



# FREDERIK MEIJER Gardens & Sculpture Park

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **MEIJER GARDENS CELEBRATES HOLIDAY TRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD IN ONE BEAUTIFUL PLACE**

*16<sup>th</sup> Annual "Christmas and Holiday Traditions Around The World"  
November 23, 2010 – January 9, 2011*

**GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., — November 16, 2010** — Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, one of the nation's most significant sculpture and botanic experiences, is proud to host the 16<sup>th</sup> annual "Christmas and Holiday Traditions Around the World" exhibition taking place November 23 through January 9. The exhibition highlights more than 40 international holiday trees and displays.

A focal point of this year's exhibition is the Indian celebration of Diwali, also known as the Festival of Lights. This five-day Hindu tradition is celebrated with festive fireworks, lights, flowers, decorations and special worship. Diyas, small clay lamps filled with oil, are displayed in homes and used for prayer. The glowing lamps symbolize the triumph within the individual of good over evil. Diwali also is celebrated with the art of rangoli, meaning row of color. Rangoli designs are traditionally motifs from nature and geometrical patterns made with natural materials.

Representations of the nativity scene are prominent throughout the exhibition. Nativities such as a 1950s lithographed cardboard manger set from Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward, a warm olive wood nativity from the Middle East, France's Santons of Provence and the Italian maiolica presepio are on display. A new addition is the Polish nativity called szopka, a complement to the returning Polish Christmas tree. Szopka is a crèche scene featuring richly decorated architecture as the backdrop.

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 20 buildings modeled after Grand Rapids landmarks are all handmade of natural materials by railway garden designer Paul Busse. There are five new buildings in Railway Garden: Meijer Gardens' own Lena Meijer Conservatory, the Civic Theatre, Joseph Kinnebrew's "Fish Ladder," the Ada and Fallasburg covered bridges and Temple Emanuel.

"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 Lisa Roo, Assistant Curator of Special Exhibitions. "Since the start of the exhibition in 1995, it has become a family tradition to more than 50,000 people each year."

Meijer Gardens transforms 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.

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.

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Special activities will be occurring throughout the exhibition:

- **Extended Holiday Hours**  
*Meijer Gardens is open until 9 PM every Tuesday in addition to December 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30. Regular hours are listed at [MeijerGardens.org](http://MeijerGardens.org)*
- **Santa Visits**  
*November 23, 30 and December 7, 14, 21; 5-8 PM*
- **Art Activities for Families**  
*November 23, 23, December 7, 14, 20-23, and 27-30; 6-8 PM*
- **The Original Dickens Carolers**  
*November 23, 30, December 7, 14, 21; 6-8 PM*
- **Horse-Drawn Carriage Rides**  
*December 7, 14, 21-23; 5:30 – 8:30 PM*  
Members \$50 per carriage, up to four adults; Non-members \$80 per carriage, up to four adults. Reservations required, call 616-975-3151. \$25 fee for all cancellations and rescheduling
- **Roof Top Reindeer**  
*November 27, December 4, 11, 18; 1-4 PM*
- **Sing-Along Trolley Rides**  
*December 21-23; 5:30 – 8:30 PM*  
Adults \$8, Children \$5. No reservations required

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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 ranked in the top 100 most-visited art museums worldwide by *Art Newspaper*, the leading publication in global art news. 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 1950-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](http://www.MeijerGardens.org)