

## Fall in Full Bloom: Celebrate Autumn with Colorful Mums at Hershey Gardens

One of the most iconic signs of fall is the chrysanthemum—and Hershey Gardens is brimming with them this season. “Mums create a colorful backdrop in festive shades of red, orange, yellow, peach and white,” said Alyssa Hagarman, horticulture specialist. “They’re versatile for home use, too—the smaller potted mums can brighten up your kitchen table, while larger varieties are the perfect addition to your landscape.”

Visitors can enjoy more than 1,500 mums throughout the Gardens, along with other autumnal displays that celebrate the season. With early, mid and late bloomers, there’s something to see from late summer through October. “Each variety differs, but most mums continue blooming for four to eight weeks,” explained Hagarman.

Chrysanthemums may look like they’re made of countless petals, but each bloom is actually a cluster of florets. “The ray florets



Visit Hershey Gardens this fall to see more than 1,500 colorful mums throughout the gardens, as well as other festive autumnal displays.

are what we typically think of as the petals, while the disc florets form the center buttons,” Hagarman added. “Together, they

create the vibrant mum bloom that’s so loved in the fall.”

### Look For These Mum Varieties!



Aduro Red



Aduro Orange



Cheryl Sparkling Yellow



Pamela Orange



Staviski Yellow



Staviski Pink



Vigorelli Purple



Josoda White

# 10 Questions With...

## Deb Wiles, Director of Horticultural Operations

We recently caught up with the new Director of Horticultural Operations, Deb Wiles. Here's what she had to say!

### Welcome to Hershey Gardens! Tell us a little bit about yourself.

Hi, I'm Deb and I'm a garden geek! I grew up in Southern California where I worked in various corporate jobs before discovering the garden world. I've now been in horticulture for 25 years and have worked in some amazing gardens on three U.S. coasts and in England.

### Tell us more about your horticultural experience!

My horticulture career began in Los Angeles as the maintenance care manager for a landscape design company. From there I went to Longwood Gardens as a professional horticulture student, then to England to intern at Great Dixter House and Gardens, which I'd been visiting for almost ten years. While in England, I got my MA in Garden History. Since then, I've held management positions at botanic gardens in New Jersey and Texas, was the head gardener on a private estate and the estate gardener for the world-renowned Inn at Little Washington, both in Virginia. Prior to that, I worked as a training coordinator in a windowless cubicle at Verizon and as a sign language interpreter during college.

### Which professional role has been the most challenging? The most rewarding?

One of the most challenging things has been the general misconception that gardening is easy and tends to be classified as "unskilled labor." In my travels, I've met gardeners who are highly skilled and educated, but because their work is misunderstood, they tend to be undervalued. People generally don't understand how much time, skill, knowledge and hard work go into maintaining a garden, especially one that's open to the public, so when someone stops and thanks us for the work we do, it's immensely gratifying.

### What are your main goals as director of horticultural operations?

First, to familiarize myself with the gardens! My mentor in England once said it can take up to five years to really know a garden, so I have a lot of learning and observation to



do through all the seasons. Sustainability is a huge issue, not just ecologically, but with all our resources, so learning how things are done will help future considerations and keep the Gardens thriving for years to come. Of course, I want Hershey Gardens to continue being a jewel in the Hershey crown and a place people can come to enjoy nature and be surrounded by beauty.

### Word on the street is that you've visited many botanical gardens throughout the years. Which ones have you visited? Any of them your favorite?

There are too many to list! I've been fortunate enough to visit a few hundred gardens throughout England, Scotland, Spain and the U.S. I'm partial to Longwood Gardens and Great Dixter for the generosity of the gardeners in sharing their knowledge while I trained with them, but there are other gardens that vie for being favorites, mostly in England.

### While you've only been here a few months, what is your impression of Hershey?

I love it! I used to wander up this way when I lived at Longwood, so this area is somewhat familiar and I'm thrilled to live here. Several of my favorite places and closest friends are nearby so in a way, it's like coming home.

### We understand that you are into historic garden research. Can you tell us about that?

I've always been interested in the stories behind gardens. I received my MA in Garden History at the University of Greenwich in London, focusing on country house gardens from the late 17th century, most of which

no longer exist on the ground. Researching the histories and development of these places through time was fascinating, and I've been able to use those skills to help other researchers with their projects, including a landscape designer here in Pennsylvania, a UK resident who wanted to learn more about where they lived, and a Canadian literature professor who is studying the human subject of my MA thesis. Hopefully I can do a little digging (pun intended) into the history of Hershey Gardens.

