

Bus Captain Script

TUESDAY TOUR August 14, 2018

Bus for early morning photo shoot will have left hotel at 7:00 a.m.

General tour buses leave hotel at 8:00 a.m. for Lurie Garden.

First stop for all buses:

LURIE GARDEN IN MILLENNIUM PARK

Lurie Garden is a 2.5 acre garden that combines naturalistic plantings and ecologically sensitive maintenance practices to create an urban oasis for city dwellers and wildlife alike. Opened in 2005, it has a planting design by Piet Oudolf, who went on to design the High Line in New York. The landscape architects were Gustafson Guthrie Nichol.

The garden is part of the 24-acre Millennium Park, which was built over railroad tracks that used to separate Chicago's downtown area from the lakefront park. The railroad still runs under the park. The downtown lakefront park area, which takes in Millennium Park, Grant Park, Maggie Daley Park and the Museum Campus, is mostly landfill. The landfill began with rubble dumped into Lake Michigan after the Chicago Fire of 1871. When Chicago, a frontier village of a few dozen people, was incorporated in 1833, the shoreline ran roughly beneath what is now Lurie Garden.

Lurie Garden is a roof garden, which sits on top of a parking garage built above the railroad tracks. Plastic foam landforms and lightweight engineered soil mixes are used to reduce the weight.

The garden offers a four-season experience blending Chicago's past, present and future with bold design, dramatic form, and intimate spaces. Its design pays homage to Chicago's transformation from flat marshland to a city.

Highlights of the garden include the dramatically lit, 15-foot-high "shoulder" hedge. This physical representation of Carl Sandburg's famous description of the "City of Big Shoulders" encloses the garden on two sides and protects the delicate perennial garden. A graceful hardwood footbridge over shallow water divides the garden diagonally between "light" and "dark" plates.

The plantings are naturalistic, mixing grasses, perennials, shrubs and trees. Although Oudolf was inspired by Midwestern prairies, the perennials in the garden are massed rather than intermixed like a prairie, in combinations that repeat through the space. The garden combines native and non-native plants.

The design for spring bulbs in the garden is by Jacqueline Van Der Kloet, the conference's keynote speaker. In May, a river of several different kinds of salvia flows through the garden. In summer, many flowers bloom, and grasses turn golden. Grasses and seed heads are left standing through winter and mowed in spring.

The garden is a magnet for wildlife, including numerous species of native bees, honey bees, and wasps, butterflies and moths, and both migrating and residents birds. It is maintained sustainably with no pesticides or fertilizer and minimal watering.

Lurie Garden was constructed and is managed by a private foundation. Like all of Millennium Park, it is open to the public free every day.

You can find more information, including a plant list and locator map, at luriegarden.org.

Continental Breakfast is being provided by Grow It! Mobile

####

After Lurie Garden, buses split into two groups, which alternate the next two stops. Buses load at 10:40 a.m. for first stop, 10:45 a.m. for second stop, 11:45 a.m. for trip back to hotel.

MCCORMICK PLACE ROOFTOP FARM

This 2.5-acre urban farm is on the roof of one of the four interconnected buildings at McCormick Place, the largest convention center in North America. Windy City Harvest, an urban agriculture program of the Chicago Botanic Garden, operates the farm in collaboration with Savor ... Chicago, the convention center's food service operation. It is the Midwest's largest farm-to-fork rooftop garden. The garden, with stunning skyline views, helps reduce the building's heat island effect, while SAVOR ... Chicago uses its harvest of herbs and vegetables to create menu items such as homemade pesto and herb rub.

Windy City Harvest promotes local sustainable farming and trains city residents for careers in urban agriculture. Much of the work of the garden is done by apprentices in the training programs, including formerly incarcerated individuals.

The rooftop garden provides SAVOR ... Chicago with fresh produce for McCormick Place's catering and restaurant operations, including "Windy City Harvest" menu items served in the 23rd Street Cafe & Market. It produces seasonal harvests that yield 8,000 pounds of farm-fresh plenty including beets, kale, carrots, lettuce, peppers, beans and herbs used in SAVOR...Chicago kitchens. There is an emphasis on using heirloom vegetables, which is a special challenge on a windy, exposed rooftop farm. The rooftop garden is also home to 20,000 honey bees in three hives that produce 50 pounds of honey a year and 2,000 red wiggler worms that create 200 pounds of vermicompost annually.

Chicago was one of the first American cities to introduce rooftop gardens, including a garden on the roof of its City Hall, in 2000. Chicago now has more than 5.5 million square feet of gardens on more than 500 rooftops, including at least 14 rooftop farms, according to city planners. A city zoning ordinance specifically allowing rooftop farms was passed in 2013.

To learn more about Windy City Harvest, see chicagobotanic.org/urbanagriculture. The PR contact for the Chicago Botanic Garden is Gloria Ciaccio, PR director, 847-835-6819, gciaccio@chicagobotanic.org, or see chicagobotanic.org/pr for more contacts.

Follow the signs and volunteers to the elevators which will take you to the rooftop.

You must be back on the bus at X:XX a.m.

GREEN GARDENS AT SHEDD AQUARIUM

The Shedd Aquarium, one of three museums in the Museum Campus south of Grant Park, gets 2 million visitors a year. We will NOT enter the aquarium, but will visit the organic, pesticide-free gardens that surround its lakefront location. They are one aspect of the aquarium's commitment to sustainability and conservation, with a special focus on clean water.

The gardens create habitat for many species of birds, pollinators and other beneficial insects. Around the lakefront side of the museum is a large migratory bird garden, planted with native perennials and shrubs that offer food and shelter.

Chicago is on the Mississippi Flyway, a major bird migration route from Central and South America up the Mississippi River and through the Great Lakes to Canada and the Arctic.

You also can see a rain garden and an urban demonstration garden. Edible gardens provide food for some of the aquarium's animals as well as its staff. A large water garden occupies a traffic island on the south side of the museum.

The south terrace features a low-maintenance garden planted with native and drought-tolerant plants. It produces flowers throughout the season that invite bees and butterflies. It provides interest and education for school children who line up there when they arrive on buses.

The Shedd is very proud of its sustainable garden practices, instituted by horticulture manager Christine Nye. They include using native plants as much as possible; making and using compost as soil amendment and mulch, and not using pesticides; collecting rain runoff so it filters into the groundwater rather than running off into Lake Michigan; and sustainable lawn care.

The migratory bird garden is adjacent to the lakefront pedestrian and bicycle paths.

For more information on the gardens, see sheddaquarium.org and search for "gardens" or email the PR staff at media@sheddaquarium.org. The PR staff can provide you with a list of native plants used in the gardens.