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CONTACT: John VanderHaagen | Director of Communications | 616-975-3180 | jvanderhaagen@meijergardens.org

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MEIJER GARDENS’ 28th ANNUAL BUTTERFLY EXHIBITION PROVIDES UP-CLOSE EXPERIENCE WITH THOUSANDS OF TROPICAL BUTTERFLIES

Enjoy an up-close experience with thousands of butterflies as they fly freely throughout the Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — February 1, 2023 — Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park’s annual Fred & Dorothy Fichter Butterflies Are Blooming exhibition will bring 7,500 tropical butterflies to West Michigan, beginning March 1. The highly anticipated exhibition, taking place every March and April, is the largest temporary tropical butterfly exhibition in the nation.

This year’s exhibition highlights the microscopic detail and beauty of butterflies. Join us as we discover the intimate, wondrous world of butterflies. The magic is truly in the details! Did you know that the newly hatched caterpillars of some butterfly species are only about 2 millimeters in length—smaller than a grain of rice? Did you know that a butterfly’s wings are covered in fragile, microscopic scales, overlapping like roof shingles—200 to 600 per square millimeter? Tune your senses to the tiny as you explore with curiosity and wonder.

Look closely. Think deeply. Delight in the details. What can you find?

Approximately 60 colorful butterfly and moth species journey from butterfly-rich regions of Costa Rica, Ecuador, the Philippines, and Kenya to fly freely in the five-story, 15,000-square-foot Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory. At 85 degrees and 70 percent humidity, this balmy environment mimics the tropical regions the butterflies call home. Throughout, butterflies
can be viewed drinking nectar from the flowering plants and feeding stations, flying freely within the towering tropical conservatory. The blue common morpho, whose iridescence impresses in flight, as well as brush foot varieties such as the clearwing, lacewing and zebra mosaic are expected to make appearances. Approximately 1,000 chrysalides are delivered to Meijer Gardens each week of the exhibition. Guests can watch delicate chrysalides and cocoons being placed in the Observation Station, where these unique and fascinating creatures transform and spread their wings for the first time. Gliders such as the emperor, ruby-spotted and orchard swallowtails will add to the diverse assortment.

“We invite and encourage you to dig deep into the details for an up-close experience—zooming in on the beauty of these unique creatures through the micro. scope. theme,” said Steve LaWarre, Vice President of Horticulture. “We’ve added new Exploration Stations in the Grace Jarecki Seasonal Display Greenhouse, where guests can use magnifying glasses to enjoy a unique view of the plant material that helps butterflies thrive.”

**Exhibition rules:**

Please do not touch the butterflies.

During the butterfly exhibition, tripods are not allowed in the Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory. Monopods may be used but please be courteous to other guests.

Per USDA regulations, no butterfly or plant materials may leave the Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory.

**Extended Hours & Exhibition Activities: More information at MeijerGardens.org/calendar**

- **Who Am I? A Butterfly Ballet**
  
  Saturday, February 25 | 10 am and 12:30 pm  
  Sunday, February 26 | 12 and 2:30 pm  
  Huizenga Grand Room  
  Tickets required: MeijerGardens.org/calendar  
  Told through the eyes of a newly emerged butterfly, this story will captivate young and old alike. With colorful costumes, spectacular music, and exquisite choreography, the enchanting performance provides a unique and memorable experience. **Who Am I? A**
*Butterfly Ballet* is choreographed by Attila Mosolygo and performed by members of the Grand Rapids Ballet Junior Company. American Sign Language interpretation will be provided for the 12:30pm performance on Saturday, February 25.

- **Extended Spring Break Hours:** Open until 9 pm March 31 and April 3–7.

- **Exclusive Member Early Hours:** Members enjoy exclusive early open hours every Sunday morning in March and April, from 9–11 am.

- **Outdoor Children’s Activities**
  
  Wednesday, March 1, through Sunday, April 30, daylight hours only
  Lena Meijer Children’s Garden
  Included with admission
  Butterflies are blooming for all ages in the Lena Meijer Children’s Garden! Whether guided or self-guided play, check at the Information Center to discover which engaging outdoor activities await you. Activities vary daily.
  
  Join us Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 10:30 am for spring-themed stories about butterflies, moths, gardens, and even rain! Participate in Discovery Cart Activities such as Monarch’s Journey, a life-sized game where you experience a monarch’s journey by using your imagination. Or enjoy the Butterfly Lifecycle or Interesting Insect Hunts, learning about the butterfly lifecycle and the names of Michigan insects in a playful way, then hunting for replicas. Navigate the Butterfly Maze and discover images of Michigan butterflies and moths along the way. In the Log Cabin, find story books about butterflies and moths or piece together a giant butterfly puzzle. Pose for a unique butterfly photo opportunity by having a seat in the life-sized butterfly chair. There is something for all ages! Check the Children’s Garden 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.