### You've lived in a lot of places! Which places were your favorites?

Southern California was home for the first half of my life. Since then, I've lived in London, the south of England and six U.S. states. London was amazing and living in the south of England with its bucolic countryside and postcard villages was a dream come true. I am partial to Pennsylvania since I've lived here twice now! I have family on the West Coast and in the South, but home is where my cats are!

### Any hobbies outside of gardening?

For the foreseeable future, I'll be learning lots of DIY tips and tricks to fix up my new house. Now that I live in a place with actual winters, the knitting needles will get good use. While living in northern Virginia, I took painting classes at the Smithsonian and would love to get back to painting. My list of books to be read keeps growing, and I have a new oven, so that means lots of baking.

### What is your favorite part of the Gardens?

It's all so new to me and there's so much to get acquainted with. I don't really have a favorite part yet, but the early morning view from the top of the Historic Rose Garden looking back toward the Conservatory is pretty fantastic.





# Rose Garden Pavilion Slated for Completion in Early Summer 2026



**H**ershey Gardens is set to bloom with a stunning new addition: the Rose Garden Pavilion, an elegant expansion of the Milton & Catherine Hershey Conservatory. Scheduled for completion in early summer 2026, the Pavilion will replace the seasonal tent at the Conservatory's east end and provide a year-round venue for events.

"This expansion allows us to enhance our offerings for school field trips, host larger flower shows such as the popular Susquehanna Orchid Society Show and Sale, and welcome more weddings and corporate gatherings," said Amy Zeigler, senior director.

Hershey Gardens' \$3.5 million capital campaign started strong with a Founder's gift from Hershey Entertainment & Resorts in 2024. "We're close to reaching our campaign goal and we're especially thankful to H E & R for their profound generosity," Zeigler shared. "More than 100 corporate and individual donors have also participated in the campaign. We will be honoring \$5,000+ donors on a beautiful wall at the

entrance of the Pavilion."

Construction is slated to begin this fall, with a streamlined timeline moving the projected opening up to next summer. The new Pavilion will add 3,300 square feet of program and event space, giving guests sweeping views of the Historic Rose Garden, Swan Lake, and several magnificent specimen trees.

The Pavilion will be designed with artistry in mind, featuring ten custom

stained-glass transom windows adorned with red roses and flower-shaped pendant lights that echo the beauty of the surrounding gardens.

To learn more about the Rose Garden Pavilion and how you can contribute, visit [HersheyGardens.org](https://HersheyGardens.org). Pledges of any amount are welcome and may be paid over five years. Please consider joining us in creating this lasting tribute to Mr. Hershey and his original rose garden.



Inspired by The Hotel Hershey, 10 handmade stained-glass transom windows, complete with personalized inscriptions, are available to donors of \$50,000 or more. Nine windows have been sponsored; only one remains.



# The Weeping Beech Tree: Beauty in Peril



Carvings on the tree makes the bark vulnerable to pests and disease.

One of Hershey Gardens' most iconic trees is the majestic weeping beech, gracefully draping its branches between the M.S. Hershey Tribute Garden and the Perennial Garden. Beneath its sweeping canopy sits a handmade bench—a peaceful place to take in breathtaking views of the Gardens.

"The tree offers a lovely shaded space with a beautiful view," said Deb Wiles, director of horticultural operations. "It's a popular spot for our members and frequent guests."

The weeping beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Pendula') is a cultivated form of the European beech. "Originating in England in the early 1800s, the first tree was discovered in a park, then grafted and propagated for gardens around the world," explained Wiles. "Introduced to America in 1847, it quickly became a favorite among garden designers for its graceful, fountain-like shape."

"Trees with this pendulous form are often called 'weeping' trees—but ours has another reason to weep," said Wiles.

Since being transplanted to Hershey Gardens in 1967, the tree's trunk has been repeatedly carved by visitors. "What many see as a romantic gesture is actually causing lasting harm," Wiles said. "Each cut damages the tree beneath the surface, weakening it and making it more vulnerable to pests and disease—thereby shortening its life span."

Just like human skin, bark is a protective layer. Beneath it lies a delicate vascular system that carries water and nutrients throughout the tree. "A deep cut can sever those vessels, dis-



rupting the tree's lifeline," Wiles explained. "Unlike the careful pruning done during dormancy to improve health, carvings create open wounds that invite fungus, disease and insects. Repeated injuries force the tree to use its energy to heal, leaving it weaker over time."

