Dear Members and Friends:

We invite you to join the New England Wild Flower Society and Wellesley College Friends of Horticulture for a memorable adventure in Sichuan Province, China, in May 2011. This unique, small group is designed for experienced travelers who are conversant in Chinese. The group will travel to eight destinations in ten days, mainly on foot and by motorcoach on each of several days. On traveling days, we will take time for both planned and spontaneous stops to discover the plants of Sichuan, to walk, photograph, and meet local people.

The rhododendron will be in Flower during our visit! This is good news because China, a global hotspot for biodiversity, supports more than 400 endemic species of rhododendron. Most of these grow in the Hengduan Mountain region where we’ll spend most of our time. We may not see them all, but if this is your first trip to southwest China, you will probably see more than you ever have before.

This two-day visit to Jiuzhaigou Valley will be a highlight of our journey. Natural areas on the itinerary include: Emel Shavan, a revered and sacred 10,000-foot mountain with spectacular flora; Tangjiahe Nature Reserve, with dense broadleaf forests and a rich bird fauna; and Wenfeng Nature Reserve, with valuable conifer forests of spruce, larch and juniper. We’ll also visit wildflowers here in Wanglang, at 11,000 feet elevation, the high elevation wildflowers will be blooming at and above 10,000 feet. Tangjiahe and Wanglang are also home to wild populations of giant panda.

A major highlight of our Sichuan program will be a two-day visit to Jiuzhaigou National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site of incomparable beauty that is another great place to view and photograph spring wildflowers. Jiuzhaigou is a valley complex of crystaline lakes and streams, connected by a superbly designed network of boardwalk trails. Access is provided to some of the most beautiful areas on earth, from 7,000 to 11,000 feet, and it is an ideal place to explore on foot.

Frequent shuttle buses provide ready access to the boardwalk trails. Sichuan also has an exceptionally rich cultural heritage. A lush, subtropical basin encircled by steep mountains, Sichuan has been famously hard to reach. As the Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai wrote: ‘Travelling the road to Sichuan is harder than climbing to the sky!’ Taoism was born here, and, 1,200 years ago, Sichuan was a major center of Buddhist learning, a tradition that endures today in beautiful rock sculpture and ancient forest temples. At Leshan, a seated Buddha image stands 200 feet tall, carved from red sandstone, overlooks an auspicious river confluence.

The landscapes and people of Sichuan inspired both Li Bai and Dufu, two of China’s most revered classical poets.

Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province has an exceptionally long record of human habitation. Recent excavations have uncovered artifacts of bronze, pottery and jade from a time, more than 3,500 years ago, when local people cultivated rice and co-existed with elephants. At the Sanxingdui museum we will see metallic trees, golden birds, and huge bronze masks which fascinate archaeologists and visitors alike.

Today, as Sichuan booms, even cosmopolitan Chengdu keeps its links to the past through tranquil tea gardens, traditional opera performances, and a delicious cuisine based on Sichuan dishes: grow in the surrounding mountains.

Sincerely,
Bonnie Drexler, Administrative Manager
Wellesley College Friends of Horticulture

NEW ENGLAND WILDFLOWER SOCIETY
with the
Wellesley College Friends of Horticulture

May 14-29, 2011

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Today, as Sichuan booms, even cosmopolitan Chengdu keeps its links to the past through tranquil tea gardens, traditional opera performances and a delicious cuisine based on fish, a sparkling array of forest wildflowers; Tanglejia Nature Reserve, with dense broadleaved forests and a rich bird fauna; and Wild panda Nature Reserve, where subalpine conifer forests of spruce, larch and juniper grow in the surrounding mountains. The landscapes and people of Sichuan inspired both Li Bai and Du Fu, two of China’s most revered classical poets.
Day 1 | New York to Hong Kong | Expedition members depart New York on a 13-hour flight via JFK International Airport to Hong Kong’s Chek Lap Kok airport. (San Francisco or Los Angeles flights are also available.) Cross International Date Line en route. Meals: abohl.

Day 2 | Hong Kong - Chengdu | Arrive Hong Kong and take a connecting flight to ChengDu, capital of Sichuan Province. We’ll meet our leaders and transfer to Tianfu Hotel (2 nights). Enjoy a late lunch in ChengDu, followed by dinner and a brief overview of our coming program to the mountains of Sichuan.

