



FREDERIK MEIJER Gardens & Sculpture Park

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEIJER GARDENS' 26th ANNUAL BUTTERFLY EXHIBITION EXPLORES AN ERA OF DISCOVERY AND HIGHLIGHTS THE
STORY OF THE WARDIAN CASE

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

March 1 through April 30.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – February 10, 2021 – 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. The exhibition is the largest temporary tropical butterfly exhibition in the nation and is highly anticipated.

With its abbreviated three-week run last year due to the onset of the global pandemic, the theme of *Into the Glass House* returns with an intriguing look into the world of life under glass. This year's exhibition once again highlights Nathaniel Ward and the invention of the Wardian Case. In 1827, Ward accidentally invented terrariums while studying caterpillars and moths by placing them in jars. He noticed that plants were flourishing in these sealed jars and discovered that plants better survived the harsh conditions in London, a city known for heavy pollution at the time, if they were enclosed in sealed containers. This discovery led to horticulturists being able to transport items around the globe and these early "fern cases" paved the way for modern terrariums, greenhouses and conservatories.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, some exhibition elements and activities will be altered to allow for physical distancing. In addition, due to State of Michigan guidelines, our capacities have been limited. There may be times when admission will be delayed during peak hours.

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 Lena Meijer 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 fuchsia and mango colored blooms and lime green 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.

"Step Into the Glass House during this year's *Fred & Dorothy Fichter Butterflies Are Blooming* exhibition and discover how the invention of the Wardian case changed the world," said Lisa Roo, Annual Exhibitions Lead Designer & Project Manager. "This theme offers our community a sense of wonder with magical glass houses from four feet tall to our iconic fifty-foot-tall Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory. We are again offering our guests the unique experience of stepping into glass houses to see butterflies soaring, caterpillars munching and learn how the Wardian case paved the way for modern terrariums and greenhouses."

An average of 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. Here guests will have the opportunity to learn how plants, butterflies and moths live in and under glass. Caterpillars hungrily feed on milkweed host plants mixed in with the flowering spring plantings and ferns that encompass the perimeter of the Seasonal Display Greenhouse. A new Wardian case will be located in the adjacent Earl and Donnalee Holton Victorian Garden Parlor.

Extended Hours & Exhibition Activities

- **Extended Members Only Hours:** In addition to current early member hours (which happen on the first full weekend every month on Saturdays from 8 am – 9 am and Sundays from 9 am – 11 am), Meijer Gardens will also open early for members only from 9 am – 11 am every Sunday in March.
- **Extended April Hours:** Open until 7 pm during April, 9 pm on Tuesdays. Sundays open from 9 am – 7 pm for all guests.

Due to current guidelines, capacity restrictions are in effect and wait times may apply.

- Outdoor Children's Activities

Monday, March 1–Friday, 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 Lena Meijer 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 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 search for butterflies and see the nightlife in the Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory.

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. Contact Valerie Maciejewski at

vmaciejewski@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 was recently listed in the top 30 most visited museums 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 Edgar Degas and Auguste 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 Claes Oldenburg & Coosje van Bruggen, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Richard Serra, Louise Bourgeois, Ai Weiwei and Jaume Plensa, among others. Indoor galleries host changing sculpture exhibitions with exhibitions by Ai Weiwei, Pablo Picasso, Edgar Degas, Mark di Suvero, Jonathan Borofsky, Alexander Calder, Jim Dine and others. 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, David Nash, George Rickey, Masayuki Koorida, Zhang Huan and Giuseppe Penone.

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