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MEDIA RESOURCES

Galaxy of Lights aims for #1 in USA TODAY 10Best competition

Community encouraged to vote daily and purchase tickets for the Garden's 31st holiday season

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (November 3, 2026) – Huntsville Botanical Garden (HBG) is once again in the national spotlight as Galaxy of Lights has been nominated for USA TODAY's 10Best Readers' Choice Award for Best Botanical Garden Holiday Lights. After ranking among the nation's top five for three consecutive years, the Garden is calling on the community to help Galaxy of Lights claim the No. 1 spot while preparing to welcome guests for its 31st season beginning November 13.

Voting is open now through Monday, November 30, at 11 a.m. CST. Supporters can cast one vote daily at **https://10best.usatoday.com/qr/66226/** and are encouraged to share the link with friends and family to help bring the national recognition home to Huntsville.

“Galaxy of Lights is something our entire community can take pride in,” said HBG Chief Executive Officer Susan Wagner. “For 31 seasons, families and friends have made it part of their holiday traditions, and their support has helped us earn a place among the best in the nation year after year. We're incredibly grateful, and this year, we're hoping Huntsville will rally together to help us reach No. 1.”

As the community casts its votes, the Garden is putting the finishing touches on an expanded Galaxy of Lights experience designed to make this holiday season especially memorable. With the theme *Holiday Memories, Brilliantly Made*, the 2026 season combines beloved traditions with new discoveries, reimagined favorites, and more opportunities to experience the wonder of the holidays together.

New this year are Winter's Edge and Crystal Glade, two illuminated areas featuring more than 200,000 new lights and adding approximately a quarter-mile to the Walking Night experience. Guests can explore an approximately 1.75-mile pathway filled with sparkling displays, festive

music, and seasonal surprises. Reimagined displays and refreshed musical programming throughout the experience offer new discoveries for returning visitors while preserving the traditions that families have cherished for generations.

Guests can choose from several ways to enjoy Galaxy of Lights:

- **Walking Nights:** Explore immersive light displays at your own pace, capture memorable family photos, and enjoy festive food and beverages along the way.
- **Driving Nights:** Enjoy the magic of Galaxy from the warmth and comfort of your vehicle, making it an easy and memorable holiday outing.
- **Evergreen Express:** Take a guided open-air tram ride through the lights on select Walking Nights, with expanded operating dates this season.
- **Dog Walking Nights:** Bring four-legged family members along for the festivities on six designated evenings.
- **Sensory Hours:** Enjoy a quieter, more accessible experience with reduced crowds and sensory stimulation on four select evenings.

“Behind every display is an extraordinary amount of creativity and hard work from our team,” said Wagner. “But the real magic happens when we see people experiencing it together. Whether it's a child's first visit, a family returning for its annual tradition, or a couple enjoying a holiday date night, those moments are what Galaxy of Lights is all about.”

Welcoming more than 90,000 guests each holiday season, Galaxy of Lights is also the Garden's largest annual fundraiser. Every ticket purchased supports the Garden's nonprofit mission, helping sustain its work in horticulture, education, conservation, and connecting people with nature throughout the year.

Galaxy of Lights opens Friday, November 13, and continues through December 31 (closed Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day). Guests are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance to secure their preferred dates. Advance Walking Night tickets offer savings compared to gate prices, with additional discounts available for Garden Members.

Tickets, the complete schedule, and information about each experience are available at **https://hsvbg.org/galaxy**.

Help Galaxy of Lights reach No. 1! Vote for Huntsville Botanical Garden in USA TODAY's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards at **https://10best.usatoday.com/qr/66226/**. Voting closes November 30 at 11 a.m. CST, and supporters can vote once daily until the deadline.

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About Galaxy of Lights

Galaxy of Lights at Huntsville Botanical Garden features stunning pathways filled with festive cheer. With walking and driving options, this event is perfect for families, couples, and friends of all ages — even dogs can join in the festivities on select dog-walking nights! Designed and engineered 100% in-house, Galaxy's 1.5 miles of sparkling light displays, choreographed music, and interactive elements immerse guests as part of the holiday magic. For more information, visit hsvbg.org/galaxy.