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For Immediate Release

“Sugar from the Sun” Exhibit

Opens March 1 at Garfield Park Conservatory

Tips to Help Gardeners Grow

CHICAGO (Jan. 29, 2008) – Knowing how plants build and use sugar can make you a better gardener. “Sugar from the Sun,” an exhibit opening March 1 at the Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N. Central Park Ave., offers many opportunities to help gardeners grow:

1. **Green plants use sunlight, air and water to make sugar**

All of the plants in your garden use sunlight energy to change small parts of air and water into sugar. This process is called photosynthesis, which means “building with light.”

2. **Plants feed themselves**

Plants take in many useful nutrients and minerals from the soil, but they do not get “food” from the soil. Plants make their own food (sugar) from air, water and sunlight.

3. **Sugar builds plants**

Plants use their self-made sugar both as a basic building block for growth and as a source of energy to sustain that growth.

4. **Every part of every plant comes from sugar**

Every part of every plant – the scented flower, the juicy red tomato, the tasty herb, the gnarled root – is possible because plants make sugar.

5. **Growth requires energy**

Flowers, fruits and seeds (often the highlights of your garden) require a lot of energy to grow, so how you care for a plant to prepare it for flowering and fruiting is important (i.e. the right balance of sunlight, air, water and nutrients).

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“Sugar from the Sun” Facts and Figures//Add One

6. Sugar travels

Plants make sugar in their leaves and then send it to all parts of the plant. Some sugar is used right away and some gets stored in underground stems and roots for future growth. When you plant a bulb, you’re planting last year’s sugar storage.

7. Plants are competitors

Plants compete with each other for sunlight, air and water. It’s important to give each plant the space and resources it needs to efficiently produce sugar for itself.

8. Mind your leaves and stems

Photosynthesis takes place in a plant’s green parts, primarily the leaves and stems. If your plants start losing their green color, they will struggle to make sugar. (Exception: some variegated plants and dark-leaf varieties may not look green, but that doesn’t mean there isn’t some green hidden in there somewhere.)

9. Help your plants conserve energy

If you grow flowers and aren’t interested in collecting the seeds, the process of “deadheading” or removing the spent flowers can help your plants redirect their sugar into producing more blooms instead of making mature seeds.

10. Your garden is an important part of the Earth’s energy cycle

Every living thing needs energy to live and grow. Plants are the only living things that can harness the sun’s energy and turn it into useable forms of energy for themselves and for all other life on Earth.

“Sugar from the Sun” is a highlight of “Chicagoasis: The Greenest Show on Earth” – a year-long celebration of the Conservatory’s 100th birthday in 2008. A series of centennial events and programs are planned to honor the world’s largest botanical collection under glass, designed on Chicago’s West Side by renowned landscape architect Jens Jensen.

“Sugar from the Sun” is made possible in part by a \$1.65 million grant from the National Science Foundation. Support also has been received from the “Public Museum Capital Grants Program” of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Illinois State Museum.

“Sugar from the Sun” Facts and Figures//Add Two

Admission to “Sugar from the Sun” is free. Owned by the Chicago Park District and operated in partnership with the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance, the Conservatory is open every day of the year, with free admission and convenient free parking. (Special exhibit and activity fees may apply.) For information about Garfield Park Conservatory’s Centennial and related programming, call 773-638-1766 extension 13, or visit www.garfieldconservatory.org.

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Garfield Park Conservatory turns 100 years old in 2008, celebrating its heritage as one of the world’s largest botanical gardens under glass. Owned by the Chicago Park District and operated in partnership with the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance, the innovative horticultural masterpiece was designed by renowned landscape architect Jens Jensen. Many activities and programs are planned to commemorate this Centennial. For the latest information, call the Alliance at 773-638-1766 ext. 13 or visit www.garfieldconservatory.org.

