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MEIJER GARDENS LIGHTS UP THE HOLIDAYS WITH 46 INTERNATIONAL TRADITIONS

28th annual University of Michigan Health-West: Christmas & Holiday Traditions exhibition illuminates the use of light in holiday traditions from around the world.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — November 7, 2022 — Experience the wonder of the holidays! Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park welcomes you to the 28th annual University of Michigan Health-West: Christmas & Holiday Traditions exhibition, on display November 22, 2022, through January 8, 2023. Guests from around the world visit Meijer Gardens to take in 46 trees and displays representing countries and cultures from across the globe. The adored and enchanting Railway Garden—and the holiday wonderland encompassing it—once again loops through three lush indoor garden spaces, among them the Grace Jarecki Seasonal Display Greenhouse and the Earl & Donnalee Holton Victorian Garden Parlor.

See the season in a new light at this year’s exhibition! We’re illuminating the ways diverse cultures use light to uplift hope, warmth, faith, remembrance, gratitude, prosperity and more during the darkest days of the year. From the warm glow of the Hanukkah menorah to the bright flash of Diwali fireworks to the starry sparkle of Filipino Christmas lanterns, light is at the center of the celebration in holiday festivities around the world.

Each winter, Meijer Gardens transforms into a botanic wonderland with fresh poinsettias, evergreens and amaryllis. The sights and sounds of cultural celebrations from throughout the world make it a place to reflect and enjoy the holiday season. Volunteers donate
hundreds of hours to decorate trees and set up displays. Indoors and out, our grounds sparkle with 350,000 lights.

New this year is the Seasonal Light Experience. This immersive audio and visual lightshow is happening in the Frederik Meijer Gardens Amphitheater every half hour from 6-8 pm, December 19-23 and 26-30. Bundle up for this unique outdoor experience! While you’re there, warm up with adult cocktails—or hot cocoa, for the kids—along with hot handhelds, sweet treats, blazing fire pits, and playful glowing goods from the DeVos-Keeler Gift Shop pop-up, located nearby in the Peter C. & Emajean Cook Transportation Center.

The unique horticultural artistry and water features of the Railway Garden, sponsored by Warner, complements the trolleys, trains, and handcrafted buildings replicating 40 West Michigan landmarks. Five landmarks representing Grand Rapids Sister Cities around the world are also highlighted in the Railway Garden.

“This year we’re showcasing traditions from around the world that incorporate light into their holiday celebrations,” said Steve LaWarre, Vice President of Horticulture at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. “The brand new Seasonal Light Experience at the Frederik Meijer Gardens Amphitheater is another can’t-miss experience that’s sure to bring joy to our guests, in addition to the familiar elements of this beloved exhibition.”

In many cultures, the holidays bring people together in distinct and memorable ways difficult to capture in a display. Meijer Gardens again presents the original film joy, which explores the diverse festive fabric that is holiday life across our local communities. This film will be shown continuously in the Hoffman Family Auditorium and is also available on the Meijer Gardens YouTube channel.

Exhibition Activities:

- **Extended Holiday Hours**: Open until 9 pm December 19-23 and 26-30.

  PLEASE NOTE: Meijer Gardens will be closed November 24, December 25 and January 1.

- **Seasonal Light Experience**:
  Fee: Included with admission.
  It’s an awe-inspiring, immersive audio and visual lightshow inspired by the natural world—one you can see only at the Frederik Meijer Gardens Amphitheater. This first-
of-its-kind illuminating experience adds new dimension to the annual University of Michigan Health-West: Christmas & Holiday Traditions exhibition and is a must-see for the entire family. Shows run every half hour in the Frederik Meijer Gardens Amphitheater, 6 pm–8 pm December 19–23 and 26–30

• **Community Discussion: Celebrating Kucios**  
  with Don Astras  
  Fee: Included with admission.  
  Sunday, December 4, 2–3 pm  
  One of the most important holiday celebrations of the year in Lithuania is Kucios, the traditional Christmas Eve dinner. Twelve dishes are often served on the table, representing the 12 disciples of Jesus. If a family member has died during the past year, an empty place is set and a candle is lit in remembrance. It is believed the spirit of the deceased family member participates in the Kucios.

• **Community Discussion: Celebrating Hannukah**  
  with Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids  
  Fee: Included with admission.  
  Sunday, December 11, 2–3 pm  
  Hanukkah is known as the eight-day Festival of Lights. Candles in a special menorah are lit on each night of the festival. A menorah has nine candle holders: Eight candles represent the eight days of celebration and the additional candle, called the shamash, is used to light the others. The lighting of the candles is a reminder of the holiday’s miracle.

• **Community Discussion: Celebrating Diwali**  
  with West Michigan Bengali Cultural Association  
  Fee: Included with admission.  
  Sunday, January 8, 2–3 pm  
  Diwali, also known as the Festival of Lights, is a five-day celebration observed among Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and some Buddhists between mid-October and mid-November. The true meaning behind Diwali is to rejoice in the inner light. This is symbolized by lighting a diya, a small brass lamp. Lighting a diya is considered highly favorable, bringing prosperity and good health.

• **The Original Dickens Carolers:**  
  Fee: Included with admission.  
  The Original Dickens Carolers roam the BISSELL and Gunberg corridors, singing holiday favorites and bringing good cheer for all to hear!  
  Tuesdays: November 22, 29, December 6, 13, 20 | 5–8 pm

• **Santa & Mrs. Claus Visits:**  
  Fee: Included with admission.  
  Visit Santa & Mrs. Claus in the Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory, for a picture-perfect setting like no other!  
  Tuesdays: November 22, 29, December 6, 13, 20 | 5–8 pm
• **Rooftop Reindeer:**
  Fee: Included with admission.
  Visit Michigan’s Farm Garden for a close-up reindeer experience—and maybe even touch their soft velvety noses. Reindeer provided by Rooftop Landing Reindeer Farm. Saturdays: November 26, December 3, 10, 17, 24 | 1-4 pm

• **Winter-Time Walks:**
  Fee: Included with admission.
  Winter can be chilly—yet fun for all ages! Bundle up and join us on an outdoor discovery walk as we investigate the Lena Meijer Children’s Garden in new ways. December 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24, 30, 31 | 11:15 am-12:15 pm

• **Christmas and Holiday Themed Classes:**
  Fees apply.
  Enjoy festive learning opportunities for adults and families. Visit MeijerGardens.org/calendar for more information.

*University of Michigan Health-West: Christmas & Holiday Traditions* is made possible by University of Michigan Health-West; The Meijer Foundation; Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Foundation; Botanic and Sculpture Societies of Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park; Michigan Arts and Culture Council, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts; Life EMS; Michigan Radio; FOX17; and Star 105.7. The Railway Garden is sponsored by Warner.


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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 100 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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