

RHS WISLEY TRAINEE STUDY TOUR TO THE GARDENS OF THE PHILADELPHIA AND NEW YORK

MERLIN REPORT

By John Paul Cookson (Merlin 646)

*A Tour of the Garden States of The USA, To
Observe How our American Cousins Approach
Horticulture and Garden Design.*



The RHS Trainee Group (Centre) with the Triad Fellowship Trainees in the Great Conservatory at Longwood.

From the Left: Alison Legg, Thomas King, Maggie Tran, John Cookson, Janina Timter, Robert Bradshaw, Brendan Arundel & Lawrence Wright.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Itinerary of the Trip.....	4
Week 1 – Pennsylvania and Delaware	4
Week 2 – New York.....	5
Our Study Tour.....	7
Day 1 -Morris Arboretum – Sunday 3 rd of May.....	7
Day 2 & 3 -Longwood gardens – Monday 4 th & Tuesday 5 th May.....	12
Day 4 – Mount Cuba Center - Wednesday 6 th May	23
Day 5 – Winterthur House and Gardens - Thursday 7 th May.....	33
Day 6 – Chanticleer – Friday 8 th May	44
Day 7 –Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College – Saturday 9 th May	54
Day 7 – Charles Cresson’s Garden – Saturday 9 th May	58
Day 8 – New York City – Sunday 10 th May	60
Day 9 – Wave Hill – Monday 11 th May.....	61
Day 10 – New York Botanical Garden – Tuesday 12 th May.....	66
Day 11 – The High Line – Wednesday 13 th May.....	71
Day 11 – Central Park – Wednesday 13 th May.....	74
Day 12 – Brooklyn Botanic Garden – Thursday 15 th May	79
Day 13 – Brooklyn Grange Rooftop Farm – Friday 16 th May	83
Day 13 – Battery Park – Friday 16 th May.....	85
Summary	87

INTRODUCTION

This Report for the Merlin Trust; who kindly donated funds to support our tour, follows the trip which I undertook along with seven other RHS School of Horticulture (Wisley Diploma of Practical Horticulture) Trainees to study the Gardens of Pennsylvania and New York.

In May 2015 we were given the opportunity to embark upon a Bursary Trip through the RHS, partly funded by the Merlin Trust. Our selection of a topic began after the Trainees from Longwood Gardens 'Professional Gardener Programme' came to Visit Wisley in Late September 2014. Inspired by the enthusiasm of these individuals and tales of the garden itself, we decided to try to make a journey to Longwood Gardens to see it for ourselves. After discussions with Colin Crosby, the Curator of RHS Wisley and later with Dr. Doug Needham, Director of Education at Longwood we were able to arrange support, funding and contacts for the Trip.

Dr. Doug Needham very kindly personally wrote to a number of the gardens, and opened the door to us for a huge number of personal tours, talks and meetings. Soon our list had developed into a two week tour programme, taking in not only the great and famed gardens at Longwood, Winterthur and Chanticleer, but also hidden gems, like Wave Hill in New York, A Rooftop Farm in Brooklyn and beautiful displays of the native flora at the Mt. Cuba Center in Delaware.

We set out with the aim of studying the American style of Gardening and how much it relates to what we have here at home in Britain, and what we could learn from them.

It seemed that we planned our trip for just at the right moment, as the springtime was just hitting its peak.

*John Paul Cookson,
Trainee, RHS Wisley (Wisley Practical Diploma)*

Thanks and Contributions

I would like to thank the Merlin trust and The RHS Bursary Committee for funding this tour and all of the gardens and individuals involved in our visit, who opened their doors to their beautiful gardens for us and showed us great hospitality throughout the trip.

Special thanks indeed is due to Doug Needham, the educational director of Longwood Gardens, who greatly supported our trip, and put us in contact with nearly all of the gardens we visited. Without this support, arranging such a fantastic trip would surely have been much more difficult.

Special thanks again go to Charles Cresson, how welcomed us into his own home and private garden, providing a wonderful end to the Pennsylvania leg of our tour.



ITINERARY OF THE TRIP

Our tour spanned two weeks, in which we took in highlights of the areas, we split our trip right down the middle, spending one week in the Pennsylvania Brandywine Valley and Delaware, before spending our second week in New York City, taking in the Urban Parks and Gardens and surrounding institutions. The following is a brief itinerary.

