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Memphis Botanic Garden Announces Opening Date for Youth Education and Tropical Plant House

To be dedicated in honor of former Mayor and long-time MBG Board Member – Jim Strickland

Memphis, TN – The Memphis Botanic Garden (MBG) today announced that its new *Youth Education and Tropical Plant House* will be dedicated and opened to the public on Friday, May 3, 2024. This new, 3,400 square foot, \$2.6 M investment has been under construction since April 2023.

“The opening of this glasshouse is the capstone project to our current 5-year strategic plan and our *Rooted at Park and Cherry* capital campaign. It was envisioned as a way to make our Garden more accessible all 12 months of the year to both students and guests, and it will be open during our regular operating hours,” said Michael D. Allen, Executive Director. “It was intentionally built parallel to Cherry Road so that as vehicles pass by - day or night - it is a highly visible expression of our mission,” said Allen.

Key Points:

- Unique in Tennessee, in that MBG will have, under one roof, tropical plants from almost every continent of the world.
- Plant identification and interpretive signage will assist visitors in learning about these plants, their uses, and their origins.
- Will assist MBG’s goal to increase their outreach to students by 30% from 40,000 school children per year to 52,000 by 2026.
- Tourism growth is a goal of the Memphis Botanic Garden, and it is expected that this new facility will increase visitor numbers from outside the Memphis area.
- An innovative lighting system allows for nighttime illumination of the structure and will be themed for the season and special events.

Dedication ceremonies will begin at 10 am on Friday, May 3, as the Garden recognizes its long-time past Board Member, Board President, and former Mayor - Jim Strickland. “Jim has been a guiding force in the growth of the Garden for more than two decades. First, while in private life as a member and later, President of our Board of Directors, continuing through his time in public service both as a City Council Member and as Mayor. This seems like a perfect way to acknowledge his contributions,” said Allen. The glasshouse will open immediately to the public at the completion of the dedication ceremonies.

Visitors are encouraged to wander through a tropical rainforest in the heart of Memphis at this new state-of-the-art facility beginning May 3, which features a carefully curated selection of tropical plants from around the world, an indoor water feature, and an outdoor patio and classroom.

The *Youth Education and Tropical Plant House* will be the centerpiece of a new series of educational programming at the Garden and an opportunity to show students firsthand the tropical plants they use in their daily lives including cacao and rubber trees. The ability for Mid-South students to experience tropical plants

and environmental concepts including biodiversity, ethnobotany, and biocultural conservation can introduce new worlds and broaden horizons beyond the typical classroom environment.

In conjunction with the opening weekend of the *Youth Education and Tropical Plant House*, the Garden will host *World of Plants Family Day* on May 4 from 10 am-2 pm where families can take a trip around the world without leaving Memphis. Attendees will journey through the Garden to discover how different cultures use plants through a variety of hands-on activities, crafts, and learning stations—no passport required. Plus enjoy cultural performances, and Soi #9, Mexico in Memphis, Just Wraps, Big River Dogs will be on-site for a picnic lunch.

Beginning April 4, the Youth Education and Tropical Plant House will be illuminated with seasonal colors. The community is encouraged to drive by Cherry Road after sunset to encounter this new jewel box at the Garden as we anticipate the opening date on May 3.

The new glasshouse was designed by 4F Design (formerly Fleming Architects) - Memphis, it was fabricated by Prospiant - Cincinnati, Ohio, and the General Contractor was Grinder Taber Grinder - Memphis.

About Memphis Botanic Garden

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.

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