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BOTANICAL ART OF THE PINELANDS

Drawings by Dr. Albert List, Jr. to be shown for the first time New Brunswick, N.J. - Nearly one fifth of New Jersey consists of a unique and precious natural habitat - a large sandy area of pine and oak forests, wetlands, and dark-watered streams and lakes. This is the Pinelands (<?xml:namespace prefix = st1 ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:smarts" />Pine Barrens), famous for its wilderness and natural history. More than 800 native plant species have been found in the Pinelands, and many of these are relicts that have survived from times with warmer climates.

An exhibit opening on April 6 at Rutgers, The State University, is showcasing both this unique ecosystem and its flora combined with the art of botanical illustration.> "Botanical illustration is an exacting mix of science and art," said Donna Gustafson, a co-curator of the exhibit. "Successful botanical art is the ability to represent with great accuracy the specific physical attributes of individual plant species so that they can be properly categorized and identified by successive generations. In an age in which photography has eclipsed many other realistic expressions in modern life, the importance of botanical illustration is shown in that it continues to be the primary visual means by which plants are scientifically studied and described. Such art is also visually pleasing, as shown in this exhibit." Gustafson is interim associate curator, Morse Research Center, Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum and lecturer in the Rutgers Department of Art History and formerly director of exhibitions at the Hunterdon Museum of Art. "This exhibit is unusual in that it blends science research with botanical art and beauty," said Lena Struwe, exhibit co-curator and director of the Chrysler Herbarium at Rutgers. "We often admire the beauty in natural objects and landscapes, which often show very exact, and intriguing, scientific patterns. But this beauty is endangered, as species become extinct or endangered and as natural landscapes are being increasingly destroyed and threatened here in New Jersey." Struwe is a professor in the Department of Plant Biology and Pathology at Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences.

In 2006, Rutgers University became the home of the largest collection of drawings of Pinelands Plants, the Albert List collection, and a selection of these botanical drawings is shown for the first time. The show also includes drawings by Robin A. Jess, photographs by Rosalie Sherman, scientific collections and living carnivorous plants. Dr. Albert List (1928-2005) was respected worldwide as a scientist as his research introduced breakthroughs in the understanding of the evolution of plants. He was also an accomplished artist and recorded many specimens with his own original illustrations. Many of the illustrations have been exhibited throughout the United States and published in numerous books and papers.

During a large part of his life, List worked on a Flora of the Pinelands, and for this drew hundreds of botanical drawings. His collection of drawings and unpublished manuscripts were donated to Rutgers University Libraries' Special Collections in late 2006, where it

will be catalogued and digitized in collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and will be included in the New Jersey Environmental Digital Library (njedl.rutgers.edu), a research and fact resource for the citizens of New Jersey. Featured botanical Artist Robin A. Jess received funding from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and the Pinelands Preservation Alliance for the production of forty professional illustrations of the flora of the Pine Barrens. That exhibition toured most of the major museums in New Jersey, and a selection will be on display here. She also designed the Pine Barrens auto license plate. In the early 1980's, Jess developed the Botanical Illustration Certificate program at the New York Botanical Garden, and she conducts workshops and lectures throughout New Jersey and beyond. In addition to being a botanical artist, Jess has held several administrative positions in the art field. Currently, she is the Executive Director of the American Society of Botanical Artists.

The photographs of Rosalie Sherman were taken at the Franklin Parker Preserve, which in 2003 was the largest private land conservation acquisition in state history. Her color photographs have been exhibited and have won several prizes in over 50 museums, galleries, colleges and universities throughout the United States. Some of them are the Heckscher Museum, LI; the Holter Museum of Art, MT; Planting Fields Arboretum, LI; Silvermine Art Guild, CT; Penn State University, PA; Montclair State University, NJ; and the Perkins Center of the Arts, NJ.

Selected works will be available for bidding during a silent auction running throughout the show. Proceeds will benefit the Chrysler Herbarium and botanical research at Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. In addition to the display of botanical art, there will be displays of carnivorous plants, a living soil column provided by the Rutgers Pinelands Research Station, and plant collections and posters describing current scientific research and conservation efforts in the Pinelands by The Pinelands Commission, the Pinelands Preservation Alliance, and others. A special treat for children will be coloring-book drawings and take-home pine cones so that they can create their own botanical art while their parents enjoy the show.

The show is organized by the Chrysler Herbarium at Rutgers and Rutgers Libraries, with support from 10 additional sponsors. **The show opens on Friday, April 6, with a reception from 6 to 8 p.m., and runs through April 23.** There is no charge for admission. Hours are Saturday, noon to 6 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 11 p.m.; Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. The show is in the **Chang Science Library**, Foran Hall, 59 Dudley Road, Rutgers Cook Campus, New Brunswick, New Jersey. Additional information is available at herbarium.rutgers.edu/pinelands or 732 932-9711 x241.