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**For Immediate Release**

**‘HEIRLOOM’ VEGGIES FROM SHAW’S GARDEN ON DISPLAY  
AT THE MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN**

(ST. LOUIS): Gardens and plants may grow and change, but “heirloom” plants have stood the test of time. In honor of the Missouri Botanical Garden’s sesquicentennial celebration and its founder, Henry Shaw, a large array of **heirloom vegetables** has been added to the Kemper Center for Home Gardening. View the historic varieties on display from late spring through summer.

An heirloom plant or heirloom variety is a cultivar that was grown in earlier times. Heirloom plants have maintained their original traits for 50 years or more through open pollination by birds, wind, or other natural methods. Many see the value of heirlooms to preserve the genetic diversity that is lacking in mass-produced plants.

“Heirlooms are open-pollinated, defined as growing ‘true to type,’ which means they produce plants identical to the parent from seed,” said June Hutson, Kemper Center for Home Gardening supervisor. “Thus, the same cultivar can be reproduced each time it is grown.”

A receipt dated Feb. 16, 1888 for vegetable seeds purchased by Shaw from the Henry Michel Plant & Seed Co. was discovered in the Garden’s archives and is the inspiration behind the sesquicentennial heirloom plantings. During the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the company’s growing fields were located near the Garden on the corners of Magnolia and Tower Grove Ave. At that period in time, the Garden boundaries only extended north from Tower Grove House, Shaw’s country home. South of his house, where the Japanese Garden is now, was the “farm,” an area of cultivated land where Shaw grew crops for his own table.

Several heirloom varieties that could be found in Shaw’s original vegetable garden will be on

**(over)**

## **ADD ONE: Heirloom Plants**

display, including: early six week beans, aubergine eggplant, turnip root beet, scotch kale, calabrese broccoli, cabbage large drumhead savoy, long orange carrot, scotch leak, ice lettuce, yellow Strasburg, parsley, okra, hollow crowned parsnip, long scarlet radish, prickly spinach, red top turnip, sweet basil, thyme, sweet marjoram and salsify. All heirloom varieties are grown from seed and will reach peak bloom from late spring through summer. Garden horticulture staff will be documenting their yield and performance.

The heirloom varieties can be seen in the Kemper Center's Bank of America Family Vegetable Garden. Each heirloom variety is identified with an icon of Henry Shaw on a label that reads "Certified Henry Shaw Veggie."

Admission to the Missouri Botanical Garden is \$8; St. Louis City and County residents enjoy discounted admission of \$4 and free admission on Wednesday and Saturday mornings until noon. Children ages 12 and under and Garden members are free.

The Missouri Botanical Garden is located at 4344 Shaw Blvd. in south St. Louis, easily accessible from Interstate 44 at the Vandeventer exit. Free parking is available on-site and at two blocks west at the corner of Shaw and Vandeventer.

For general information, visit [www.mobot.org](http://www.mobot.org) or call the recorded event line at (314) 577-9400 or toll-free 1 (800) 642-8842.

The Missouri Botanical Garden is the oldest continually operating botanical garden in the nation, celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2009. Emerson is the presenting sponsor of the year-long sesquicentennial celebration, *Missouri Botanical Garden: Green for 150 Years*.

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**NOTE: A digital color image is available by request. Download media materials at [www.mobot.org/press](http://www.mobot.org/press).**

The Missouri Botanical Garden's mission is "to discover and share knowledge about plants and their environment, in order to preserve and enrich life." Today, 150 years after opening, the Missouri Botanical Garden is a National Historic Landmark and a center for science, conservation, education and horticultural display. *Missouri Botanical Garden: Green for 150 Years*.

**The Missouri Botanical Garden is located at 4344 Shaw Blvd. in St. Louis, just south of I-44 at Vandeventer-Kingshighway (exit #287B). Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day except Dec. 25. Grounds open at 7 a.m. every Wednesday and Saturday. Admission is \$8; free children ages 12 and under and Garden members. St. Louis City and County residents are \$4 and free every Wednesday and Saturday until noon (exception: special admission rate events). Park for free on site and two blocks west at the Shaw-Vandeventer intersection. The Garden is easily accessible by taking the MetroLink commuter rail line to the Central West End station and picking up a Metro bus ([www.metrostlouis.org](http://www.metrostlouis.org)). For general information, log on to [www.mobot.org](http://www.mobot.org) or call the 24-hour recording at (314) 577-9400 or 1-800-642-8842. For membership information, call (314) 577-5118 during weekday business hours. For volunteer opportunities, call (314)-577-5187 or visit [www.mobot.org/volunteer](http://www.mobot.org/volunteer). The Missouri Botanical Garden is a tobacco-free environment.**