Day 3 | Chengdu | Today, we will explore Chengdu with emphasis on the cultural heritage of the Sichuan Basin. ChengDu has one of the longest histories of continuous human habitation in China. People settled in this productive, river-watered basin for more than 4,000 years. In the morning we’ll visit the New Sichuan Provincial Museum and a thatched cottage that commemorates the residence of Du Fu, one of China’s most famous poets. Du Fu lived in ChengDu during the Tang Dynasty more than 1,200 years ago. The thatched cottage, located next to a small stream, was built by Du Fu in 759 and is next to a restored, semi-wild wetland area near the ancient city walls. Du Fu’s Temple, located near our hotel, has a classic Chinese architecture, tranquil surroundings, and has been the Vegetation Management Conservation Facility with a resident population of giant pandas. Nearby is the Panda Center at Bifengxia, an important conservation area.

Day 4 | Chengdu to Ya'an & Bifengxia Pandas | This morning we’ll drive to Ya'an, at the mouth of a major tributary valley that drains high mountains to the west. Nearby is the Panda Center at Bifengxia, an important conservation facility with a resident population of giant pandas that were bred on site. Bifengxia accommodates rescued and captive-bred pandas whose original home at Wolong Panda Reserve was disturbed by the 2008 earthquake.

Day 5 | Ya'an to Leshan Giant Buddha & Emei Mountain | Morning tour to Leshan. About two hours, our site is the huge, 8th-century Sichuan Buddha image that was carved into red sandstone near the confluence of two of Sichuan’s numerous rivers. En route, we will pass by the sacred Mount Emei, one of China’s most revered sacred mountains. The sacred mountain has existed for more than 4,000 years. This is the place where the great Zen master Bodhidharma founded the Chan sect of Buddhism and turned the Buddha statue’s back to the water. On the mountain we will visit a sacred temple located within a natural enclosure, and learn about the breathing program. Also which supports their conservation work in the area. The temple is open to the public for an hour every day and we’ll have the opportunity to photograph the panda. At 11 a.m., we’ll continue a short distance up valley to stroll in the old town of Nangxi where traditional rural houses are set amid green hills. Ya'an Hotel.

Day 6 | Ya'an to Leshan Giant Buddha & Emei Mountain | Morning tour to Leshan. About two hours, our site is the huge, 8th-century Sichuan Buddha image that was carved into red sandstone near the confluence of two of Sichuan’s numerous rivers. En route, we will pass by the sacred Mount Emei, one of China’s most revered sacred mountains. The sacred mountain has existed for more than 4,000 years. This is the place where the great Zen master Bodhidharma founded the Chan sect of Buddhism and turned the Buddha statue’s back to the water. On the mountain we will visit a sacred temple located within a natural enclosure, and learn about the breathing program. Also which supports their conservation work in the area. The temple is open to the public for an hour every day and we’ll have the opportunity to photograph the panda. At 11 a.m., we’ll continue a short distance up valley to stroll in the old town of Nangxi where traditional rural houses are set amid green hills. Ya'an Hotel.

Day 7 | Emei Mountain | We will enjoy a full day of exploration on the flanks of Mt. Emei, one of the most sacred mountains in China. In addition to the historical sites, we will hike along forest paths to reach the summit of Mount Emei, the highest mountain in southwestern China. It is a religious and cultural center for the local Tibetan people and a natural center for the Sichuanese. The climb up the mountain is dramatic, and there are many spectacular views along the way. At the summit, we’ll have a chance to experience the religious ceremonies and visit the temples located at the top.

Day 8 | Emei Mountain to Sanxingdui | In the morning we’ll visit the Sanxingdui archaeological site. In 1986, while conducting research in the Sichuan Basin, the passing of the Chinese town of Pingyao. Gaining derivatives from its name, Wanglang is the Chinese for the local minority township of Baima for a barbecue lunch. Here the local people enjoy a traditional lunch, and many are members of the family. Wildflowers include columbine, lark’s-spur, jack-in-the-pulpit, peony, meadow-rue, wild peony, Mecanopsis poppies, and the beautiful buttercup. Lunch at Dawuodang or Zhugengcha.

Day 11 | To Wanglang Nature Reserve | From Tanlu we will visit the Wanglang Nature Reserve, a natural reserve that is home to a number of rare plants and animals. At this elevation, we will encounter such early season wildflowers as Primula, Anemone, Gentiana and the beautiful buttercup, Oxygraphis glacialis. We have afternoon and morning time to explore the reserve and photograph the pandas. If time permits, we’ll continue a short distance up valley to stroll in the old town of Nangxi where traditional rural houses are set amid green hills. Ya'an Hotel.

Day 12 | Wanglang to Jiuzhaigou | Today we’ll cross a 12,000 foot pass to Jiuzhaigou, one of the most beautiful places on earth. We’ll visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of global significance. With crystal-clear lakes, streams, brooks, and small waterfalls, the Jiuzhaigou Valley is a stand of primar

Day 13 | To Jiuzhaigou National Park | Today we will drive north through the agricultural heartland of the Sichuan Basin to the town of Leshan. Leshan is a city on the confluence of two of Sichuan’s numerous rivers. En route, we will pass by the site of a huge, 8th Century Buddhist statue of Buddha. The site is now a national park and is charged by the center for everyone who wants to visit. We’ll spend the night at the Jiuzhagou Hotel.

