

New *Garden of Healing* Display Now Open at The Leaf

For immediate release: Winnipeg, May 30, 2024 – The biomes at The Leaf re-opened this morning after a scheduled closure during which the Babs Asper Display House was transformed with a stunning new summer display.

The new *Garden of Healing* display, which runs from May 30 – September 8, is a conceptual piece that acts as a visual testament to the limitless healing potential of nature. It was imagined by Indigenous designers Carmen Grey and Mamie Griffith with support from Wade Meisner, Assiniboine Park’s Horticulture Curator.

Using a blend of medicinal and sacred plants arranged in a contemporary floral installation, the designers have sought to create an immersive experience of personal healing and connection to the land. The project also honours the resilience and strength of Indigenous peoples, acknowledging the impacts of colonialism in Canada and the ongoing journey of healing from historical injustices.

Plants have been used for healing across cultures and continents for millennia, offering natural remedies that connect us to the earth and our ancestors. Well-known examples of these cultural connections can be found in traditional Chinese medicine, Indigenous traditions and knowledge, and modern medicine.

“The *Garden of Healing* display is a beautiful celebration of the universal connection with nature that continues to shape our lives and cultures around the world in such important and meaningful ways,” said Gerald Dieleman, Senior Director of Horticulture, Assiniboine Park Conservancy. “While the display acknowledges global traditions, the use of local plant species brings the experience closer to home, in a loving tribute to the beauty and bounty of the Manitoba landscape.”

Highlights of the *Garden of Healing* display include:

- **A breathtaking 20 x 16-foot floral installation suspended from The Leaf’s soaring translucent roof structure.** Surrounded by flower beds of seasonally blooming Manitoba species, this installation features a dynamic collection of herbs, branches, flowers, and shrubs selected for their unique healing properties and cultural significance. Visitors can walk around or through the installation, which will evolve over time, transitioning from fresh to dried florals.
- **A touch table featuring the four Sacred Medicines:** tobacco, cedar, sweet grass, and sage.
- **An interactive sweet grass braiding station.** Sweet grass braids are made of 21 strands grouped in three clusters representing the past seven and future seven generations and the seven teachings (love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility, and truth).
- **Interpretive panels highlighting key features of the Indigenous Peoples Garden,** one of six themed public gardens surrounding The Leaf. Highlighted areas include the Water Node, Fire Node, Whispering Lodges, and Residential School Totem Pole.

About the Artists

As a horticulturalist, **Carmen Grey** is influenced by the reciprocal relationship between plants and people. Carmen's approach to respectful land stewardship is shaped by her experience working in consumable horticulture and sustainable food production with an emphasis on creating non-intrusive space for people in the landscape.

Through her design practice, **Mamie Griffith** takes a critical look at the representation of Indigenous cultures within the built environment. Her design mission is to respectfully reflect local Indigenous culture and identity within architectural forms and interior spaces.

The biomes at The Leaf are open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. More information about visiting The Leaf can be found at assiniboinepark.ca.

For more information, please contact:

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