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Celebrate Japanese Culture at Tanabata, or Star Festival, at the Memphis Botanic Garden

Memphis, TN – The Memphis Botanic Garden (MBG) is pleased to announce it will host ***Tanabata: An Evening in the Japanese Garden*** on July 7 from 7-9 pm. Tanabata is the Japanese Star Festival typically celebrated on the seventh day of the seventh month of the year.

“Tanabata is one of the most popular seasonal celebrations in Japan. It is celebrated on July 7 based on the story that Orihime (Weaving Princess) and Hikoboshi (Cowherd) living on the other side of the Milky Way, can meet each other once a year on that day. Since Orihime and Hikoboshi are represented by the stars, Vega and Altair respectively, Tanabata is also referred to as Star Festival,” said Maika Yamaoka, Japan Outreach Initiative Coordinator. “Before and after this celebration, bamboo and various decorations can be seen around towns in Japan. People then write their wishes on tanzaku, strips of paper, and hang them on the bamboo leaves. Look at the night sky on Tanabata day. Who knows, maybe Altair and Vega will be crossing the Milky Way to meet each other!”

The celebration also marks the end of Yamaoka’s two year tenure as a Japan Outreach Initiative Coordinator as part of the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership in partnership with the Memphis Botanic Garden and the University of Memphis. Yamaoka, is one of 10 JOI Coordinators currently in the United States, which are tasked with introducing Japanese culture into the areas they are working with. She has provided enriching programming at the Garden and the University as well as throughout the state of Tennessee and regionally.

Attendees to the event at the Garden on July 7 will learn the story of the star crossed lovers behind this celebration and take part in traditional activities such as writing wishes on tanzaku, or colored strips of paper, and creating origami, touring the Japanese Garden, trying on samurai armor, and enjoying small bites and Japanese cocktails under the stars.

This event is for adults 21+ only. Tickets are \$35 for MBG Members and \$45 for non-members. Each ticket includes admission to the event, three alcoholic beverages, and small bites.

A drop-in Tanabata family activity will also be offered on July 7 from 10 am-2 pm in the Garden's Visitors Center where families can write their wishes on tanzaku. This daytime family activity is free with Garden admission.

A special thank you to A Moveable Feast/Hog Wild BBQ. Proceeds support the Memphis Botanic Garden.

Learn more and purchase tickets at membg.org/events/tanabata

The Memphis Botanic Garden is a not-for-profit 501(c) (3) organization dedicated to being an exemplary center for horticulture and environmental enrichment. Serving over 40,000 school-aged children annually, and hosting 260,000 visitors each year, Memphis Botanic Garden strives to enhance lives by connecting people with nature, increasing awareness and appreciation of our environment. For more information please visit membg.org.

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