- **Zooming in on Butterflies in Bloom**
  
  Sunday, March 12, 2 pm
Meijer Gardens Education Staff
Included with admission
Experience butterfly and plant adaptations from a different perspective in this hands-on exhibition program designed for guests of all ages. Use an array of microscopes to take a closer look at butterfly and plant diversity while investigating questions through careful observation.

• **A Closer Look at Metamorphosis (Lecture)**
  Sunday, March 26, 2 pm
  Included with admission
  Matt Deighton
  Included with admission
  Take a closer look at butterfly metamorphosis in this lecture-style presentation. Using high-resolution photography from his butterfly research, Matt Deighton takes guests through the stages of one of nature’s greatest marvels. Join us on this visual journey as we uncover the mysteries of metamorphosis.

• **Seeds as Stories**
  Sunday, April 12, 2 pm
  Bevin Cohen
  Included with admission
  Join Bevin Cohen—author, herbalist, seed-saver, and owner of Small House Farm—in this lecture-style presentation as we explore how seeds are a microcosm of the world around us. Discover the different ways seed stories can be approached, from species and variety to place and people. By preserving seeds and their stories, we preserve a rich history and become part of the stories the seeds tell. Cohen’s book, *Saving Our Seeds*, will be available for sale in the DeVos–Keeler Gift Shop. Cohen will host a book signing at the conclusion of the event.

• **Secchia Garden Lecture - Melinda Myers**
  The Master Lecture Series - This annual lecture is made possible by The Secchia Family.
Tuesday, April 25, 7 – 8 pm
Included with admission

Join Melinda Myers, nationally known gardening expert, TV/radio host, author, columnist, and speaker, as she shares stunning plant combinations and designs sure to attract pollinators to your garden—no matter the size. Learn the many benefits of attracting bees, hummingbirds and butterflies to your outdoor spaces. You’ll enjoy their beauty and increased productivity in your garden. They’ll benefit from the food, water and shelter you provide!
SAVE THE DATE: Registration is required and begins online at MeijerGardens.org/calendar on March 1. Please direct questions to eboyer@meijergardens.org or call Eve Boyer at 616-975-3145.
*Applies toward Michigan State University Extension Master Gardener education credit.

Fred & Dorothy Fichter Butterflies Are Blooming is made possible by Fred & Dorothy Fichter and family; DTE Energy Foundation; Howard Miller Company; The Meijer Foundation; Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Foundation; Botanic and Sculpture Societies of Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, and Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. Media sponsors are Star 105.7 FM, WOOD-TV8 and Blue Lake Public Radio.

High-resolution images available for download here.

Volunteers:
Wanted. Needed. Appreciated. Various jobs and shifts. Please contact Valerie Maciejewski at 616-974-5221 or vmaciejewski@meijergardens.org.

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 gardens nationwide. Exclusively for members, 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.
Online Ticketing:
Expedite entry by reserving tickets online!
Members and guests can visit MeijerGardens.org/tickets to reserve and purchase tickets online. When on-site, head directly to the Entry Desk near the DeVos–Keeler Gift Shop for easy entry.

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About Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park
Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, one of the world's most significant botanic and sculpture experiences, was recently listed in the top 45 most visited museums in the world and the 30 most visited museums in the United States by The Art Newspaper, the leading global art news publication. Education programs welcome 80,000 students and guests each year. Culinary Arts & Events offerings include weddings, corporate meetings, and award-winning catering. The 158-acre main campus features Michigan’s largest tropical conservatory; one of the country’s largest interactive children's gardens; arid and Victorian gardens with bronze sculptures by Edgar Degas and Auguste Rodin; a carnivorous plant house; outdoor gardens, including a replica 1930s-era farm garden; an eight-acre Japanese garden featuring contemporary sculpture; and a 1,900-seat outdoor Amphitheater Garden, showcasing an eclectic mix of world-renowned touring musicians each summer. The permanent collection highlights hundreds of sculptures from internationally acclaimed artists Magdalena Abakanowicz, El Anatsui, Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder, Mark di Suvero, Marshall Fredericks, Henry Moore, Michele Oka Donor, Beverly Pepper, Jaume Plensa, Auguste Rodin, Richard Serra, Yinka Shonibare CBE and Ai Weiwei, among others. Indoor galleries with changing sculpture exhibitions have hosted shows by Jonathan Borofsky, Edgar Degas, Jim Dine, Laura Ford, Richard Hunt, Rebecca Louise Law, Pablo Picasso, George Segal and others.

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park promotes the enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of gardens, sculpture, the natural environment, and the arts.

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