

Call for Artist Proposals

CREATE A FAIRY HOUSE FOR OUR FALL EXHIBITION

Fairy Hollow at New England Botanic Garden

August 29 to October 25, 2026

OVERVIEW

New England Botanic Garden invites artists, designers, and makers to submit proposals to design and create original, handcrafted, illuminated, nature-inspired fairy houses for a special outdoor fall exhibition, *Fairy Hollow*. This enchanting seasonal display will transform the Garden's landscape into a whimsical world of imagination, creativity, and discovery for visitors of all ages.

Successful fairy house designs should be whimsical, enchanting, and magical, and have a strong botanical or woodland-inspired theme. Designs should be created from natural or nature-inspired materials and demonstrate high-quality craftsmanship. All designs will be displayed outdoors for a two-month period and must be able to withstand the elements (wind, rain, etc.). Additionally, each fairy house should incorporate a built-in lighting component using outdoor-rated lights that illuminate the interior or accentuate the exterior.

EXHIBITION DETAILS

The fairies are returning to **New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill** from **August 29 to October 25**—and this time, they're settling into *Fairy Hollow*.

This family-friendly outdoor exhibition will feature imaginative, artfully crafted, miniature fairy homes designed by local artists and displayed in our children's garden, The Ramble. Selected through a competitive process, artists (individuals or groups) will create high-quality, stylized fairy houses that offer a fresh and creative twist. We are seeking inventive creators who will push beyond the expected and craft enchanting works that spark wonder and invite visitors to explore and enjoy the Garden in new ways.

In keeping with the Garden's mission to "create experiences with plants that inspire people and improve the world," artists are encouraged to let nature guide their designs and to consider the Garden's commitment to being an inclusive, equitable, and welcoming space for a diverse community.

Who should I contact with questions?

Please direct all questions to our exhibitions team by emailing us at exhibitions@nebg.org.

2026 FAIRY HOLLOW EXHIBITION SCHEDULE

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| • Submission deadline | April 20 |
| • Proposals chosen & participants notified | May 1 |
| • Fairy House delivery to 11 French Drive, Boylston, MA | August 3 – 7 |
| • Exhibition installation | August 24 – 28 |
| • Exhibition dates | August 29 – October 25 |

BENEFITS & RECOGNITION

Selected artists and groups will receive the following benefits and recognition:

- A monetary stipend ranges from \$300 to \$800 per fairy house; the final amount will be decided during budget consultation with the NEBG Exhibitions Team.
- Your fairy house will be displayed during *Fairy Hollow* from August 29 to October 25, 2026, with the potential of being displayed in future exhibits at the Garden.
- Recognition on the New England Botanic Garden website and social media channels.

SELECTION PROCESS

Proposals should include a detailed design sketch for each proposed fairy house, including dimensions, integrated outdoor-rated lighting details (plug vs. battery), intended materials, footing description (e.g., direct ground contact, on a stump, or on a pole), and a completed entry form for each proposed design. In addition, an artist biography and a short portfolio, resume, or description of your artistic experience specific to a project of this nature is required. New England Botanic Garden staff will make the determination of which design proposals will be selected to be featured in *Fairy Hollow*.

Once chosen, artists will be notified by email by May 1, 2026. Completed fairy houses are due at the New England Botanic Garden by 4:30PM on August 7, 2026. Participants will be asked to hand-deliver their works between the hours of 10AM and 4:30PM or securely ship their completed fairy houses to New England Botanic Garden, 11 French Drive, Boylston, MA. Stipends will be distributed to artists once delivery has been made and accepted.

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES

To ensure the highest-quality exhibition, we are seeking artists/designers with experience creating high-quality outdoor artwork for a family audience. Artists with experience working with outdoor/integrated lighting features are preferred.

Fairy House designs should:

- Be crafted from natural or nature-inspired materials on the exterior.
- Incorporate outdoor-rated, appropriately-sized lighting to illuminate the interior or accentuate the exterior.
- Be playful and family-friendly.
- Have artistic appeal for adults, with high-quality craftsmanship.
- Take into consideration the Garden's mission to *create experiences with plants that inspire people and improve the world.*
- Reflect our Garden's desire to be an inclusive experience for everyone.
- Be recognizable as a fairy house (abstractions are welcome, but visitors must be able to associate an abstract design with its natural counterpart without difficulty).
- Have a height between 12 – 36 inches, with a depth and width between 6 – 24 inches.
- Require minimal maintenance during the exhibition period.

Durability & Outdoor Requirements:

Artists are responsible for ensuring structural integrity and weather durability. All fairy houses must:

- Be able to withstand outdoor display for approximately **two months** during fall weather conditions.
- Be constructed of weather-resistant materials.
- Faux flowers, 3D-printed elements, and plastic materials are welcome to ensure weatherproof durability.
- Be able to tolerate rain, wind, temperature fluctuations, and sun exposure without damage to the integrity of the artwork.
- Have a solid base fitted to its intended mounting or display surface, appropriate for the outdoors.
- Have elements securely fixed to the fairy house structure using adhesive that resists outdoor weather conditions.
- Natural elements must be dried before being used with adhesives.

Ownership and Usage Rights

New England Botanic Garden will own all artworks upon completion of delivery and payment. The fairy houses will not be returned to the artists. The Garden reserves the right to use all images, renderings, and models—both in print and electronic formats—to promote and interpret the exhibition. After the 2026 exhibit, the fairy houses will become part of the permanent collection at New England Botanic Garden and may or may not be displayed in future exhibitions.

FAIRY HOUSE ARTIST PROPOSAL FORM

To submit a proposal, please complete the following form and submit it, by email, to the New England Botanic Garden's exhibitions team at exhibitions@nebg.org by **April 20, 2026**. Proposals will be reviewed and chosen participants will be notified by May 1, 2026.

Artist Contact Information

Artist Name _____

Business Name *if applicable* _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Address _____

**Please include a short artist biography and link to website, social media, or online gallery.*

Artist Questionnaire

1. Experience with Fairy Houses

Have you previously handcrafted a fairy house? YES NO

If YES:

Please describe your experience, including materials used, scale, and whether the work was displayed outdoors. Attach images if available.

If NO:

Please describe any similar or relevant experience (e.g., sculpture, miniature structures, outdoor installations, mixed-media work, lighting integration).

2. Experience with Lighting Integration

Have you previously integrated electrical lighting elements into artwork intended for outdoor display? YES NO

If YES, please describe the type of lighting systems used (low-voltage plugin, solar-powered, battery-operated, etc.) and your experience ensuring weather resistance and safety.

Proposal Details (Please fill out this section for each fairy house design proposed)

Fairy House theme _____

What inspired your design?

For each proposed house, please include:

- Detailed sketch that will represent the final product
- Approximate dimensions
- Lighting details
- Descriptions of unique elements and materials intended for use