

NIGHT LIGHTS

FACTSHEET

ABOUT NIGHT LIGHTS

Night Lights is an annual winter light display at New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill that, since first imagined, has grown into a signature event attracting thousands of visitors from near and far. Every year, over a quarter million lights are arranged in dazzling combinations and displayed throughout the indoor and outdoor areas of the Garden. Visitors experience this one-of-a-kind spectacle while enjoying festive favorites such as s'mores roasting, seasonal drinks, a model train, holiday shopping, and fun photo opportunities for the whole family.

Night Lights is New England Botanic Garden's largest annual event and helps fund the nonprofit garden's four-season operations and its mission to connect people and plants.



HISTORY

Between 1994 and 1996, the Garden hosted an annual 'Festival of Trees', an event consisting of Christmas trees adorned with ornaments, at the end of the year. The development of an annual year-end display of lights at the Garden only began in 1997 as a fundraiser for the Garden's operations. Between 1997 and 2013, this year-end event was called **Holly Days**, with the significant difference that it was mostly a day-time event. The displays of lights were part of general Holly Days festivities, which included live music and performances, alongside other holiday events amidst handcrafted ornaments and unique décor items. The Garden also invited outside organizations, such as garden clubs, to decorate trees, wreaths, and vignettes as part of Holly Days.

In 2014, Holly Days was renamed **Winter Reimagined** and with it came a bigger focus on winter holiday lights. Traditions such as marshmallow roasting (which later became s'mores roasting) in the Winter Garden,

the Bromeliad Tree, and the milk jug igloo also became staples of the event.

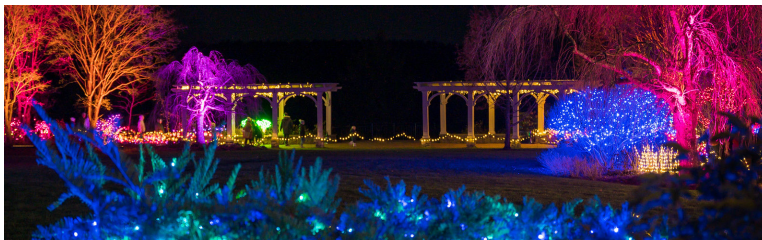
In 2018, the annual winter light display was reconceptualized once more. Night Lights would become a true celebration of the winter season for people of all ages and backgrounds. Light displays that showcase the unique beauty of the botanic garden and exhibit a creative new theme each year are a key feature of the event. In recent years, like 2022, displays throughout the gardens and conservatories immersed visitors in different environments on Earth, from icy mountaintops to meadows of pollinators and even into the sea. In 2023, the artfully crafted light displays of Night Lights: Starry Skies took guests on a journey through the cosmos and back. In 2024, visitors will enjoy a kaleidoscope of colors at Night Lights: Color Cascade.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Each year's display is envisioned and built by New England Botanic Garden's horticulture team in a nearly year-long process. Night Lights brainstorming usually starts in late February or early March. Hundreds and hundreds of staff hours go into planning, purchasing materials, and building displays, with the team putting thought and creativity into how they want to showcase garden spaces they manage, before tying all the stories together.

Set up generally begins around September or October. However, because of daytime visitation and other activities at the Garden, many elements of the event can only be set up a week or two before Night Lights opens.

Because the Garden's team of horticulturists is small, volunteers play a significant role in making Night Lights happen. Volunteers spend between 250 and 300 hours helping with crafting projects, tree wrapping, and more. In 2023, they spent close to 300 hours.



2023

BY THE NUMBERS

DESIGN & PLAN
BEGAN IN FEB



INSTALL FROM
SEP THROUGH NOV



250,000
LIGHTS USED



1,816
STAFF HOURS



300
VOLUNTEER HOURS



66,000
VISITORS



13,252
S'MORES KITS SOLD

ABOUT NEW ENGLAND BOTANIC GARDEN AT TOWER HILL

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill is a nonprofit organization located at 11 French Drive in Boylston, Massachusetts. A regional destination, the Garden is operated on 200 acres by the Worcester County Horticultural Society, one of the oldest of its kind in the country, and is open to the public for garden viewing, trail walking, educational programs, private events, weddings, exhibitions, and more. In 2023, New England Botanic Garden was voted "Top Botanic Garden in the U.S." by *TravelAwaits*. New England Botanic Garden is an [AAM-accredited](#) museum that includes an irreplaceable collection of plants and creates opportunities for visitors to experience the wonder of plants, learn about the natural world, and make joyful connections. Learn all about New England Botanic Garden including its history, mission, and its staff at www.nebg.org.



New England
Botanic Garden
AT TOWER HILL

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