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For Immediate Release

**MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN COMPETES FOR
AMERICAN GARDEN AWARD**

(ST. LOUIS): The Missouri Botanical Garden is one of 15 prestigious gardens participating in the **American Garden Award**, a bold new creation designed to learn the most popular flowers as voted by American consumers. Visit the Missouri Botanical Garden and pick your favorite flowers using mobile marketing.

Competing flowers will be grown at each garden. The Missouri Botanical Garden will grow *Pentas lanceolata* 'Northern Lights Lavender,' *Petunia* 'Baby Duck Yellow,' *Petunia* 'Opera Supreme Purple,' *Petunia* 'Plush Lilac Pearl,' *Rudbeckia hirta* 'Tiger Eye Gold,' and *Catbaranthus roseus* 'Viper Orchid Halo.' Garden visitors can send a text message or dial an 800 number to cast their vote. The Garden is equipped with signage to coach people through their voting process. Visitors have the opportunity to vote "early and often" during the competition.

Other venerable gardens participating in the competition include: the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Boerner Botanical Gardens, Cantigny Gardens, Chicago Botanic Garden, Chicago Park District, Dallas Arboretum & Botanical Garden, Denver Botanic Gardens, Massachusetts Horticultural Society, Nebraska State Fair Park & Arboretum, Oklahoma State U-Oklahoma City, Park Seed Co. Inc., Pier 39 Inc., Rotary Botanical Gardens and San Francisco Botanical Garden.

The American Garden Award is a new venture to benefit gardeners and plant producers and give direction to plant breeders. Now people guess about the most popular flowers, but next year after votes have been counted in the fall, the three American Garden Award winners will be

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ADD ONE: American Garden Award

announced as the sovereign ornamentals, chosen by popular vote.

The flowers can be viewed at the Kemper Center for Home Gardening. Admission to the Missouri Botanical Garden is \$8; St. Louis City and County residents enjoy discounted admission of \$4 and free admission on Wednesday and Saturday mornings until noon. Children ages 12 and under and Garden members are free.

The Missouri Botanical Garden is located at 4344 Shaw Blvd. in south St. Louis, easily accessible from Interstate 44 at the Vandeventer exit. Free parking is available on-site and at two blocks west at the corner of Shaw and Vandeventer.

For general information, visit www.mobot.org or call the recorded event line at (314) 577-9400 or toll-free 1 (800) 642-8842.

The Missouri Botanical Garden is the oldest continually operating botanical garden in the nation, celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2009. *Missouri Botanical Garden: Green for 150 Years.*

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NOTE: Download media materials at www.mobot.org/press.

The Missouri Botanical Garden's mission is "to discover and share knowledge about plants and their environment, in order to preserve and enrich life." Today, 150 years after opening, the Missouri Botanical Garden is a National Historic Landmark and a center for science, conservation, education and horticultural display. *Missouri Botanical Garden: Green for 150 Years.*

The Missouri Botanical Garden is located at 4344 Shaw Blvd. in St. Louis, just south of I-44 at Vandeventer-Kingshighway (exit #287B). Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day except Dec. 25. Grounds open at 7 a.m. every Wednesday and Saturday. Admission is \$8; free children ages 12 and under and Garden members. St. Louis City and County residents are \$4 and free every Wednesday and Saturday until noon (exception: special admission rate events). Park for free on site and two blocks west at the Shaw-Vandeventer intersection. The Garden is easily accessible by taking the MetroLink commuter rail line to the Central West End station and picking up a Metro bus (www.metrostlouis.org). For general information, log on to www.mobot.org or call the 24-hour recording at (314) 577-9400 or 1-800-642-8842. For membership information, call (314) 577-5118 during weekday business hours. For volunteer opportunities, call (314)-577-5187 or visit www.mobot.org/volunteer. The Missouri Botanical Garden is a tobacco-free environment.

(Note: A section of the I-64/U.S. 40 highway is under construction through 2009. Before traveling, check www.thenewi64.org for updates or visit www.GetAroundStL.com for other helpful information.)