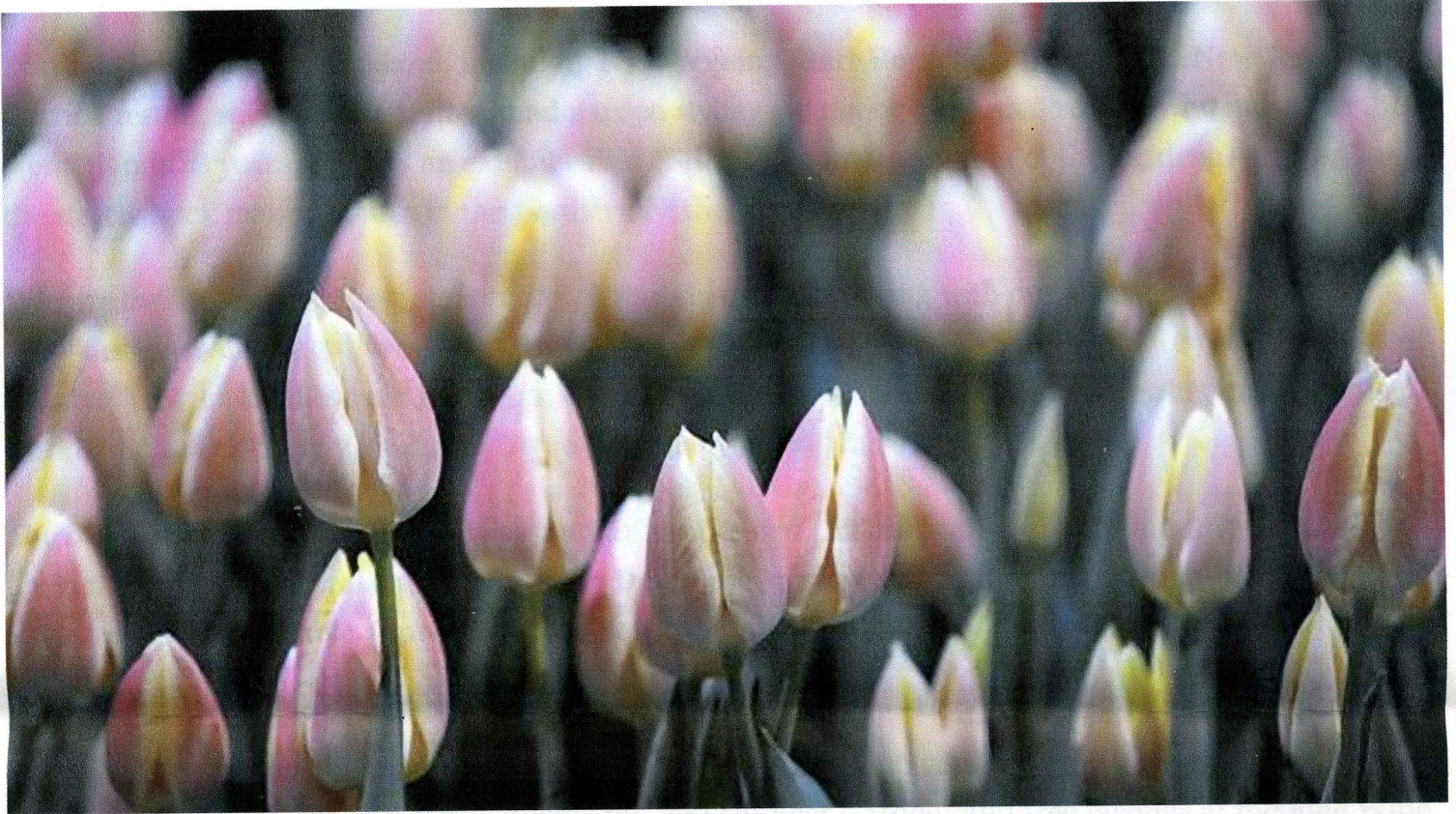


# Philadelphia Flower Show celebrates Dutch culture



The Philadelphia Flower Show 2017 celebrates the beauty and ingenuity of Dutch culture. Presented by the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society, the show runs March 11-19 at the Philadelphia Convention Center. (Matt Rourke/Associated Press)

By **Jennifer Marangos**  
Special to The Morning Call

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**T**he legend of the Little Dutch Boy who stuck his finger in a hole in the sea wall to plug a leak and save the city of Amsterdam says a lot about the spirit of Holland as a nation.

