



## Press Release

For Immediate Release: September 27, 2004

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## Olympic Wreaths at the U.S. Botanic Garden

Presentation Ceremony on Tuesday, September 28

WASHINGTON - Three olive wreaths from the Athens 2004 Olympic Games medal ceremonies will be presented to the U.S. Botanic Garden in a public ceremony on Tuesday, September 28, at 3:30 p.m. in the West Gallery of the USBG Conservatory. Rep. Henry J. Hyde (R-IL), chairman of the House Committee on International Relations, will present the wreaths to Alan M. Hantman, Architect of the Capitol, and Acting Director of the U.S. Botanic Garden.

The wreaths, a gift from the Olympic Organizing Committee in Athens, Greece, and obtained through the auspices of Rep. Hyde, were hand-made from the branches of olive trees growing on the island of Crete. These olive wreaths were created for award to this year's medal-winning athletes, reviving a tradition begun at the very first Olympic Games of 776 B.C.

The U.S. Botanic Garden intends to preserve the wreaths and include them in the USBG's permanent collection. One of the wreaths will be displayed in a new permanent exhibit scheduled to open in spring 2005. The exhibit will focus on the influence of plants on human culture. The olive has significant cultural importance in Western civilization. Not only does the tradition of presenting olive wreaths signify honor and achievement; the olive branch also is universally recognized as a symbol of peace.

The United States Botanic Garden Conservatory is open to the public, free of charge, every day of the year from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Conservatory is located at 100 Maryland Avenue, SW, at the foot of the U.S. Capitol on the National Mall. Visitors are encouraged to take Metrobus and Metrorail. Further information is available by calling 202-225-8333 or visiting the USBG website at [www.usbg.gov](http://www.usbg.gov).

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