



Date: December 8, 2009

For Immediate Release

**FLOCK TO THE FIFTH ANNUAL BACKYARD BIRD FESTIVAL
AT THE MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN**

WHAT: Backyard Bird Festival
WHEN: Saturday, Feb. 6 from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
WHERE: Missouri Botanical Garden, 4344 Shaw Blvd., south St. Louis
COST: Varies by activity: classes, \$10 each; guided walks, \$5 each.
INFO: Advance registration required; www.mobot.org/birding or (314) 577-5140

(ST. LOUIS): It's a bird-watching bonanza at the Missouri Botanical Garden during the fifth annual **Backyard Bird Festival**. Enjoy a day filled with guided birding walks, live exhibits, identification tips and informative classes for children and adults of all experience levels, Saturday, Feb. 6 from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost varies by activity and advance registration is required; visit www.mobot.org/birding or call (314) 577-5140.

“Winter is a great time for bird watching because the branches are bare and the birds are easier to spot,” said event organizer Julia Gaussoin of the Garden’s Education Division. “The festival is the perfect opportunity to talk with other birders and to enhance your skills.”

Begin your day with a **guided bird walk** from 7:30 to 9 a.m. Look for the yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Cooper’s Hawk, American Goldfinch, Golden-Crowned Kinglet, Down Woodpecker and more. A second bird walk will be offered from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.

View live birds up close and receive helpful information from **experts** on the upper level of the Ridgway Visitor Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Exhibitors include the World Bird Sanctuary, Missouri Nature and Environment Photographers, St. Louis Audubon Society, Webster Groves Nature Study Society, Shaw Nature Reserve, EarthWays Center, Missouri Department of

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ADD ONE: Backyard Bird Festival

Conservation, Wild Bird Center and Wild Bird Rehab.

Participants of all ages can enjoy a colorful slideshow offering a **“Great Backyard Bird Count Introduction”** at 9:15 a.m. and repeated at 11:45 a.m. in the Shoenberg Theater. Adults can choose from a selection of four classes to attend between 10 and 11:30 a.m. True beginners, get to know the most common birds at your feeder by focusing on a few key features that distinguish different species in **“Beginning Bird Identification.”** **“Intro to Bird Photography”** will teach you how to create a backyard oasis for songbirds and set the stage to capture their true beauty. The more skilled birder can learn from **“Advanced Bird Songs.”** A fourth class, **“Backyard Bird Feeders,”** will illustrate how to create your own bird feeder with materials from the kitchen or even the bathroom; please bring a paper milk or juice carton and a few toilet paper rolls to this class.

From 1 to 2:30 p.m., adults can choose from three additional classes focusing on **“Spring Warblers,” “Bird Watching Optics”** or **“Landscaping For Birds.”**

Learn about birds along with your hatchlings in four new family classes designed for ages three to 13, accompanied by an adult. From 10 to 11:30 a.m., choose from **“Fine, Feathered Friends”** (ages three to six) or **“Wing Watchers”** (ages seven to 13). Take a break from 11:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. to visit **“The Nest,”** where families can play children’s games and enjoy bird-related activities. Then, choose from two afternoon classes offered from 1 to 2:30 p.m., **“Home, Tweet Home”** (ages three to six) or **“This Backyard is for the Birds!”** (ages seven to 13).

The Backyard Bird Festival will be held rain or shine at the Missouri Botanical Garden, located at 4344 Shaw Blvd. in south St. Louis, easily accessible from Interstate 44 at the Vandeventer exit. Free parking is available on-site at the west lot and two blocks west at the corner of Shaw and Vandeventer. Please dress appropriately for outdoor activities.

Pre-registration is required. Cost is \$10 per class and \$5 for guided walking tours. For family classes, cost is per child, with no extra charge for one required accompanying adult. No more than three children per adult, please.

For more information or to register, call (314) 577-5140 or download a registration form at www.mobot.org/birding . 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: A digital color image is available by request. 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. Wednesdays and Saturdays. Admission is \$8; free children ages 12 and under and Garden members. St. Louis City and County residents are \$4 and free Wednesdays and Saturdays 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.