Day 14 | Jiuzhaigou National Park | Today we will cross a 12,000 foot pass to Jiuzhaigou, one of the most beautiful places on earth. We’ll visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of global significance. With crystal-clear lakes, streams, brooks, and small waterfalls, the Jiuzhaigou Valley is a stand of primar

Day 15 | To Chengdu | Day 15: Jiuzhaigou to Chengdu. Our morning transport from the national park to the Jiuzhaigou Airport may proceed at a leisurely pace to connect with the flight to Chengdu. We’ll arrive the same day.
ITINERARY

Day 1 New York to Hong Kong

- Departure for New York City, New York. Flights to Hong Kong via San Francisco or Los Angeles. Hong Kong International Airport.

Day 2 Hong Kong

- Arrival at Hong Kong International Airport and transfer to hotel. Meeting with your tour leader and discussion about the coming program to Sichuan.

Day 3 Hong Kong & Chengdu

- Round trip flight to Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province, and the meeting point for the group. Dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 4 Chengdu

- Morning visit to the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding. Afternoon visit to the Dufu Thatched Cottage, a poet who lived more than 1,200 years ago.

Day 5 Chengdu to Ya'an & Bifengxia Pandas

- Drive to Ya'an, the gateway to the Mount Emei region. Visit the Wuhou Temple, dedicated to Confucius. Visit the Ya'an Botanical Garden, home to rhododendron species blooming amidst granite outcrops near the resort town of Shangli.

Day 6 Ya'an to Leshan Giant Buddha & Emei Mountain

- Visit the Leshan Giant Buddha, the largest Buddha statue in the world. Drive to Emei Mountain, a site of Buddhist pilgrimage. Visit the Hongzhu (Red Bamboo) Hotel, at the foot of Emei Mountain, one of China's revered sacred mountains.

Day 7 Emei Mountain

- Visit the Sacred Leshan (Red Sandstone) Temple, located near our hotel, and the surrounding mountain slopes for a contemplative atmosphere. The iconic Lingyun Temple is very scenic and ecologically distinct from Tangjiahe.

Day 8 Emei Mountain to Sanxingdui

- Drive to Sanxingdui, a site of cultural and historical significance. Visit the Sanxingdui archaeological site and the Museum of Sanxingdui.

Day 9 Sanxingdui to Jiuzhaigou

- Visit the Sanxingdui archaeological site and the Museum of Sanxingdui. Drive to Jiuzhaigou, one of the most beautiful and biodiverse nature reserves in the world.

Day 10 Jiuzhaigou Nature Reserve

- Visit the Jiuzhaigou Nature Reserve, one of the most beautiful and biodiverse nature reserves in the world. Visit the Jiuzhaigou National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. See the vibrant colors of the lake in the evening.

Day 11 Jiuzhaigou to Chengdu

- Drive to Chengdu for the last night. Visit the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding.

Day 12 Chengdu

- Visit the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding. Visit the Sichuan University and the nearby Sichuan Botanical Garden.

Day 13 Chengdu

- Departure for New York City, New York. Flights to San Francisco or Los Angeles. Hong Kong International Airport.

LEADERSHIP

Leading this expedition is Ted Elliman, a popular leader of our Sichuan expeditions. Ted is an ecologist with an M.S. from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Ted has a long association with conservation and education in China. He first went to China in 1981 and has spent many years working with scientists on a variety of ecological issues from rare plants to remote protected areas. Ted was formally the Director of Education and has been the Vegetation Management Coordinator for the New England Wild Flower Society. He supervises the Society’s programs for educational initiatives on the Society’s sanctuaries. Ted looks forward to returning to China and sharing the delights of China with you.

RESERVATIONS

Yes! I want to join the Secrets of Sichuan Expedition, May 14-29, 2011. Please reserve a space for me. Please mail a deposit of $500 per person payable to Betchart Expeditions Inc. in trust.

Sichuan Expedition 2011

Registration Information:

Name ________________________________ Address ________________________________ Phone ________________________________ Email ________________________________ City ________________________________ State ____ Zip ________

Payment Information:

Yes! I will pay the following amount: ___________ $________.

Method of payment: ________ Check ________ Money Order ________ Cash ________ Credit Card : ________ Visa ________ Mastercard ________ American Express ________ Diner's Club ________ JCB ________ Other __________

Please Mail To: Sichuan Expedition 2011 Betchart Expeditions Inc. 17500 Montebello Road Cupertino, CA 95014-5435

RESPONSIBILITY

Betchart Expeditions Inc., New England Wild Flower Society, and Wellesley College Friends of Botany. Please reserve a space for me. Please mail a deposit of $500 per person payable to Betchart Expeditions Inc. in trust.

