Dear Friends:

The warmer weather in New York in recent weeks has us thinking about spring flowers, spring cleaning and spring travel (from years past). We hope you enjoy these historical highlights from the Library’s collections and beyond.

Virtual Visit: A Change of Scenery

This month’s virtual visit gets us outdoors to explore some of our many walking trails and health resources that offer opportunities for recreation to New Yorkers past and present.

From the Collections: Diary of a spring holiday in Cuba, 1872

Spring is a delightful time to travel, which this year we’ve done mostly in our imaginations. This book might help: 150 years ago, Philadelphia physician Richard J. Lewis (1827-1893) took a trip to Cuba. “Boarded for a land of perpetual summer” on a cold gray day in February, he stayed through April 11, and then wrote up, illustrated and published his diary, which is 800 pages. Read the book.

Images from the Past: Flowering Dogwood

The flowering dogwood (Cornus florida), one of the earliest trees to bloom, usually comes out in early April in the south and as late as early May in the northern reaches of its range. William P. C. Barton’s Medicinal Botany (2 vols., 1805-1809) is the source of this beautiful hand-colored image.

Color Our Collections: The Dandelion

Springtime brings flowers! Leonhart Fuchs’s De Historia stirpium commentatariorum imaginum (1542) shows one that appears in private yards and public parks every spring: the dandelion. This image is from the collection of the Royal Horticultural Society. See the collections gallery and view images from libraries, archives, and museums around the world.

From the Blog: Time-Tested Tips for Spring Cleaning

Springtime also brings spring cleaning! We gathered some household cleaning tips from the 17th-century manuscript compilation Choice Receipts, one of the items that the Library recently digitized.

Noted Elsewhere: “Conspiracy: Doubt-Mongering”

Dr. Sylvia R. Karasu, a NYAM Fellow and longtime supporter of NYAM and the Library, looks at how healthy and reasonable doubts can flip into unhealthy conspiracy theories. As we’ve seen recently, these can create barriers to seeking out lifesaving COVID vaccines, among other things. Her article appears in a recent issue of Psychology Today.

We look forward to welcoming you back to the Library. As we wait, stay safe, stay engaged and stay connected.

The NYAM Library Team

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