


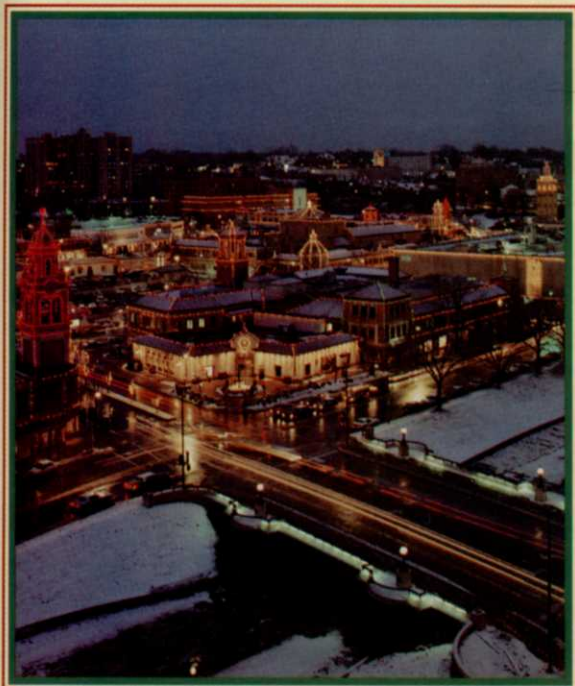


Season

by Heide Aungst, managing editor



Perhaps the display which best reflects Yuletide tradition is the one viewed by millions at Rockefeller Center in New York City. The Center starts preparing for the holidays as early as August each year. For more than 50 years, New York has launched the Christmas season with the lighting of the giant evergreen on Rockefeller Plaza. The tree comes from places throughout the country each year. Pictured here is a Norway spruce (right) decorated with more than 18,000 multi-colored lights set on five miles of wire. The trumpeting angels (right) in the Channel Gardens, designed by Valerie Clarebout, is another signature of the season. White lights on the *ilex glabra* and junipers (right) highlight the plants in the angel display. The Exxon Building lights up its Douglas fir with multi-colored lights (above) while white lights highlight the shrubs. Of course, visitors to the Big Apple will also want to watch in the ice skaters at the famous Rockefeller rink. 



People come from all over the world to view the annual Thanksgiving Day lighting of Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, Mo. Forty-seven miles of lights (that's 155,000 bulbs!) brighten the more than 60 acres of buildings and landscape. The plaza is the oldest planned suburban shopping center in the country. Most of the buildings in the area are owned and run by the J.C. Nichols Co. The Mill Creek Building (two-story building in the center of the photo) was the first store in the area, built in 1922. Three years later one string of lights decorated the building, a tradition that has expanded and grown during the past 57 Christmas seasons. Today, the one-story addition to the Mill Creek building houses Gerhardt furs. Red lights highlight the Giralda Tower (left side of photo). White lights decorate many of the Bradford pear trees which line the plaza's streets. Although snow covers most of the bluegrass/ryegrass turf here, the park areas are highly managed by Rosehills Garden Inc. "The plaza is my baby," says Everett Asjes, Jr., former president of Rosehills. "I still advise on it. It's a really beautiful area." Rosehills has managed the plaza's landscape for 20 years. The highlight after the Christmas lights is watching the more than 25,000 tulip bulbs bloom in the spring.



The National Christmas tree is the focal point of the annual Pageant of Peace in Washington, D.C. Frank LaGuisa of General Electric designs the lighting for the tree each year. The tree is chosen from various locations throughout the country. In this design (below), LaGuisa chose large lighted ornaments which will carry greater distances. The smaller lights on the tree fill in the tree's form. A moderate amount of flood lighting picks up the sparkle in the tinsel. A new technique uses cycling controls on the tree to slowly change the color of the major ornaments.



One of the most beautiful Christmas lighting displays is in Cleveland, Ohio, home to lighting experts General Electric. Every year, the G.E. headquarters shines with multi-colored lights (above). G.E. designer Frank LaGuisa offers Christmas landscapers some lighting tips:

Note that there is no pattern of garland. The tinsel-trimmed star ornaments create a pattern which carries the design for distant viewing. The ground-level floodlighting makes the tinsel shine. The two styles of luminous ornaments are the only lighting on the tree itself. A good technique is to surround the featured tree with smaller trees. The clear sparkly lights on the smaller trees provide a more traditional foil for the highly stylized feature tree.

