



Press Release
For Immediate Release

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Welcome Home!

“Home for the Holidays: A Sentimental Journey” Opens at U.S. Botanic Garden

December 10, 2004 - January 9, 2005

November 18, 2004 - Washington, DC - The U.S. Botanic Garden's spectacular holiday display, Home for the Holidays: A Sentimental Journey, will open in the Conservatory on Friday, December 10, paying tribute to America's Greatest Generation and saluting the opening this year of the World War II Memorial. Turn back the clock with us to the post-war holidays, circa 1948, when families were reunited, a peaceful future beckoned, and celebrations had developed a distinctly American style. Home for the Holidays will continue through January 9.

During World War II, virtually all facets of American life were changed by the shortages, rationing, and near cessation of international trade. Holiday celebrations were no exception -- Christmas ornaments imported from Europe became unavailable, and toys went out of production due to the war effort. To fill this void, fledgling companies soon arose to design and produce distinctly American glass ornaments, Christmas lights, and children's toys. With the end of the war, troops returned home from the front lines, but American life had been forever changed -- and the new "American" sense of the holidays endured. Come reminisce with us as Home for the Holidays celebrates this post-war era:

Music is an integral part of every holiday celebration, especially Christmas. The **USBG Conservatory** will stay **open until 8:00 pm** on three Thursday evenings during the holidays -- **December 16, December 23,** and **December 30**. From 6:00 to 8:00 pm on those evenings, our visitors will enjoy tunes from the 1940s performed live in the **Garden Court** by the Helene Fontaine Duo. Jazz **singer Helene Fontaine** has been described as the “singer who sends you a smile in her voice.” Many of her arrangements are influenced by the vocal stylings of Ella Fitzgerald, Judy Garland, Peggy Lee, Doris Day, Della Reese, and Frank Sinatra. You'll delight in hearing Helene's lovely renditions of **sentimental favorites from the 1940s**.

In the **West Gallery**, a magnificent model railway will remind us that rail was the dominant mode of long-distance travel in post-war times. Just as trains sped passengers, goods, and raw materials across our

country, you'll see trains speeding overhead on trestles and racing past more than twenty American landmarks, including a scale model of the USBG Conservatory. Designed and built from all-natural plant materials by nationally known designer and landscape architect Paul Busse, this display is his Washington debut. More than 600 feet of track, two streetcars, and five trains make up this immersion into railway history that is sure to delight young and old. Experts will be on hand to answer your questions about model railroading.

In the **Garden Court**, baby-boomers - and their parents - will recognize the distinctive decorations of the late 1940s: tinsel garlands, icicles, and now-classic Shiny Brite® ornaments made of colored glass. Look closely and you will see the bells, pine cones, and lanterns from your memories, along with bubble lights and big-bulb string lights in blue, green, red, orange, and white. Along the wall are pages from an oversized scrapbook of real photos from the period. Some of these fashions are back in style!

For many American children, the holidays are filled with the anticipation of toys. Authentic toys and games from the 1940s are on display in the **West Orangerie** - including first-edition versions of Scrabble®, Tinkertoy®, and Lincoln Logs®. Dolls, Marx toys, and puppets are sure to jog memories. Look also for the authentic holiday advertisements, publications, Christmas Seals®, and other collectors' items on display here.

Of course, no holiday celebration would be complete without sweets! Once again, the USBG will have its popular "**plant hunt**" for plants that provide essential ingredients for holiday confections.

The U.S. Botanic Garden will offer wreath-making and other **holiday workshops** during December. Please call 202-226-4082 or visit www.usbg.gov for more information on these programs.

The USBG Conservatory is open to the public, free of charge, every day of the year from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Conservatory is located at 100 Maryland Avenue, SW, at the foot of the U.S. Capitol. Visitors are encouraged to take Metrobus and Metrorail. Further information is available by calling 202-225-8333 or visiting our website at www.usbg.gov.