A healthy weeping beech can live up to 200 years. "Ours is not even halfway there, yet it's already struggling because of repeated vandalism," Wiles said.

We are actively taking measures to protect the tree, including the installation of new signage, a barrier, and a live trail camera. "We are taking every possible step to help save this magnificent tree," said Wiles.



## Keep Your Love Life Off My Bark

**Carvings might seem romantic,  
but they're heartbreak for this tree.  
Cuts in the bark let in pests, fungi and disease.  
Cameras are in place to help identify anyone who causes damage.**

**Weeping European Beech  
*Fagus sylvatica* 'Pendula'  
Transplanted in 1967**

**Beech trees are slow growers and can live for hundreds of years.**

This sign was recently installed near the tree.



# Unique Kaleidoscope a New Feature in the Senses Garden

Remember peering through a hand-held kaleidoscope as a kid and seeing all the fascinating, jewel-like designs you could create as you turned the tube? Thanks to a generous donor, Hershey Gardens now has a kaleidoscope of gardens proportions!

Beverly Hartman reached out to Hershey Gardens a few months ago, expressing her interest in donating a garden kaleidoscope. “I’ve been fascinated with kaleidoscopes since my childhood,” she said. “The first Robert Anderson garden kaleidoscope I saw was at Franklin Park Conservatory in Ohio; the second was at the Penn State Arboretum, and that’s when it occurred to me that it would be a wonderful addition to Hershey Gardens.”

And what a wonderful addition it is. Located in the Senses Garden, the kaleidoscope is a unique way for kids and grown-ups alike to experience the color and beauty of plants and flowers



Turning the lens on the kaleidoscope creates mosaic-like images..

through a different lens. Similar to the familiar hand-held kaleidoscopes from childhood, the garden kaleidoscope has a microscope-like lens that guests look through. On the other end of the lens is a big bowl full of colorful plants. The lens creates mosaic-like images from plants that it is focused on. Turning the lens creates a different mosaic-like image.

“I’m excited to share it with visitors to the Gardens, children as well as adults, and my hope is it will bring them as much joy and fascination as it has me,” added Hartman.

A big thanks to Beverly for this generous donation. The kaleidoscope is a great addition to the newly-created Senses Garden, and gives guests of all ages a unique way to experience the color and beauty of plants.

Make sure to stop by the Senses Garden on your next visit and experience the garden kaleidoscope!

## Join Us for These Homeschool Days!

### HERSHEY GARDENS

#### Career Day

**Tuesday, September 30, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

Gain insights into outdoor careers, from horticulture to conservation and sustainability. Explore the garden as we highlight careers at Hershey Gardens and welcome special guests from the industry. Guests include Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Harrisburg University, West Shore Wildlife Center and more.

**Registration is required here; closes on Sunday, September 28.**

\$11 per student, \$13 per adult; includes admission to Hershey Gardens and the Butterfly Atrium.



### THE HERSHEY STORY

THE MUSEUM ON CHOCOLATE AVENUE

#### Candy Chemistry

**Wednesday, October 8, 15, 22 & 29 at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.**

**All programs are the same.**

Calling all Kid Candy Chemists! Do you like fun experiments? How about tasty treats? Come explore the exciting science behind how sugar is transformed to create the sweet treats we love to eat! Discover the difference between physical and chemical changes, examine various crystal formations in food, and understand how some candy gets its sour punch. Everyone will make their own science-themed chocolate creation to take home!

**Registration is required here.**

**Cost: \$17 for ages 3 and over.**

**Ages 2 and under are free.**

Admission to the The Hershey Story Museum is included, as well as a scavenger hunt through the exhibits.



# How to Spot Fall Garden Bargains

By Lois Miklas, Retired Educator, The M.S. Hershey Foundation and Penn State Master Gardener

We often don't think about adding to the garden at the end of summer—which is why this is an excellent time to look for highly discounted perennials, shrubs and trees. You will not be competing with crowds at local garden centers, which often have sales to clear out summer merchandise. If you can connect with healthy plants that suit your needs, fall is an excellent time to plant. It is a pleasant time to work outside in the garden and natural irrigation is more likely to occur.

