

NIGHT LIGHTS

FACT SHEET

ABOUT NIGHT LIGHTS

This nationally recognized winter light display at New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill attracts thousands of visitors with festive experiences and half a million lights. Dazzling displays arranged throughout indoor and outdoor spaces invite people of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy a one-of-a-kind celebration of the winter season. S'mores roasting, seasonal drinks, a model train, holiday shopping, and photo opportunities offer fun for the whole family. Night Lights is the Garden's largest annual event. It helps fund the nonprofit's four-season operations and mission to connect people and plants.



HISTORY: AN EVENT THAT KEEPS GETTING BRIGHTER

Night Lights carries on a tradition that began more than three decades ago with the **Festival of Trees**. Hosted from 1994 to 1996, this small-scale event featured displays of beautifully adorned Christmas Trees. By 1997, the Festival of Trees grew into **Holly Days**, a mostly day-time experience of live music and performances, holiday activities, and displays of trees, wreaths, and vignettes created by local organizations and Garden Clubs. As more people discovered the joys of Holly Days, the event grew again, both in concept and as an important fundraiser for the Garden's general operations.

Holly Days was renamed **Winter Reimagined** in 2014, and with this change came a bigger focus on outdoor winter light displays. Garden staff began to showcase the unique beauty of the botanic garden, its

plants, architecture, and landscapes with thousands of twinkling lights. Traditions such as marshmallow roasting (now s'mores roasting) and the Bromeliad Tree display became staples of the celebration. Over the years, this event continued to build momentum. In 2018, it was reconceptualized once more: **Night Lights** emerged as an even bigger, brighter holiday tradition.

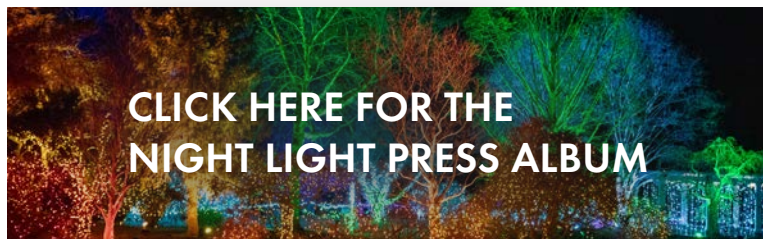
Thousands of visitors of all ages and backgrounds look forward to the Night Lights experience each year. Immersive displays designed around annual themes are second to none. In fact, in 2025, Night Lights earned national recognition when it was voted #1, winning *USA TODAY's* 10BEST Readers' Choice Award for Best Botanical Garden Holiday Lights. As more and more people make cherished memories at Night Lights, the magic continues to grow.

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 each individual garden space.

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



2025 data included

ABOUT NEW ENGLAND BOTANIC GARDEN AT TOWER HILL

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill, now celebrating its 40th anniversary, 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.



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