

NIGHT LIGHTS FACT SHEET

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. Half a 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 celebration of the winter season 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: AN EVENT THAT KEEPS GETTING BRIGHTER

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.

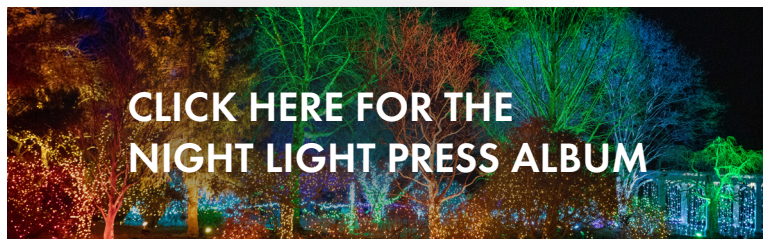
In 2018, the annual winter light display was reconceptualized once more. Night Lights would become a true celebration of the winter season for people of all ages and backgrounds. Light displays that showcase the unique beauty of the botanic garden and exhibit a creative new theme each year are a key feature of the event. In recent years, 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 2024, visitors enjoyed a kaleidoscope of colors at Night Lights: Color Cascade. In 2025, the artfully crafted displays of Night Lights: Dazzling Gardens invite guests to experience a celebration of nature unlike any they've seen before.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Talented staff on the Garden's horticulture and education teams envision and build each year's light displays, a process that requires months of planning and preparation. Night Lights brainstorming usually starts in late February or early March. Hundreds of staff hours go into planning, purchasing materials, and constructing displays, with the team putting thought and creativity into how they showcase individual garden spaces, 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, from crafting to tree wrapping and more. Volunteers also act as Garden ambassadors welcoming visitors to Night Lights each evening.



NIGHT LIGHTS BY THE NUMBERS

**DESIGN & PLAN
BEGAN IN FEB**



2024 data included

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 nearly 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

Media Contact

Liz Nye, Public Relations Manager
New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill
Office: 508-869-6111 ext. 143 | Mobile: 518-526-3060
lnye@nebg.org