



CHRIS ABELE, MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
JOHN DARGLE, JR., DIRECTOR OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE



Contact: Shirley Walczak, Director, Boerner Botanical Gardens
(414) 525-5603
Shirley.Walczak@milwaukeecountywi.gov

For immediate release

Inaugural Chinese Lantern Festival Comes to Boerner Botanical Gardens in October

Milwaukee, WI (Aug. 8, 2016, Updated Sept. 21, 2016) — Boerner Botanical Gardens is planning to set autumn evenings aglow.

Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele announced today that China Lights: Boerner Brighter Than Ever will fill the Botanical Gardens with a celebration of Asian culture, featuring 40 larger-than-life sculptural lantern displays from Oct. 1–30. Boerner Botanical Gardens is located in Whitnall Park at 9400 Boerner Drive, Hales Corners, WI.

From a three-foot baby panda in Panda World to a three-story Chinese palace pagoda, 1,000 sculptural components will be created on-site by more than 30 artists from China. Welded metal frames covered in fabric will emerge as flowers, peacocks, cranes, butterflies, archways—all LED-lit-from-within lanterns. A nearly 200-foot-long dragon is sure to be a crowd-pleaser.

China Lights will be open Tuesday–Sunday from 5:30–10 p.m. The festival will be closed Mondays.

Each night at about 6:15 p.m. members of the entertainment staff will lead a procession to light the displays in the entertainment and concessions area of the festival. The Illumination Parade will conclude at the main stage in time for the first performance of the night.

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ADDRESS
9480 Watertown Plank Road
Wauwatosa, WI 53226-3560

PHONE/FAX
ph: **414 / 257 PARK** (7275)
fax: 414 / 257 6466

EMAIL
parks@milwaukeecountywi.gov

WEBSITE
countyparks.com

Stage performances will highlight folk-culture entertainment at 6:30 and 8 p.m. A bonus performance will be added Fridays through Sundays at 9 p.m. Acrobats, dancers, and jugglers will be among the performers.

Each weekend will have a special theme.

- Oct. 1–2, Opening Weekend will kick off the festival with a ceremony, giveaways, and tours.
- Oct 7–9, Asian Cuisine/Chicago Weekend will offer food sampling, cooking demonstrations, special pricing on food, and free tea and fortune cookies. The first 2,000 visitors from Illinois who present identification at the admission gate will receive a free, 12-inch, outdoor fabric lantern (a \$10 value).
- Oct. 14–16, Moon Festival Weekend, presented by the Milwaukee Chinese Community Center, OCA-Wisconsin, and Tri City National Bank, will feature Chinese calligraphy, painting and knot-tying demonstrations; food demonstrations making dumplings and snow-skin mooncake; cultural demonstrations of water-lantern-floating and watermelon carving; and demonstrations of special interest to young children, including making paper lanterns, making kites, and face painting.
- Oct. 21–23, Cultural Weekend will focus on tea, with a tea ceremony by Rishi Tea, and presentations on the history and folklore of tea.
- Oct 29–30, Closing Weekend will feature giveaways and the closing ceremony.

Throughout the festival a wide variety of Asian and American food options will be available for purchase.

China Lights admission tickets will be valid any night of the regular 2016 schedule.

Admission is \$15 for adults (age 18–59) and \$10 for seniors (age 60 and up) and children (age 5-17). Children under age 5 will be admitted free. For \$30, a patron may purchase a one-visit VIP ticket, which includes a behind-the-scenes tour, optional participation in the Illumination Parade, fabric lantern, and mobile guide. Grass-lot parking is included with all admission tickets.

Preferred, close-up paved parking will be limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis for \$5 cash per night. Some spaces in this area will be designated for and are free to people with disabilities who have state-issued disabled parking or disabled Veteran parking license plates, or the state-issued disabled parking identification card.

Offered exclusively at the Botanical Gardens, in advance at the information desk or later at the box office, will be a season pass with unlimited visits for \$45, and a mobile guide, which requires a cell phone for use, for \$5.

Tickets may be purchased in advance on-line at chinalights.org, Boerner Botanical Gardens, and Milwaukee County Parks point-of-sale locations, including Parks Public Services (9480 Watertown Plank Road), regulation golf courses, The Domes, and the Milwaukee County Sports Complex.

Co-presenters of the event are the Park People of Milwaukee County and Travel Wisconsin. Event sponsors are the We Energies Foundation, Miller Lite, and Tri City National Bank.

For more information, visit chinalights.org.

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