## What kinds of plants should you look for?

Fall blooming plants will still command top dollar at the nursery. Therefore, it is best to do some research and seek out plants that will fill holes in your garden and look their best in spring and summer. Look for perennials, shrubs and trees. Ask questions! Do not mistake an annual, even one with pretty fall color, for a perennial. With the possible exception of pansies, an annual will not overwinter.

## How do I know it's healthy?

Plants should appear to have been watered and cared for. They should still have some green foliage, even if they exhibit some dead areas or signs of sun scald. Avoid plants with obvious insect damage or disease. Also, question the nursery staff about the health of the plant you wish to purchase. They may have not had time to reexamine and cull through the sale plants, but will want to uphold their business's reputation by giving you an honest opinion about the plant you have chosen.

## I found a bargain—now what?

- Once you bring the plant home, get it in the ground as soon as possible. Leaving it in the container too long is detrimental—it will be difficult to keep it hydrated and a container will freeze more quickly than the ground.
- Time your purchase so that the root system establishes itself in the new soil, about four to six weeks before first frost. In Central Pennsylvania, shoot to plant by the end of September.
- Plants may be root bound, so loosen the roots before planting. In the case of trees and shrubs, you should cut an X in the bottom of the root ball and several shallow slits on the sides of the



roots to allow them to spread out into the backfilled soil.

- Before winter sets in, check weekly and water if dry. A thick layer of mulch will keep the plant from heaving out of the ground during periods of freezing and thawing.
- If shrubs and trees appear to need pruning, only prune off dead material in fall. Save more extensive pruning until late winter.

One final tip—nurseries often offer plant warranties, but these may not be available for end-of-summer clearance plants. Make sure you have examined your sale plant carefully and it is worth a gamble.

For planting advice and answers to your garden questions, contact Dauphin County's Garden Hotline at [dauphinmg@psu.edu](mailto:dauphinmg@psu.edu) or call 717-921-8803. To find the Garden Hotline in your home county, [click here](#).

## Where Comfort Meets Curiosity: Sensory-Friendly Backpacks Available

Hershey Gardens is pleased to offer sensory-friendly materials to enhance the visit for individuals, especially children, with sensory sensitivities. These items are designed to help children better manage their environment and promote improved focus and a more comfortable experience at the Gardens.

"Guests may borrow a sensory backpack to help your child make the most of their visit," said Vera Kolstrom, visitor experience manager. "These backpacks are a 'toolbox' that allows children to participate in activities and navigate an environment that might otherwise be overwhelming."

Additionally, a social story and a visual schedule are included in the backpack. The social story helps children prepare for unfamiliar or potentially challenging situations by outlining what to expect, while the visual schedule assists in planning the visit and transitions in an effort to foster a sense of control.

"By providing tools to manage sensory challenges with these sensory friendly materials, we hope to make it easier for individuals to engage and enjoy all that Hershey Gardens has to offer," said Kolstrom.



Each backpack includes a magnifying glass, headphones, sunglasses, a fidget toy, binoculars and finger puppets.



# Discover Nature Journaling at Hershey Gardens

**H**ershey Gardens is inviting guests to slow down, look closer and connect more deeply with the natural world through the art of “nature journaling.”

Nature journaling is a simple yet powerful practice that combines observations, curiosity and creativity. It involves regularly spending time in nature, recording observations, perceptions and feelings. But it's about more than just putting a pen to paper—it's a way to slow down, connect deeply with the natural world, and document observations and reflections. It's a subcategory of the larger practice of journaling, and it's not just a current trend. Many famous scientists, thinkers and explorers throughout the ages, including Leonardo DaVinci, Charles Darwin, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, documented their ideas, thoughts and experiences in journals. They used the three journaling languages: words, sketches and numbers, just as we do today.

## Why Nature Journaling?

Whether you're an artist, writer, scientist or simply someone who loves being outdoors, nature journaling can become a fulfilling and meditative practice. Like other forms of journaling, it can have benefits that include helping to reduce stress, cultivate mindfulness, sharpen memory and improve mood. With a regular nature journaling practice, we can strengthen our powers of observation and increase our focus, in addition to appreciating nature in a deeper, more meaningful way.

## What to Journal About?

Literally anything in the world around us makes a fitting subject to observe and record, as long as it captures your attention and holds your interest. Things that you wish to document and remember, to learn more about, are already an expert on, animal, vegetable, mineral - it's all fair game. The point isn't to pick something pretty to draw, it's more about observing deeply and recording carefully.

