



# FREDERIK MEIJER Gardens & Sculpture Park

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MEIJER GARDENS' 24th ANNUAL BUTTERFLY EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS HOW LIGHT AND SHADOW AFFECT BUTTERFLY BEHAVIOR, COLOR AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WHERE THEY FLOURISH

*Enjoy thousands of butterflies as they fly freely in the Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory*

*March 1 through April 30.*

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – February 1, 2019 – Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park's annual *Fred & Dorothy Fichter Butterflies Are Blooming* exhibition will bring more than 7,000 tropical butterflies to West Michigan beginning March 1. *Butterflies Are Blooming* is the spring's most anticipated exhibition and is the largest temporary tropical butterfly exhibition in the nation.

This year's exhibition highlights how light and shadow affect butterflies, their color and the natural environment of the Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory. On bright, sunny days butterflies often move faster and fly higher. Swallowtails, Charaxes and Paper Kites in particular tend to fly higher on sunny days. On cloudy days, butterflies fly lower and more slowly, making them easier to observe and enjoy. At dusk, many butterflies roost together, forming large groups in trees. These include the Heliconids (longwings) and the Mormons (a type of swallowtail butterfly). Guests will notice these butterfly groupings late in the day or on Tuesday evenings. Some of the chrysalids that visitors will encounter in the new and redesigned Observation Station emergence area have silver or gold patches that act like mirrors and reflect sunlight. While they are very showy in the Observation Station, in nature they disappear, appearing as dew drops and making it more difficult for predators to find them.

Approximately 60 colorful species of butterflies and moths journey from butterfly-rich regions of Costa Rica, Ecuador, the Philippines and Kenya to fly freely in the five-story tall, 15,000 square-foot Tropical Conservatory. At 85 degrees and 70 percent humidity, this balmy environment mimics the tropical regions that the butterflies call home. A rich carpet of ferns punctuated by bright red and orange blooms and chartreuse foliage creates an irresistible buffet in both sunlight and shade for nectaring butterflies. Plants that are flowering during the

exhibition include Pentas, Orange Plume Flower, Blue Porterweed, Jatropha, as well as Queen's Wreath and Bleeding Heart Vines.

Species of butterflies expected to arrive include the blue Common Morpho, whose iridescence impresses in flight, as well as Brushfoot varieties such as the Clearwing, Lacewing and Zebra Mosaic. Likewise, the Longwings captivate with distinctive wing patterns as seen on the Small Blue Grecian, Doris, Postman and Tiger butterflies. Gliders like the Emperor, Ruby-Spotted and Orchard Swallowtails will also add to the diverse assortment.

"This year's Fred & Dorothy Fichter Butterflies Are Blooming exhibition explores light and shadow and how these elements influence both the activity of the butterflies and the natural environment in which they flourish," explained Steve LaWarre, Director of Horticulture. "Guests are invited to pay particular attention to the iridescence of the color on wings, how light bounces off the butterfly wings as well as how light and shadow alter the appearance of The Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory. This annual exhibition provides a wonderful opportunity for our guests to experience the diverse beauty of these creatures up close and in person."

More than 1,000 pupae arrive at Meijer Gardens weekly from around the world. Guests can watch as delicate chrysalides and cocoons are placed in the Observation Station, where these unique and fascinating creatures then transform and spread their wings for the first time.

The Caterpillar Room, located within the Grace Jarecki Seasonal Display Greenhouse, features Monarch caterpillars. Guests will find caterpillars hungrily feeding on milkweed host plants mixed in with the flowering spring plantings and glossy green foliage that encompass the perimeter of the Seasonal Display Greenhouse. A docent will be present to help guide guests and enhance the experience.

This much-loved exhibition attracts 185,000 visitors from all over the world each year.