WEEK 1 – PENNSYLVANIA AND DELAWARE

- Saturday 2nd May –** Fly from London Heathrow to Newark Airport (NYC) for the trip ahead to Pennsylvania.
- Sunday 3rd –** **Morris Arboretum**, *Short Tour followed by free time to explore.*
- Monday 4th –** **Longwood.** *The first day of an intensive 2 day programme of tours and talks around Longwood. Introduction to Longwood gardens and a look at their ongoing and future projects.*
- Tours of the Ideas Gardens, Flower Garden, Pierces woods, Italian Fountain Garden, the Meadow and Natural lands projects.*
- Meeting with the Professional Gardener Students (PG) and helping install their show garden plots. Followed by a picnic with the PG's and Staff at the student village.*
- Tuesday 5th –** **Longwood.** *Our Second Day in Longwood took in the conservatory and production houses. Followed by a question-answer session with all of the senior staff.*
- We also presented our "Brown-Bag" Seminar to the Longwood Staff on the RHS and Wisley Gardens.*
- Wednesday 6th –** **Mount Cuba Center**, *Guided Tours by section Gardeners, followed by Question-answer session with senior staff.*
- Thursday 7th –** **Winterthur**; *Guided tour of the gardens and the Winterthur museum*
- Friday 8th –** **Chanticleer.** *Short tour followed by free time to explore for the rest of the morning.*
- Lunch with the staff before helping with work on the site.*
- Saturday 9th –** **Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College.** *Tour led by the Director of Horticulture around the campus.*
- This was followed by a meeting with the American Garden Writer **Charles Cresson**, who gave us a personal tour of his own garden in a suburb in Swarthmore. Before driving onwards to New York City.*

WEEK 2 – NEW YORK

- Sunday 10th** – *A visit to a Private rooftop Garden in Manhattan, followed by free time exploring New York City,*
- Monday 11th** – **Wave Hill.** *Tour of the gardens and a question and answer session with the staff.*
- Tuesday 12th** – **New York Botanic Garden.** *Tour of the site and meetings with Staff and Trainees, followed by free time to explore.*
- Wednesday 13th** – **High Line.** *Tour of the High line with the Director of Horticulture.*
- Central Park** – *An introduction to the history of the park and its restoration followed by a tour of the highlights and free time to explore.*
- Thursday 14th** – **Brooklyn Botanic Garden.** *An introduction to Brooklyn Botanic Gardens community schemes followed by a visit to two community gardens in the local area. A short tour and walk and Talk with the Curator followed by free time.*
- Friday 15th** – **Brooklyn Grange Rooftop Farm.** *A Tour of the Rooftop farm and an explanation of their work.*
- Battery Park.** *A tour around Battery Park and a talk on its restoration.*
- Saturday 16th** - *Return Flight to London Heathrow.*



(Above) Central Park, New York City

OUR STUDY TOUR

DAY 1 -MORRIS ARBORETUM – SUNDAY 3RD OF MAY.

BACKGROUND

Our First trip of the tour was to the Morris Arboretum. This is attached to the University of Pennsylvania and is the state's official arboretum.

The garden began its life in 1887 as the summer Home of Brother and Sister John and Lynda Morris, the children of a wealthy industrialist who made his families fortune through Iron Manufacturing.

Both were very keen gardeners and plantsmen and travelled across America and the world in search of plants. Notably they visited the classic gardens of Europe, which can be seen in the formal areas, such as the rose garden. They also went as far afield as East Asia and Japan, and brought back elements of these cultures and their native plants back home to plant in their garden.

They were also very interested in art, and their worldwide trips often included seeking out artwork and sculpture and crafts. The Arboretum still continues this tradition, exhibiting sculpture and art from both lesser and well-known artists in the gardens for the public to see.

John and Lynda Morris, both devout Quakers greatly wanted to share their creation with others, to educate and pursue the sciences of Horticulture and Botany. They made plans to establish a school and laboratory on the site for this purpose, and by 1932 it became the Morris Arboretum, part of the University of Pennsylvania.



