exhibited at the botanic garden during February and March in honor of Black History Month and Women’s History Month.

“This visually striking portrait collection spotlights important, often unsung, trailblazers whose work has or is continuing to make a lasting impact on our world,” says Lea Morgan, exhibitions manager at New England Botanic Garden. The exhibit was first commissioned in 2018 and exhibited by the Garden in 2019. Designed to be a travelling exhibition, it has been displayed at Smith College and is available to be showcased in other galleries. With the new additions, the exhibit includes 30 portraits that celebrate their subjects in a range of styles and media including oil, encaustic, watercolor, collage, embroidery, acrylic, cast glass, digital AI, pyrography on wood, and more. Narratives accompany each portrait so that viewers can discover the stories and legacies of the influential figures featured. “We were thrilled to have the opportunity to expand the exhibit this year and to again engage local artists in the process of amplifying diverse voices in horticulture,” Morgan says.

The new portraits and additional selections from the *Horticultural Heroes* exhibit will be on display at the Garden during February and March. In connection, the Garden’s Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Committee is launching [a free online lecture series](#) that kicks

off February 6 with a talk by *Black in the Garden* podcast creator, Colah B. Tawkin. Tawkin will guide attendees through several of the rich narratives of the *Horticultural Heroes* exhibit, bringing history to life in an innovative and interactive way. The lecture series continues March 6 with horticulturist and researcher Tracy Qiu, whose talk will take participants on a journey through global histories of art and science, exploring how our current understandings of botanical art are co-produced across dividing lines of gender, class, race, and ethnicity. On March 13 the series concludes as storyteller, author, and cultural geographer Carolyn Finney discusses her book, *Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans in the Great Outdoors*. The series is free, but registration is required.

To learn more about the *Horticultural Heroes* exhibit, or for questions about displaying this exhibit at your gallery or museum, contact Lea Morgan at lmorgan@nebg.org. For more information about viewing the Horticultural Heroes exhibit at New England Botanic Garden or the Garden's upcoming lecture series, contact Liz Nye at lnye@nebg.org. New England Botanic Garden is open to the public seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. To learn more visit nebg.org.

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Photo Caption and Credit: Portrait of Natasha Bowens Blair, author, farmer, photographer, and food justice activist, by Rebecca Duffy, is one of 30 that make up NEBG's newly expanded *Horticultural Heroes* exhibit.

About New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill is a nonprofit organization located at 11 French Drive in Boylston, Massachusetts. A regional destination, the Garden is operated on 200 acres by the Worcester County Horticultural Society, one of the oldest of its kind in the country, and is open to the public for garden viewing, trail walking, educational programs, private events, weddings, exhibitions, and more. In 2023, New England Botanic Garden was voted "Top Botanic Garden in the U.S." by *TravelAwaits*. New England Botanic Garden is an [AAM-accredited](#) museum that includes an irreplaceable collection of plants and creates opportunities for visitors to experience the wonder of plants, learn about the natural world, and make joyful connections. Learn all about New England Botanic Garden including its history, mission, and its staff at www.nebg.org.

Media Contact

Liz Nye, Public Relations Manager

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill

Office: 508-869-6111 ext. 143 | Mobile: 518-526-3060

Inye@nebg.org