



RAYS OF SOFT WINTER SUN GENTLY EASE through the glass roof of Longwood Gardens' Conservatory, spreading their warmth equally across 4½ acres of inspiration. The artful spectacle is a holiday gift for the eyes: towering Fraser firs slathered with ornaments; orbs of poinsettias dangling from the roof; an orchid wreath; and masses of amaryllis, begonias, cyclamens, narcissus, and tulips edging the pathways. You find yourself whispering and slowing your steps to make the stroll last forever. Much later you wander to other reaches of Longwood to sing carols, linger beside fountains with leaping jets of color, and revel in a whirling outdoor ice-skating show. Sinking into the nighttime spell, punctuated with everywhere-you-look-lights, you find yourself closer to your own soul. And to the glorious gift Longwood presents to all seekers of beauty. ●

Longwood Gardens: 1001 Longwood Road, Kennett Square, PA 19348 (on U.S. 1, 12 miles northwest of Wilmington, Delaware); www.longwoodgardens.org or (610) 388-1000. Holiday admission operates by timed ticket (through January 11); \$16 adults, \$14 seniors, \$6 students ages 5-22 (extra for ice show). Call for information about extra events, including Yuletide Buffet and Breakfasts with Santa.

{POSTCARD FROM LONGWOOD}

Decked Out

Stroll through a wonderland at this best-of-the-best public garden.

By Karen Lingo, photography Allen Rokach