THE TOUR

We met Barry Jeffries, our guide, at the visitor centre at 10am for a guided tour of the site. Upon arriving we were met by one of the plants that will stay with me from this trip, the **Virginia bluebell** (*Mertensia virginica*) A delightful perennial (Pictured Right) with beautiful light blue funnel shaped flowers. This was planted in large drifts alongside *Dicentra spectabilis f. alba* and *Matteuccia struthiopteris* (Ostrich Fern), a very attractive arrangement.

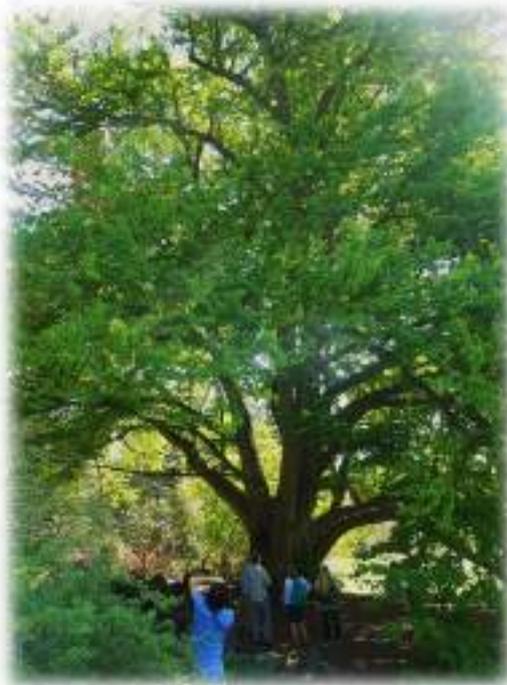
Barry led us to the Arboretum's new Tree Top walk 'Out on a Limb' This is an active attempt by the institution to make the gardens more exciting for children, identifying the problem that many UK gardens also have in trying to attract a younger audience.

The tree top walk has plenty of interpretation and signage on the native trees found here, has binoculars to allow visitors to scan the forest canopy and netted areas (as pictured below) where children, or adults, can play high above the forest floor. The tree pictured below is the Chestnut Oak, *Quercus montana*, just coming into leaf.



NOTABLE TREES

The Arboretum is home to many great trees from all around the globe. Over 100 years' worth of plant collecting, first by the Morris' and later by the institution itself have led the gardens hosting impressive and mature specimens.



Katsura Tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*)

(Left) Certainly the most impressive specimen for us was that of the Japanese Katsura. Planted at the turn of the century, it is arguably the biggest in North America, the latest records stating the height at 67ft, with a canopy spread of 90ft

It is often quoted as the staff and visitors favourite tree in the whole garden, and it is easy to see why. It is such an elegant tree, with such a scale that we never see of this species in England.

Lacebark Pine (*Pinus bungeana*)

The impressive 64ft high Lacebark Pine lies on the corner of the Japanese Garden, and makes a great impression with its white, flaking bark.

Japanese Zelkova (*Zelkova serrata*)

Lying near the edge of the garden is a huge Zelkova, measured to be 84ft high and a spreading canopy of 92ft. It is the State Champion of its species and is one of the originally planted trees on the site, well over 100 years old.

Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*)

A more recent addition to this band of champion trees is the grove of Dawn Redwoods. The trees were planted as saplings in the 1950s and are some of the earliest to be planted in North America. In Britain we are used to seeing them grown as specimen trees, alone; but in a group they really provide impact. The fast-growing trees have attained a height of 90ft in 60 years, clearly enjoying the sheltered and wet position they are situated in. (Pictured Right)



THE DORRANCE H. HAMILTON FERNERY

The Victorian fernery dates from 1899, and is the only one of its type standing in North America. It was built to accommodate the fern craze that swept the western world in the late 19th Century, and houses many species from across the world.

Its collection include a huge *Asplenium nidus* (Pictured Below)



The house is landscape, and features ponds with fish, streams, rock faces, tunnels and elements of a stumpery. There are also many hanging basket displays, particularly of *Davillia canariensis* and *Platycteriums*.

There are also impressive Tree ferns, such as the *Cyathea* (Pictured right).

The Fernery was an enchanting addition to our trip, and showed how a fine display could be presented purely utilising the texture of fronds and a restricted colour palette of Greens, Silvers and browns.



