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GREGOR MENDEL: PLANTING THE SEEDS OF GENETICS MAY 24–SEPT. 28, 2008

PHILADLEPHIA—Everyone who has taken high school biology knows Gregor Mendel experimented with peas and became known as the father of genetics.

But most people don't know the intriguing story behind the brilliant 19th century friar who spent eight years and grew 28,000 pea plants, only to have his discovery of one of the most important scientific principles go unnoticed for 35 years. From May 24 through Sept. 28, 2008, The Academy of Natural Sciences and Villanova University will present "Gregor Mendel: Planting the Seeds of Genetics" at the Academy in Philadelphia. The exhibit traces the rise of genetics through its major milestones—from the discovery of chromosomes to the famous DNA model of James Watson and Francis Crick—and shows how scientists today are using genetics to tackle cutting-edge questions of evolution, conservation and crop cultivation.

Learn how Mendel spent eight years meticulously researching and experimenting with 28,000 pea plants, all according to the standard scientific method. While Mendel reported his remarkable findings on pea plant hybridizing experiments and laid out the basic laws of inheritance in 1865, his work was ignored until the turn of the century.

Visitors will see Mendel's botanical specimens, scientific instruments, manuscripts, correspondence and even his gardening tools. They will have fun recreating his pea experiments, analyzing DNA sequences and identifying dominant and recessive genes.

President William Y. Brown said collaborating with Villanova, one of the few Augustinian universities in the nation, adds to the rich overall experience of authenticity in the Mendel exhibit. "We're excited to reach college-age students of our accomplished neighbor and hope to inspire more to regularly visit our museum." Rev. Kail Ellis, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Villanova University, said, "Students who experience the exhibit at the Academy will have a renewed appreciation for Mendel's work and may even look at our own Mendel Science Center in a new way."

The exhibition was developed by The Field Museum, Chicago, in partnership with The Vereinigung zur Förderung der Genomforschung in Vienna, Austria and The Mendel Museum in Brno, Czech Republic. For more information: <http://www.ansp.org/museum/changing/future.php>. The exhibit is FREE with museum admission.

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The Academy is located at 1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway and is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and weekends until 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for children ages 3–12, seniors, students with college I.D. and military personnel, and free for children under 3. There is a \$2 fee for "Butterflies!"

Founded in 1812, The Academy of Natural Sciences is the oldest natural history museum in the Americas and is a world leader in biodiversity and environmental research. The mission of the Academy is the encouragement and cultivation of the sciences.