## How to Journal About Nature

Journal entries are personal and subjective. Many people journal by instinct, putting to paper whatever moves them in the moment. There are, however, methods that can be helpful in guiding us as we journal. A quick internet search reveals



Beginning Monday, October 6, Hershey Gardens guests can check out the nature journal at the admissions desk.

much information from willing teachers and enthusiasts, as well as an abundance of beautiful and inspirational examples of journaling methods and styles. “Journaling is not about being an artist, but a way to understand the plants, insects and landscapes around you,” said Vera Kolstrom, visitor experience manager. “There is no right or wrong way to nature journal, but to get started, it's best to try these three simple prompts: I notice; I wonder; it reminds me of...”

“Through words and sketches, participants can collect and record what they see, hear and feel in nature – all in one note-

book that is passed from one guest to the next,” added Kolstrom. “As guests contribute, the nature journal will grow.”

Each nature journaling kit has all the tools participants will need to record their observations: a notebook, magnifying glass, binoculars, ruler, water colors, colored pencils, sketch pencils and other art accessories – all in a tote bag that is easy to carry.

“It's perfect for individuals or families who want to experience nature together,” said Kolstrom. “We invite everyone to come explore the Gardens with fresh eyes and leave your discoveries behind.”



Hershey Gardens will be kicking off the nature journaling program with an introduction on **Saturday, October 4 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.** in the Conservatory. Guests can drop in to review the materials in the kit, see a demonstration of nature journaling techniques and ask questions of a seasoned nature journalist. Hershey Gardens' nature journal can be checked out at the admissions desk beginning Monday, October 6.



# Hydrangea Heartbreak:

## “Why Didn’t My Hydrangea Bloom This Year?”

Hydrangeas are beloved for their vibrant summer blooms, so it’s disappointing when the flowers never arrive. This year’s lack of color has left many gardeners puzzled, with weather, pruning or plant stress often to blame.

“Focusing on key care techniques is vital to getting those signature blooms season after season,” said Alyssa Hagarman, manager of horticulture. “There are a few types of hydrangeas, but each one requires slightly different care routines. However, there are some core care practices that should be followed regardless of the type hydrangea.”

### Species of Hydrangeas



- *Hydrangea macrophylla* or Bigleaf Hydrangea - Offers round head flowers or lace cap flowers in shades of white, pink, blue and purple from June to October. This species blooms on old wood.
- *Hydrangea arborescens* or Smooth Hydrangea - For partial shade areas, this hydrangea boasts white and pink flowers from June through September. Flowers bloom on new growth.



- *Hydrangea paniculata* or Panicle Hydrangea - Big cone-shaped clusters that start green, turn white, then pink or red as the season progresses, flowers

from June to September. Blooms on new wood. Flowers will dry on the stems which provides some winter interest.



- *Hydrangea quercifolia* or Oakleaf Hydrangea - Oakleaf hydrangea offers white to purple/pink lace cap flowers in July through September. This species of hydrangea is beautiful for other reasons as well, the oak-shaped leaves turn vibrant red, purple, and orange in fall. Blooms on old wood.



- *Hydrangea serrata* or Mountain Hydrangea - Offers pink or blue lace cap hydrangeas from June to August. Blooms on old and new wood.

### Old Wood Vs. New Wood

Hydrangeas that bloom on old wood form flower buds on the previous year’s growth, so pruning them in fall or spring may remove blooms. “Those that bloom on new wood form buds in the current growing season and are more forgiving of pruning and winter damage,” said Hagarman. “So, knowing what species of hydrangea you have will tell you when the best time to prune would be.”

Most shrubs that bloom on **old** wood should be pruned immediately after they are done flowering, but not hydrangeas.



“The species that bloom on old wood finish flowering so late in the season that pruning them after they bloom doesn’t leave enough time for them to regrow and form flower buds for next year,” said Hagarman. “That’s why it is suggested that pruning this type of hydrangea should be avoided, except to remove any completely dead branches in the spring once the plant starts to leaf out.”

Hydrangeas that bloom on **new** wood can be pruned in late fall once the plants have gone dormant or in early spring. “Next year’s flower buds won’t form until later that spring, so there is no risk of removing the flower bud,” said Hagarman. “If you like the look of dried flower heads in your garden in the wintertime, leave them on and prune them in spring. If heavy snow load is a threat or if you prefer a tidier look in winter, prune in late fall or early winter.”