NATURE RESERVE



The Arboretum is also home to a nature reserve, which hosts a wide variety of Habitats.

A large wetland lies just to the right of the garden main entrance, here we saw Snapping turtles (Pictured). This habitat is also home to many species of birds, and we caught glimpses of Red cardinals and Red-winged Blackbirds.

A large woodland and meadows lay beyond this, where we saw Groundhogs and Beavers along the rivers edge.



DAY 2 & 3 -LONGWOOD GARDENS – MONDAY 4TH & TUESDAY 5TH MAY

AT A GLANCE...

Main Fountain Garden – Perhaps Longwood’s signature View, an unparalleled water feature surrounded by a very classical style of planting. (Under renovation and improvement at the time of our visit)

The Flower Garden Walk, with exceptional Seasonal bedding displays, around 109m long.

Pierce Wood – A large woodland garden, highly focused on native flora, with lake and classical features.

The Conservatory – A huge complex of display and service houses, including 120 indoor gardens, including the orangery, with its famous seasonal displays.

Italian Water Garden – An impressive Italian inspired fountain garden, bordered on each side by large pleached lime hedges.

Meadow Garden – an impressive 86 acre late-season meadow with native flora.

Propagation Facilities – A large unit which supplies the whole gardens with its own stock. There is also an on-site Tissue culture lab for micro-propagation.



(Above) Topiary in Longwood

BACKGROUND

Longwood Gardens can trace its heritage back to 1700 when the Pierce family, Quaker farmers, settled in the area. In 1730 they built the Brick farmhouse which now stands in Pierce Wood. This area is the oldest part of the gardens, and is formed from an early 15-acre arboretum planted on the site in 1798 by the great-grandchildren of the original settlers, Samuel and Joshua Pierce.

By the end of the 19th Century the land was abandoned by the family's descendants, and passed from hand to hand until in 1906 it was purchased by Pierre Du-Pont, it is said, to save the trees from being taken for timber.

From 1906, Longwood gardens grew into the grand gardens that stand today. Pierce influenced many of the plantings and areas seen today, and also as a keen engineer, he is also responsible for the impressive water features in the site.

As Pierre Du-Pont reached old age, he looked to preserving Longwood for the future. With no children to hand it onto he set about forming Longwood Inc. in 1914.

In 1946, after negotiations with the government, the gardens and land were placed under the control by a foundation, and were thereafter called Longwood Gardens, a public garden.

Pierre died 8 years later in 1954 from a heart condition, having secured the Estates future.



(Above) The original Quaker Farmhouse in Pierce Wood, seen amongst an Alle of trees planted as part of the 18th century arboretum.

LONGWOOD

Longwood gardens is often declared as America's greatest, it has a reputation for exuberant displays. The site spans 11,000 acres in total, of which 400 acres is gardened. (The rest being farmland, Property and natural reserves.

The gardens find themselves in a particular good position with their finance, the Du-Pont legacy left a huge endowment, which alone can finance all of the gardens operations. They are also, of course, funded through their admissions and by fundraising.

They also maintain a large amount of (Horticultural) staff:

198 Full Time

229 (Part Time)

86 Seasonal

63 Students

727 Volunteers.

MAIN FOUNTAIN GARDEN

The jewel in the crown of Longwood is arguably its main fountain garden, which stands in front of the Grand Conservatory.

Pictured to the right at the time of our visit it may not look much. This is part of a 90 million dollar project to revitalise the garden, and to improve the infrastructure, modernising the engineering of the feature, which before was still operating on the 1930's equipment and also to repair all of the aging stonework which has decayed over time.

Much of the structure of the original design will be maintained, including the Box hedging (Buxus), which will use a new, blight-resistant cultivar *B. sempervirens* 'Green Beauty'.



(left) A photograph of the original garden.

FLOWER GARDEN WALK

Longwood puts a lot of work into its annual displays, and nowhere in the outdoor gardens offers a better view of this than the Flower Garden Walk, essentially a seasonally changing bedding display, around 109 metres long.

As we arrived in May, the design was one of cool and hot colours, beginning with cool pastel shades. Purple and White Tulips, Osteospermums, Erysimum and Digitalis among blue Muscari and Mysisotis.