#### Exhibition Activities

- "Who Am I?" A Butterfly Ballet

Saturday, February 23, 10 am

Sunday, February 24, 12 pm and 2:30 pm

Fee: \$5 members/\$8 non-members; Free for ages 2 years and younger

*Choreographed by Attila Mosolygo, performed by members of the Grand Rapids Ballet Junior Company and narrated by Errol Shewman.*

Developed in collaboration with Grand Rapids Ballet, this unique performance highlights characteristics of butterflies through dance. Don't miss this thoroughly delightful butterfly ballet. Told through the

eyes of a newly emerged butterfly, the story will captivate young and old alike. With colorful costumes, spectacular music and exquisite choreography, this enchanting performance will provide a unique and memorable experience. Participate in interactive dance activities before the performance and take advantage of photo-ops on stage with the dancers afterward. Register online at [MeijerGardens.org](http://MeijerGardens.org) or call 616-975-3184. *Who Am I? A Butterfly Ballet* is generously sponsored by Karl & Patti Betz and Jesse & Gia Budrick.

An American Sign Language interpreter will be provided for the 10 am performance on February 23. Reservations for this service are required. To reserve your space, call 616-975-3184 or 616-975-3147, or email [classes@meijergardens.org](mailto:classes@meijergardens.org)

- Children's Activities

Saturday, March 1-Wednesday, April 30, daylight hours only

Lena Meijer Children's Garden

Included with admission

Once you have observed caterpillars in the Seasonal Display Greenhouse and butterflies in the Tropical Conservatory, come out to the Children's Garden for engaging outdoor educational events. Fly like a butterfly, wrap up like a chrysalis, curl up like a caterpillar, or crawl out of an egg using life cycle costumes and your imagination. Perform your own butterfly-themed puppet show or read about moths and butterflies in the Log Cabin. Search for butterfly and moth life cycle stages in a special Treehouse Village hunt. Ring the bell after successfully navigating through the Butterfly Maze. Become a butterfly in the Monarch's Migration game. Enjoy a springtime puppet show or story-time; days and times vary. There is something for all ages! Activities vary daily; check the Information Center for activities and times.

- Tuesday Night Lights

Included with admission

Bring your flashlight on Tuesday nights until 9 pm to see the nightlife in the Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory.

- Girl Scout Day – Butterflies and Ballet

Saturday, February 23

This special event provides a unique and memorable way for girls to experience and learn about butterflies. An exclusive performance of "Who Am I? A Butterfly Ballet" will be presented by the Grand Rapids Ballet Junior Company and includes colorful costumes, spectacular music, and exquisite choreography. Girls will also create a special mask, based on one of the characters in the play and visit the butterflies in the tropical conservatory. An optional fun patch will be available for purchase in the gift shop. Pre-registration is required. Register on-line at the Girl Scouts of Michigan Shore to Shore website: [www.gsmists.org](http://www.gsmists.org)

Boy Scout and Cub Scout troops are welcome to attend and should register by calling Julie at 616-975-3145.

The exhibition is made possible by the DTE Energy Foundation, Howard Miller Company, Foremost Graphics Group, the Meijer Foundation, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Foundation, Botanic and Sculpture Societies of Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. Media sponsors are Star 105.7 FM and Blue Lake Public Radio.

High-resolution images available for [download here](#).

Volunteers:

Wanted. Needed. Appreciated. Various jobs and shifts. Mid-February through mid-May. Contact Amber Oudsema at [aoudsema@meijergardens.org](mailto:aoudsema@meijergardens.org) or 616-974-5221.

Membership:

Members of Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park enjoy unique members-only events and exhibition openings, valuable discounts, and reciprocal benefits to more than 300 other gardens nationwide. Meijer Gardens is open early the first full weekend of each month on Saturdays from 8 am – 9 am and Sundays from 9 am – 11 am exclusively for members.

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

One of the world's most significant botanic and sculpture experiences, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park served 696,000 visitors in 2018 and was recently listed in the top 30 most visited museum in the United States by *The Art Newspaper*, the leading publication in global art news. The 158-acre main campus features Michigan's largest tropical conservatory; one of the largest interactive 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 Oldenburg, Moore, Hepworth, Serra, Bourgeois, Ai Weiwei and Plensa, among others. Indoor galleries host changing sculpture exhibitions with exhibitions by Ai Weiwei, Picasso, Degas, di Suvero, Borofsky, Calder and Dine. In June 2015, the eight-acre Richard & Helen DeVos Japanese Garden at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park opened. Created by renowned designer Hoichi Kurisu, the garden features sculpture by Anish Kapoor, Jenny Holzer and Guiseppe Penone, among others.

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