



## MEDIA REPORT

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### Never Alone – The Secrets of Symbiosis

Prague Botanical Garden as a part of an international team is preparing an exhibition for all the senses.

Living organisms in nature take part in various relationships and connections. What are they, how do they work? You can find the answers at this year's exhibition for all senses, which is created for the first time by an international team thanks to the European Union Erasmus+ programme. Prague Botanical Garden joined forces with colleagues from Polish, Hungarian and Swedish botanical gardens and arboreta. The exhibition is unique because the visitors can perceive the exhibits not only by sight, but they can enjoy it using all the senses. Thanks to a specially prepared audio guide, the exhibition can turn into a unique experience. Do you know how the parasitic plant (*Rafflesia*) with the largest flower in the world smells? Come and experience that at the botanical garden from 12th to 28th October, daily from 9am to 5pm. The exhibition will be held in the exhibition hall near the Ornamental garden.

#### Exhibition for All Senses

For 22 years the Prague Botanical Garden has been organizing special exhibitions that present various aspects of nature to a wide public, including visitors with special needs. The exhibits can be touched, heard, smelled and sometimes even tasted. They are accompanied by labels and descriptions in both latin and Braille. *“Visitors can go through the exhibition on their own, or they can be accompanied by a trained guide, which can also aid people with special needs. Those who are interested can borrow an eye mask and a special audio guide, which covers the exhibition using authentic sounds, commentary and instructions. Experiencing the exhibition without sight is extraordinary for most visitors,”* explains **Eva Novozámská, co-author of the exhibition and educational manager of the Prague Botanical Garden**. In 2017, the exhibition was attended by more than 2.500 visitors.

#### Never Alone – The Secrets of Symbiosis

In the previous years, the visitors could become acquainted with – among others – the plants in the life of native Americans. They have even explored the relationships between plants and bees and travelled from the surface of the sea to the highest peaks of the world. *“The topic of this year's exhibition for all senses is symbiosis. It describes various and fascinating relationships between living organisms in nature. The exhibition uses an entertaining and interactive approach and engages literally all the senses. The visitors will find out the secrets of parasitic plants as well as why plants live together with bacteria or fungi. Interesting information about sneaky orchids and why plants cooperate with ants or other animals will also be revealed to our guests ,”* says **Klára Lorencová, co-author of the exhibition and curator of the Prague Botanical Garden**. People will also get a chance to smell the parasitic rafflesia flower, examine a model of a lichen by sight and touch and inspect the largest seed in the world.

#### Botanical Garden: COME IN!

Prague Botanical garden has been improving the accessibility of its exhibitions to a wider public for more than 20 years. *“Our garden employs a unique information and navigation system for people with visual impairments, which enables them to move freely through the outdoor exhibitions. Our*



*employees are regularly trained for working with visitors with special needs. We also hold a Friendly Places certificate from the Red Cross. Apart from exhibitions for all senses, we also offer other educational activities that are really open to everyone,” says **Jarmila Skružná, co-author of the exhibition for all senses and curator of the botanical garden.***

Since 2016, we are working with a European Union Erasmus+ project called Botanical Garden: COME IN! VSTUPTĚ! KOM IN! WEJDŹ! GYERE BE! The employees of the Prague Botanical Garden collaborate with national teams from Sweden (Göteborgs botaniska trädgård), Poland (Ogród Botaniczny Uniwersytet im. A. Mickiewicza w Poznaniu) and Hungary (Magyar Arborétumok és Botanikus kertek Szövetsége). “We were motivated by an interest of our colleagues from botanical gardens across Europe to share our long-time experiences. They were literally captivated by our activities. At the present we are working on a methodology of how to work with visitors with special needs in botanical gardens, we are holding this year’s exhibition for all senses and are preparing an international conference, which will take place in 2019 in Poland’s Poznań,” **adds Jarmila Skružná.**

This year, the Prague Botanical Garden in Troja opened two constituent parts of the Scent Trail. It enables visitors to perceive the world of plants not only by sight, but also by smell. The first stop is located in the Fata Morgana greenhouse and it incorporates a unique perfume Fata Morgana No. 1. The second stop can be found by the Rosary in the area North of the outdoor expositions. The Scent Trail will be extended in the coming years.