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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **MEIJER GARDENS PRESENTS 41 HOLIDAY TRADITIONS IN ONE BEAUTIFUL EXHIBITION**

*Christmas and Holiday Traditions Around the World*  
November 19, 2008—January 4, 2009

**GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., — September 11, 2008 —** Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, one of the nation's most significant sculpture and botanic experiences, is proud to host the 14<sup>th</sup> annual *Christmas and Holiday Traditions Around the World* exhibition taking place November 19, 2008 through January 4, 2009. The exhibition highlights over 40 international holiday trees and displays.

A new addition to the exhibition features a 50-piece Santon display imported from France. The exhibition returns with three important festive displays honoring the Chinese New Year, the Muslim celebration of Eid ul-Fitr and the unique illumination traditions from the Phillipines known as *Parols*. Another returning favorite, the *Gardens Holiday Express* railway-garden constructed by nationally-known designer Paul Busse, will travel through lush gardens, over bridges and past buildings. This year, the exhibit focuses on the amazing buildings constructed from bark, twigs, nuts, pods and cinnamon sticks made by Busse and his team of artists. All buildings are reproductions of Grand Rapids area buildings, many of which are historic landmarks.

Meijer Gardens will remain open until 9 pm every Tuesday evening as well as the entire week between Christmas and New Years. Thousands of lights take on a completely different look during the evenings. Other features include a luminary-lit walkway, star-lit carriage rides, holiday entertainment, family activities, Santa and Taste of the Gardens Café international cuisine specials. Also, every Saturday until Christmas there will be the opportunity to see live reindeer.

### **Special Activities**

- ***Holiday Gift Show*** – November 8 at 9 AM – 5 PM  
The annual Holiday Gift Show promises to offer an array of spectacular selections, from the fun and unusual to the beautiful and elegant. Art, jewelry, home and garden décor, collectibles, pottery and more will be available from nearly 40 vendors, including local and regional artists. Accomplished pianist Don Irwin returns to entertain with his signature sound of beautiful melodies, sweeping ranges, unique sounds and exotic rhythms. A regular at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis, Irwin has served as a recording studio musician for artists such as Prince and Donna Summer. Admission to the gift show is free. Meijer Garden members receive a 10% discount with their membership cards.
- ***Tree Lighting Ceremony*** – November 18 at 6 – 8 PM  
The Tree Lighting Ceremony starts the official opening of the exhibit with activities including carriage rides, a visit from Santa, and a performance by the Embellish Hand Bell Ensemble.
- ***Holiday Gala*** – December 4 at 7 – 10 PM  
The highly anticipated annual fund raiser celebrates the magic of the season. The evening will

sparkle with caroling, carriage rides through the illuminated Sculpture Park, and delicious cuisine from around the world. Chaired by Starr Meijer, Meg Miller-Willit and Pamella DeVos, tickets to this grand affair are \$100 per person and include dinner, drinks and entertainment.

- **Roof Top Reindeer** – November 22 & 29, December 6, 13, & 20 at 1 – 4 PM
- **Carriage Rides** – November 18 & 25, December 2, 9, 16, 23, 26, 27, 29, & 30
- **Santa Visits** – November 18 & 25, December 2, 9, 16, & 23 at 6 – 8 PM
- **The Original Dickens Carolers** – November 18 & 25, December 2, 9, 16, & 23 at 6 – 8 PM

#### **About Christmas and Holiday Traditions Around the World**

Started in 1995 as an effort to share how Christmas is celebrated around the world, Meijer Gardens has embraced the decorations, music and food of more than 40 countries and cultures to create an exhibit which is totally distinct. The exhibition itself has grown to become a holiday tradition with more than 75,000 guests visiting in November and December from all across the country and across the globe.

#### **About Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park**

One of the nation's most significant botanic and sculpture experiences, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park serves more than a half-million visitors annually. The 132-acre grounds feature Michigan's largest tropical conservatory; one of the largest children's gardens in the country; arid and Victorian gardens; a carnivorous plant house; outdoor gardens; and a 1750-seat outdoor amphitheater, featuring an eclectic mix of world-renowned musicians every summer. The internationally acclaimed Sculpture Park features a permanent collection including works by Rodin, Oldenburg, Moore, Bourgeois and Plensa among others. Indoor galleries host changing sculpture exhibitions with recent exhibitions by Picasso, Degas, di Suvero and Chihuly. For additional information, please visit [www.meijergardens.org](http://www.meijergardens.org).

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