Reblooming hydrangeas produce flowers on both old and new wood, which makes it tough to find a good time to prune without surrendering some flowers. “Reblooming cultivars should be pruned the same way as hydrangeas that bloom on old wood, meaning you should only need to prune out a few dead branches in the spring once the plant starts to leaf out,” said Hagarman.

“One common misconception is that you can prune them throughout the season to keep them shorter,” said Hagarman. “That is simply not true; doing so will risk cutting off the flower buds.”

Pruning your hydrangeas to reduce their height isn’t effective because they will grow right back to their original size, or even larger because pruning stimulates new growth. “Instead, transplant your too-large, still-dormant hydrangea to a new spot in early spring and replace it with a variety that naturally stays shorter,” said Hagarman.



# MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

All activities below are included in admission; free for members, except where a cost is noted.

Not a member? Join Now! Please check [HersheyGardens.org](https://HersheyGardens.org) for event updates.

## Bonsai Exhibit by the Susquehanna Bonsai Club

Wednesday, September 24 through  
Saturday, October 11, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
daily



Experience the living art of bonsai with this popular annual exhibit, provided by the Susquehanna Bonsai Club, and vote for your favorite bonsai! Exhibit located in the Hoop House in The Children's Garden.

## NEW DATE! Hershey Gardens Member Reception

Thursday, September 25 from 4:30 to 6 p.m.

Members, look for your invitation in the mail!



## Demonstration of Nature Journaling

Saturday, October 4, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Drop in to see a demonstration of nature journaling techniques, ask questions of a seasoned nature journalist and review materials in our nature journaling kit available to check out during your next visit. (Read more about Hershey Gardens nature journal on page 4.) Demonstration located in the Milton & Catherine Hershey Conservatory.



## Bonsai Demonstration with the Susquehanna Bonsai Club

Saturday, October 4, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Gain insight into the techniques and artistry of the living art of bonsai. Members of the Susquehanna Bonsai Club will actively demonstrate techniques in branch selection, wiring and shaping the growth of woody trees and shrubs. Demonstration located in The Children's Garden.

## Intro to Forest Bathing with ANFT Forest Therapy Guide

Lauren Berg

Saturday, September 27 and Saturday, October 11,

9:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

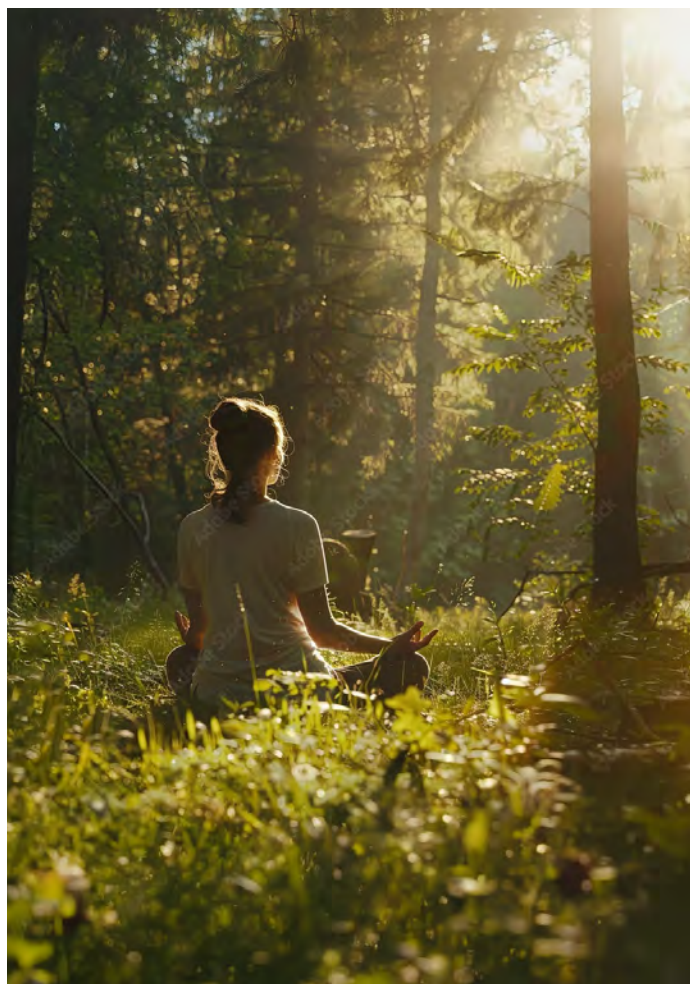
\$30 for members, \$35 non-members, per session

Online registration required [here](#).

