



FREDERIK MEIJER Gardens & Sculpture Park

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEIJER GARDENS CELEBRATES THE MAGIC OF 40 HOLIDAY TRADITIONS IN ONE BEAUTIFUL PLACE

*15th Annual "Christmas and Holiday Traditions Around The World"
November 18, 2009 – January 10, 2010*

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., — October 28, 2009 — Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, one of the nation's most significant sculpture and botanic experiences, is proud to host the 15th annual ***Christmas and Holiday Traditions Around the World*** exhibition taking place November 18, 2009 through January 10, 2010. The exhibition highlights more than 40 international holiday trees and displays.

Mainstays of the exhibition include the Germany Tree which is adorned with handmade glass ornaments homemade springerle cookies; the England tree with antique Christmas cards and mistletoe; and the beautiful Eid ul-Fitr display, which celebrates the end of Ramadan. The exhibition includes 30 decorated trees, 10 cultural displays and an expansive presentation of poinsettias and live Michigan-grown evergreens.

A new international display will debut this year – the Vietnamese celebration of the Lunar New Year titled Tết Nguyên Đán (pronounced "day wen don"). Tết Nguyên Đán, which translates to "the first morning of the first day," is the most important cultural occasion to the Vietnamese, honoring the union of nature, humans, culture, the living and the dead. The new display represents an ancestral altar which the Vietnamese create as a way to remember and honor their ancestors during the holiday.

"Tết Nguyên Đán and our other cultural displays offers a unique way to celebrate the holiday season," said Lisa Roo, Assistant Curator of Special Exhibitions at Meijer Gardens. "As visitors walk along our scenic corridor, lined with beautifully decorated displays, they discover ornaments with centuries-old legacies, symbols of important celebrations and a rich history of holidays around the world."

Meijer Gardens is transformed into a botanic wonderland with poinsettias, orchids, amaryllis and more than 300,000 outdoor lights. Carriage rides through the candle-lit sculpture park, the smell of evergreens as visitors enter the building and the sounds of carolers and hand bells make it a magical place for the holidays.

A returning visitor favorite, the *Railway Garden* expands through three lush indoor gardens with a model train traveling past glittering lights and over high trestles. The 19 buildings modeled after Grand Rapids landmarks are all handmade of natural materials by railway garden designer Paul Busse. Fountain Street Church, Pantlind Hotel, St. Cecilia Music Society, Flanagan's Pub and Fulton Street Power Plant are just some of the many landmarks made of bark, twigs, leaves, nuts and cinnamon sticks in the *Railway Garden*.

"With the glow of lights, the warmth of our indoor gardens and the bustle of our family activities, this makes for the perfect holiday destination," said Roo. "Since the start of the exhibition in 1995, it has become a family tradition to more than 50,000 people each year."

A variety of activities will be occurring throughout the exhibition.

Tree Lighting Ceremony

November 17, 6-8 PM

See our exhibition all lit up for the first time this year. The Tree Lighting Ceremony will have holiday activities such as performances by The Original Dickens Carolers, Santa visits, and art activities for families from 6-8 PM.

Holiday Activities on Tuesday Evenings at Meijer Gardens

November 17, 24, December 1, 8, 15, 22

6-8 PM

Meijer Gardens is open late on Tuesday evenings! Holiday activities will occur from 6-8 PM including: performances by The Original Dickens Carolers, Santa visits, art activities for families.

Roof Top Reindeer

November 21, 28, December 5, 12, 19

1-4 PM

Live Reindeer will be visiting Meijer Gardens' English Perennial Garden for pictures, petting and fun!

Carriage Rides

December 1, 8, 15, 22, 26, 28, 29, 30

5:30-8:30 PM

A scenic carriage ride will take you around the luminescent sculpture park. The member price is \$50 per carriage, up to four adults. The Non-member price is \$80 per carriage, up to 4 adults. Reservations required, call 616-975-3151.

Sing-A-Long Trolley Rides

December 1, 8, 15, 22, 26, 28, 29, 30

5:30-8:30 PM

As part of the Meijer Gardens' "Christmas and Holiday Traditions Around the World" exhibition, the Sing-A-Long Trolley Rides will have all ages enjoying classic holiday songs. No reservations required. Adults \$8, children \$5.

Images are available upon request.

About Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park

One of the world's most significant botanic and sculpture experiences, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park serves more than a half-million visitors annually. Meijer Gardens was recently named one of the world's 30 "Must-See Museums" by Patricia Schultz, author of *1,000 Places to See Before you Die*. The 132-acre grounds feature Michigan's largest tropical conservatory; one of the largest children's gardens in the country; arid and Victorian gardens with bronze sculptures by Degas and Rodin; 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, Borofsky and Calder. For more additional information, please visit www.MeijerGardens.org

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