Sichuan Expedition 2011

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RESPONSIBILITY

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Costs & Conditions

Trip Fee: $3,945 per person twin share (plus air fare of $1,195 + tax from New York to Chengdu, China, round trip).

Questions:
Please call Renee Apostolou, Betchart Expeditions Inc., telephone (800) 252-4910 or (408) 252-4910.

Expedition Fee Includes: Land transport, airport transfers, accommodations; all meals in Sichuan; in-tour flight; group entrance fees; baggage handling, leadership, administration.

Expedition Fee Does Not Include: International air fare (quoted separately); baggage handling in remote areas; China visa fee; personal items such as laundry, phone calls, alcoholic beverages, sodas, snacks, personal insurance; foreign airport departure taxes.

What to Expect: This expedition is planned for travelers who would enjoy exploring the natural and cultural heritage of areas in Sichuan Province little visited by westerners. See some of the most scenic areas in China, with 15,000-foot peaks, including the Chongqing Huashan and Yangtze World Heritage Site, and remote mountain villages. Leading the expedition will be an excellent American biologist who is conversant in Chinese. The group will travel by motorcoach on each of several days. On traveling days, we will have time for both planned and spontaneous stops to discover the plants of Sichuan, to walk, photograph, and meet local people. Participants should be prepared to actively explore on foot at a leisurely pace. Food will include a varied Sichuan menu.

Weather is pleasant, with midday temperatures in the 60’s to 70’s in the mountains, and some rain. It can be hot and muggy in Chengdu (90’s), and cool in the mountains. Elevations will range from the Chengdu lowlands to 11,000 feet at one pass in the Minshan Mountains. Most time will be spent between 5,000-8,000 feet. This expedition will be a tremendous experience for travelers with an appetite for adventure who would enjoy a chance to explore biologically rich, scenic places in remote parts of Sichuan Province. (No smoking in vehicles, during lectures, or meals, please.)

Air Fare & Airline Ticketing: Air fare quoted is based on a special rate with Cathay Pacific and Dragon Airlines. All air bookings will be handled by Betchart Expeditions Inc. Phone Renee at (800) 252-4910. AIR FARES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Accommodations: We will occupy first class hotels and lodges. We may have share bathrooms at the lodges in two parks. Expect a good bed, showers, mostly Western but some Asian style toilets, and carefully prepared food. Single accommodations are available in most locations for a supplement of $595.

Reservations, Deposits & Payments:
To reserve a space on this expedition, please mail your deposit check for $500 per person with the completed reservation form to: Sichuan Expedition, Betchart Expeditions Inc., 17050 Montebello Road, Cupertino, CA 95014-5435. Balance of land fee is due 60 days before departure.

Cancellations & Refunds: The initial deposit is refundable up to 60 days before departure less a handling fee of $100 per person. There is no refund after the 60-day period unless your place is resold, then only the $100 per person handling fee is withheld. There are no refunds for unused meals or other expedition features.

Responsibility

Betchart Expeditions Inc., New England Wild Flower Society, and Wellesley College Friends of Horticulture act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation and hotels, and exercise every care possible. However, we assume no liability for injury, damage, delay, loss, accident or irregularity in connection with the services of any airplane, ship, motorcoach, or any other conveyance used in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, acts of God, or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to substitute another leader of similar expertise or to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case the entire payment will be refunded with no further obligation on our part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour. No refund will be made for the unused portion of any tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The price of the program is based on current tariffs and rates, and is subject to change. Any tariff, exchange rate, or fuel increases will be passed on to participants. Baggage is carried at the owner’s risk entirely. It is understood that the air ticket when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and the airline concerned. The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their plane or conveyance.

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Reservations #1185

Yes! I/We want to join the Secrets of Sichuan Expedition, May 14-29, 2011, offered by New England Wild Flower Society & Wellesley College Friends of Horticulture. Please reserve ____ space(s).

As a deposit, I/we enclose a check for $____ $500 per person) payable to Betchart Expeditions Inc.

Trust Account.

Name(s) ____________________________ Age ______

Address ____________________________ Age ______

City __________________ State _____ Zip ______

Phone: Home (______) __________________________ Work (______) __________________________

Email: ________________________________

Membership: NEWFS Friends of Horticulture

Accommodations Preference: __ Twin  __ Single  __ Nonsmoker  __ Smoker

Signature ____________________________ Date ______

Signature ____________________________ Date ______

Please Mail To: Sichuan Expedition 2011
Betchart Expeditions Inc.
17050 Montebello Road
Cupertino, CA 95014-5435