Forest bathing is a guided experience that invites participants to slow down, engage their senses, and cultivate a deeper connection with the natural world. Inspired by the Japanese practice of Shinrin-Yoku, forest bathing has been shown to reduce stress, boost immune function, and enhance overall well-being.

During the walk, your guide will offer embodiment-focused "invitations," which participants can use as a guideline, recognizing that each individual has a unique path to follow. Invitations are followed by a time to gather, listen and share, during which all expressions are welcome. The walk will end with a light tea tasting.

The walk will include changes in grade and walking surfaces as you may go off the main paved path and onto wood carpet or grass. Shoes with good tread are recommended. As this walk will be held outdoors, please dress for weather conditions and bring a water bottle. Rain or shine.





## ECO-FICTION BOOK GROUP



Join us quarterly to explore works of eco-fiction, nature, and environment-oriented literature, which often include a human element. It is not necessary to attend all sessions—please join whenever you can!



New participants are always welcome. We encourage you to read each month's selections prior to the meeting to fully participate in the discussion. All sessions are located in the Garden Cottage and will be held from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

*New for 2026, we will be pairing a non-fiction read with the fiction selection each quarter.*

**Friday, October 24:** *Gun Island* by Amitav Ghosh

**Friday, January 23:** *There are Rivers in the Sky* by Elif Shafak and *Mudlarking: Lost and Found on the River Thames* by Lara Maiklem

**Save These Dates!** Check [HersheyGardens.org](https://HersheyGardens.org) for book selections.

**Friday, April 24 | Friday, July 24 | Friday, October 23**

To register, please email Kaitlin Dannenberg at [kadannenberg@hersheygardens.org](mailto:kadannenberg@hersheygardens.org)

**Did You Know...**  
**Your Gardens Membership**  
**is Your Passport to Public Gardens**  
**Across North America!**



AMERICAN  
HORTICULTURAL  
SOCIETY

Hershey Gardens is proud to be part of the American Horticultural Society's reciprocal admissions program. This means that Hershey Gardens members can enjoy select benefits at more than 360 botanical gardens! Reciprocal privileges often include free or member-priced admission, as well as other discounts.

To enjoy this benefit, simply present your current membership card at one of our **partner institutions**. We recommend calling your garden of interest before your visit; each garden has its own admissions policy.

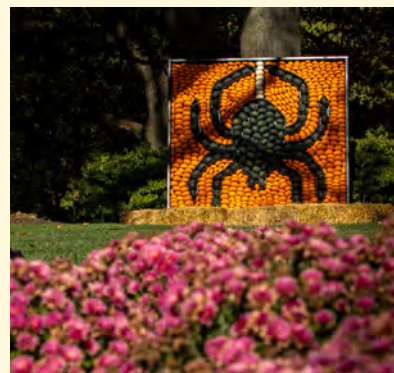
## Pumpkin Palooza

October 18, 19, 25 & 26, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Pumpkin Palooza returns for all things pumpkin! Kids, come in costume and trick or treat at four Hershey's candy stations, enjoy over 200 painted pumpkins, a unique



14-foot "pumpkin tree" and the perfect photo backdrop of pumpkin mosaics! Plus, stop by to see if you can "handle" the Creepy Creatures Gallery! Guests can also enjoy food trucks and hundreds of mums on display, including a colorful 9-foot mum tree. [See the full schedule of events here.](#)



Sponsors:





# Celebrate the Holidays at Hershey Gardens

Holiday Hours: Open daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the following holiday exceptions:  
Closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas Day  
Open 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Christmas Eve

## The Christmas Tree Showcase

Friday, November 21 through  
Thursday, January 1, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Located in the Milton & Catherine  
Hershey Conservatory

Our signature holiday event features colorful tree displays with twinkling lights; each unique tree is created by a talented local designer. New this year, guests will enjoy a pair of 14-foot and 8-foot poinsettia and tropical trees! The historic Hersheypark Comet coaster car is back for family photo ops and the Butterfly Atrium will be decorated for the holidays!



Thomas Davis



## Visits with Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus

### Santa Claus

Saturday, December 13, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Garden Cottage

### Storytime with Mrs. Claus

Saturday, December 20 at 11 a.m.  
Garden Cottage



## Student Christmas Tree Showcase

Friday, November 21 through Thursday, January 1, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Enjoy dozens of creative ornaments made by local school students on display on live Fraser fir trees in the Garden Cottage.

