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Date: Friday, April 23, 2010 03:22PM
Subject: SOUTHAMPTON TALK: Healing Plants and the Rainforest with PHOTO

**ANCIENT WISDOM AND MODERN MEDICINE
IS FOCUS OF STONY BROOK SOUTHAMPTON LECTURE**

SOUTHAMPTON, N.Y., April 23, 2010 – Michael Balick, Vice President for Botanical Science and Director and Philecology Curator at the New York Botanical Garden Institute of Economic Botany, will present a talk titled “Ancient Wisdom and Modern Medicine: Plants, People, and Cultures in the Tropical Rainforest” as the final installment of the Dean's Distinguished Lecture Series at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 29, in Duke Lecture Hall, Stony Brook Southampton. The event is hosted by Dean and Vice President Mary C. Pearl. For further information, call 631-632-5028.

Dr. Balick’s Biography

For more than three decades, Dr. Michael Balick has studied the relationship between plants and people, the field known as ethnobotany. Most of his research is in remote regions of the tropics, where he works with indigenous cultures to document their plant knowledge, understand the environmental effects of their traditional management systems, and help develop sustainable utilization systems for the region—while ensuring that benefits from such work are always shared with local communities. He also conducts research in the urban environment in New York City, examining traditional healing practices of the Dominican community and working with local physicians to develop culturally sensitive medical practices.

Dr. Balick has been active in ethnopharmacological investigations—the search for plants with medicinal properties—particularly in Belize where his research aided in the formation of the world’s first ethnobiomedical forest reserve. He co-founded the Ix Chel Tropical Research Foundation in 1987, a center in Belize devoted to traditional healing and cultural preservation. From 1986 to 1996 he helped lead a program sponsored by the US National Cancer Institute to survey the flora of Central and South America and the Caribbean for plants with potential activity against cancer and AIDS. Currently, he is working in Micronesia, on the islands of Pohnpei, Kosrae, Palau and surrounding remote atolls to document diversity, local use and management of plant resources.

Dr. Balick has authored 18 scientific and general interest books and monographs, on topics ranging from *Useful Palms of the World* (with Hans T. Beck), to *Rainforest Remedies* (with Rosita Arvigo), to *Plants, People, and Culture: The Science of Ethnobotany* (with Paul Alan Cox). Over the past several years his books include *Human Impacts on Amazonia: The Role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge in*

Conservation and Development (with Darrel Addison Posey), *Plants of Semillas Sagradas: An Ethnomedicinal Garden in Costa Rica* (with Rafael Ocampo), *Handbook of Poisonous and Injurious Plants* (with Lewis Nelson and Richard Shih), and, most recently, *Ethnobotany of Pohnpei: Plants, People and Island Culture* published by the University of Hawaii Press/New York Botanical Garden in 2009.

He has received numerous awards and honors for his scientific research and achievements. In 2009 he was given the Distinguished Economic Botanist award from the Society for Economic Botany and that same year was accorded the high title of *Luhk en Kairoir Dolen Katau Nett*, in recognition of his service to the people of Pohnpei, Micronesia through work in cultural and biodiversity conservation. In 2007 he received the Rachel Carson Award for Environmental Achievement from the Natural Products Association and was a Fellow of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation during 2005-2006. He is the recipient of the 2004 American Association for the Advancement of Science International Award for Scientific Cooperation (“For leadership in the field of ethnobotany and devotion to establishing international collaborations and institutions that work toward preserving traditional knowledge and respect for the values of local communities.”) He received the Frontiers of Science Award from the Society of Cosmetic Chemists in 2001, was elected as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1999, received the E. K. Janaki Ammal Medal from the Society of Ethnobotanists in 1998 (“For his long and distinguished service to ethnobotany.”). Dr. Balick is a former President of the Society for Economic Botany, an international organization devoted to furthering research in the study of the relationship between plants and people, has been a Visiting Fellow at Green College, Oxford University; and serves on the boards of numerous scientific and cultural organizations. He currently holds adjunct teaching appointments at Columbia University, Fordham University, New York University, and City University of New York where he mentors numerous graduate students.

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Attachments:

Michael Balick wearing mwaramwar.jpg