The fact that the story is pure fiction speaks volumes about the fascination the rest of the world has with Dutch culture.

It's the combination of that spirit and fascination that seeded the 2017 Philadelphia Flower Show, which celebrates the beauty and ingenuity of Dutch culture. Presented by the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society, the nation's largest and longest-running horticulture event, themed "Holland: Flowering the World," runs Saturday through March 19 at the Philadelphia Convention Center.



No other country is as well known for its floral industry as the Netherlands. Visitors will pass through the Entrance Garden, featuring bridges, windmills, canals and water gardens in a sea of 30,000 flowers — with 6,000 more blooms suspended in a giant floral canopy — a flower show first. From there guests will pass under a brick bridge inspired by the Amsterdam cityscape and adorned with Delft tile patterns, overflowing flower boxes and hanging baskets. Tulips, hyacinths and daffodils dominate.

Leading designers from Holland, including Nico Wissing, Bart Hoes, Bart Bresser and New Jersey-born Carrie Preston, will share their floral and garden stylings in major displays. Preston, who moved to the Netherlands 18 years ago, has an exhibit called "Stinze," an interpretation of the gardens surrounding the stately brick manor houses in the northern Netherlands.

"We are thrilled to have these stars of Dutch garden design working with our award-winning flower show designers on the exhibits," says Sam Lemheney, the chief of shows and events for the horticultural society. "This flower show will inspire guests with new ways of thinking about gardening in a changing world, and dazzle them with the colors and creativity of Holland's floriculture."

The show will also explore the innovation that has defined Holland's approach. Windmills were one of the earliest uses of natural energy. Now, the Dutch use ecodomes, and the Dutch Wave movement takes a natural and sustainable approach to landscape design.

New attractions include the World Market in the Convention Center's Grand Hall, which will feature a Dutch Shopping Village; opportunities to create a take-home bulb garden or crafted planter; the lively Designer's Studio demos and competitions; the Pop Up Beer Garden; and free tastings at the Fine Wine and Good Spirits store.

The show also will introduce the Garden Spa, where guests can relax, recharge and be pampered, including with massage and make-your-own essential oils or potpourri.

Show exhibits will spotlight quality trees, shrubs and perennials for the home garden, including the 2017 horticultural society Gold Medal Plant winners chosen for year-round beauty and hardiness.

Interactive presentations in the Gardener's Studio will cover topics such as the latest thinking in container gardening, foodscaping, attracting pollinators, growing orchids and African violets, and planting bulbs.

Expert advice can be found at the displays of the plant societies, in the educational exhibits created by area universities and high schools, and at booths where designers will share their knowledge. Master classes will be presented by Dutch floral designers Rene van Rems and Max van de Sluis.

Butterflies Live is back again. The family-friendly exhibit features a habitat of native plants where guests can interact with more than 1,000 butterflies, including 20 exotic species.

Shopping opportunities will grow this year: the horticultural society has a shop in the main exhibition hall and there are three satellite stores where visitors can purchase flower show scarves and capes, T-shirts, the new Teddy van der Bear and other souvenirs. The Meadowbrook Farm Store offers spring plants and garden accessories. More than 180 vendors will sell cut flowers, plants, tools, horticultural supplies, fine crafts and home decor and garden products in the flower show marketplace.

Keep in mind the average visit to the flower show is four to five hours — enough time to see the exhibits, the new attractions, watch a presentation or two, enjoy refreshments and do some shopping.

The show attracts a quarter-million guests each year. Visitors who prefer smaller crowds may want to head there after 3 p.m. on weekdays. Evenings are good times to visit as well. For night owls, there's the "Flowers After Hours" 9:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Saturday, that features dancing, drinking and games.

Be sure to wear comfy shoes: the flower show exhibits and marketplace cover 10 acres in the main exhibition hall, and activities and attractions in the concourse and World Market cover an additional 23 acres.

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## DETAILS

Philadelphia Flower Show

**When:** Saturday to March 19

**Where:** Pennsylvania Convention Center, 12th and Arch streets, Philadelphia

**How much:** Online: \$31; \$28, through March 10; \$20, ages 17-24; \$15, ages 2-16. Door: \$35; \$22, ages 17-24; \$17; ages 2-16

**Hours:** 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Saturday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday to March 17, 8 a.m.-9