## Calling All Kids! Crafty Christmas Creations

November 22 & 29; December 6, 13, 20 & 27, 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Perfect for kids of all ages. Join in the fun of creating your own holiday craft, inspired by nature. Located in the Education Center in The Children's Garden.

## Winter Wreath Workshops

Friday, December 5 at 10 a.m., Saturday, December 6 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and Sunday, December 7 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Celebrate winter by creating a beautiful and festive wreath, perfect for the holidays! Using fresh limbs, twigs and pods pruned from the Gardens, participants will learn how to create a stunning, long-lasting 24-inch wreath for their door or table. All supplies and materials are provided. Led by Hershey Gardens Education Programs Staff.

Members: \$55; Non-members: \$65  
Registration required [here](#), beginning November 1.





## The Annual Orchid Show & Sale Takes a Hiatus in 2026

Due to construction of the Rose Garden Pavilion, the Orchid Show & Sale will not be held in 2026. The show will return in 2027, bigger and better than ever!



### Winter Bird Watch

**Saturday, January 17, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Feeding the Birds**

**Saturday, February 14, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Love is on the Wing; Bird ID and Mate Selection**

Bring the whole family—and your binoculars—and learn to identify the various birds that call Hershey Gardens home during the winter. Each Saturday we'll walk you through Project Feederwatch, take you on a unique guided bird walk and provide additional information about identification and feeding. For the youngest birders, additional bird family crafts and activities will be offered in the classroom. Dress for the weather and wear comfortable shoes. In partnership with Quittapahilla Audubon Society. Registration is required by calling 717.508.5968.

### NEW! Winter Wednesdays Family Series:

#### Winter Animal Adaptations

**January 14, 21, 28, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

Each week meet new "friends" at the Zoology Zone Interactive Cart and engage in family activities that explore how animals and plants survive winter. We'll compare and contrast native species to our Zoology Zone species, discuss winter survival, and when seeds are sleepy over winter. Activity located in the Milton & Catherine Hershey Conservatory and the Education Center.



### Live Feedings at the Zoology Zone Interactive Cart

**Fridays, January 16, 23, 30, February 6, 13, 20, 27, 12 to 12:30 p.m.**

Watch our insectivores receive a special nutritious snack, while learning about our predatory insects, frogs and arachnids.

### Dried Floral Arrangement Class

**Saturday, February 7, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

Join us to create your own dried floral arrangement to bring beauty to your home in the winter months. We'll use an assortment of dried specimens such as seed pods, florals, grasses and greens to learn about color, form and texture when creating an arrangement. Class held in the Education Center in The Children's Garden.

Led by Kaitlin Dannenberg, education associate

Members: \$65; Non-members: \$75

**Registration required here**, starting December 15.

## CELEBRATE THE LUNAR NEW YEAR IN 2026!

Celebrate the Lunar New Year with us! Each week we'll explore a different activity. The Butterfly Atrium will be decorated to celebrate the Lunar New Year. Plus, discover the cultural significance of our Asian butterfly, moth, insect and plant collections!

### Winter Wednesdays

**February 4, 11, 18 & 25, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.**



Bring the family and interact with Asian species like our mossy frog, jungle nymphs, walking sticks, and more at the Zoology Zone Interactive Cart. Engage in family activities that celebrate traditions like making seed envelopes, learn about Chinese calligraphy and create lanterns. Located in the Milton

& Catherine Hershey Conservatory and the Education Center.

**February 4:** Plant Asian greens

**February 11:** Discover calligraphy and paper cutting

**February 18:** Create a red seed envelope

**February 25:** Make a paper lantern

### Lunar New Year Celebration

**Sunday, February 22, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

Join us for guided garden tours that highlight indoor and outdoor Asian collections and bring the whole family for fun activities to celebrate the Year of the Horse!



#### Activities include:

Guided garden tours at 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

Create a good luck seed envelope, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Music by the Chilin' Quartet, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Tropical bonsai exhibit by the Susquehanna Bonsai Club, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### Art Show & Display

**"For the Love of Art" by the Hershey Area Art Association**

**Friday, February 13 and Saturday, February 14, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.;**

**February 15 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**



This dazzling display of art will feature work by members of the Hershey Area Art Association. Pieces for purchase will include woodworking to prints, acrylic and oil, jewelry and more. Located in the Milton & Catherine Hershey Conservatory.