



FREDERIK MEIJER Gardens & Sculpture Park

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MEIJER GARDENS' 17th ANNUAL HOLIDAY EXHIBITION ILLUMINATES MORE THAN 40 INTERNATIONAL TRADITIONS

*"Christmas and Holiday Traditions Around The World" on display
November 22 – January 8*

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., — November 9, 2011 — Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, one of the nation's most significant sculpture and botanic experiences, is proud to host the 17th annual "Christmas and Holiday Traditions Around the World" exhibition on display November 22 through January 8. The exhibition highlights more than 40 international holiday trees and displays.

This year's exhibition centers around the theme Celebration of Light, showcasing the many cultures and holidays that celebrate light or enlightenment.

"The symbol of light can have many different meanings," said Lisa Roo, Assistant Curator of Special Exhibitions. "Each culture incorporates light differently, but many find it especially important during the long winter months of darkness."

Several traditions utilizing light and illumination will be showcased, including "Diwali," India's Hindu Festival of Lights, the Chinese New Year Lantern Festival, the Hanukkah Festival of Lights and Saint Lucia Day, Sweden's celebration of the patron saint of sight and light.

"Visitors can learn about the menorah's importance during Hanukkah, view the ornate lanterns carried in Chinese New Year parades and gaze at the illuminated Moravian star hanging in the five-story Tropical Conservatory," said Roo. "It is truly a multicultural experience."

Mainstays of the exhibition include the Germany Tree which is adorned with handmade glass ornaments and 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.

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. Within the garden are 25 buildings modeled after Grand Rapids landmarks, all handmade of natural materials by railway garden designer Paul Busse. Additions to this year's display include the Van Andel Institute, Helen DeVos Children's Hospital, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, Maya Lin's "Ecliptic" sculpture at Rosa Park's Circle, and Alexander Calder's sculpture "La Grande Vitesse."

Meijer Gardens transforms into a botanic wonderland with poinsettias, orchids and amaryllis. 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 festive place to enjoy the holiday season.

The exhibition began in 1995 and has since become a holiday tradition in itself to more than 50,000 visitors each year. A variety of family-friendly activities are available on Tuesday evenings and weekends.

Exhibition Activities

- **Extended Holiday Hours**, Open until 9 PM on December 20-23 and 26-30
- **Horse-Drawn Carriage Rides by Grand Carriages, LLC**, December 6, 13, 20-23, 5:30-9 pm
Reservations required, call 616-975-3151. Members \$50 per carriage, non-members \$80 per carriage (up to four adults). \$25 fee for all cancellations and rescheduling.
- **The Original Dickens Carolers**, Tuesdays, November 22, 29, December 6, 13, 20, 6-8 pm
- **Santa Visits**, Tuesdays, November 22, 29, December 6, 13, 20, 5-8 pm
- **Art Activities for Families**, November 22, 29, December 6, 13, 20-23 and 26-30, 6-8 pm
- **Roof Top Reindeer**, Saturdays, November 26, December 3, 10, 17, 1-4 pm
- **Sing-A-Long Trolley Rides**, December 20-23, 5:30-9 pm
No reservations required. Adults \$8, children \$5.

This exhibition is sponsored in part by The Meijer Foundation, and the Botanic and Sculpture Societies of Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. The Railway Garden is sponsored by Warner, Norcross & Judd, LLP.

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Images available upon request. [View thumbnails](#)

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 1900-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, Calder and Chadwick.

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