As you reach the centre, a round pool, and a sunken garden separate this from the warm end of the border, as the pastel shades give way to vibrant red and orange Tulips, Yellow Erysimum and red Salvia. Before again returning to the cooler shades of towering white foxgloves.



PIERCE WOOD

Beyond the Flower Garden lies Pierce Wood, most of which is the original Pierce Arboretum from before Pierre Du Pont's time.

The Woods are home to many beautiful American native woodlanders, and at the time of our visit this was dominated by a few key species; the creeping Phlox (*Phlox stolonifera*), *Tiarella cordifolia*, *Trillium* and Rue-Anemone (*Anemonella thalictroides*), with *Decentres*, *Osmund as* and *Matteuccia* making an appearance here and there. The high canopy, mainly formed of American Beech (*Fagus grandiflora*) and *Liriodendron* has an understory of *Cercis Canadensis* and *Cornus*, which give highlights of colour.

The woods eventually give way to a lake, with a temple on the riverside, mimicking a very classical European garden style (Pictured) Travelling onward is the Italian Fountain Garden, again in the same style.



On the slopes above the main wood is the original Pierce farmhouse, and the Alle of trees pictured on page 12.

Pierces wood is an interesting combination of these classical styles, mixed with native planting and integrating the original heritage of the garden.

CONSERVATORY

Longwood's giant conservatory house 120 'Indoor Gardens' Ranging from splendid mixed floral displays in the east conservatory to more landscaped displays, it also houses the garden's impressive Ballroom and indoor event spaces. Behind these lie the service houses, where plants are stored, ready for display and where some of the more unique collections are held. The conservatory was built in 1919 and was since added onto to the size it is today. Some notable areas include:

Design

At this point in the report, you might be wondering who has the time to design all of these grand displays, and more often than not this comes down to one full-time designer who creates all of the seasonal displays. It is also worth noting that Longwood works with 5 seasons, winter, spring, summer, autumn and Christmas, and its designer stays one year ahead.

Orangery – The Orangery hosts formal displays, which like the outdoor bedding displays can be changed up to five times a year. The spring display at the time of our visit reflected those on the Flower Garden Walk, with Purple and white Tulips and Foxgloves making the main impact with Blue Hydrangeas woven into the design. Large areas of the space were given over to turf, which was bordered on all sides by these floral displays.

East Conservatory – This house is more landscaped than the Orangery. It features many older specimens and larger plants. A central pond is the dominating feature, the area can be moved around completely, with many hidden views and clever design tricks to make the space seem larger than it really is.





(Above) The Orangerie Terrace, leading out toward the Fountain Garden. (Below) Inside the Orangerie, showing the sunken terrace which is often flooded. Hanging from the ceiling are baskets of blue hydrangea, flanked by potted Cyathea tree ferns.





(Above) The Bonsai collection on display in the Conservatory service houses. (Below) The Mediterranean gardens, also under glass in one of the older display houses.



Palm House – The Palm house is the tallest of all of the conservatory buildings, and houses a collection of exotic palms. The trees are planted lower than the viewing floor, so the visitor can peer down into the understory.

Silver Garden – This space, just off to the left of the Orangery is given over completely to a silver and white colour scheme. This design is certainly a contrast to the rich colours of the main houses.

Rose House – This part of the complex was designed to produce indoor, cut flower roses for the house and still does today. Roses, and also hibiscus can be produced in this space for most of the year.

Waterlily Display – In the centre of the complex is a large open-air space with ponds which are used to display the gardens' collection of Waterlilies and aquatics, most notable of which is, of course the Longwood Hybrid (*Victoria amazonica x cruziana*)



(Above) One of the Longwood Hybrid Victoria lilies in the service house.

Events Space – Many areas of the conservatory are used as the garden's main event space, particularly the east conservatory and its adjoining ballroom provide an exemplary space for everything from tea parties to weddings; which Longwood will happily cater for.

THE MEADOW

One of the most striking features that we saw at Longwood was the 86 acre meadow garden, which sits at the rear of the property. The meadow is maintained and managed in such a way to work with the local wildlife and flora. The meadow garden can be split into four zones with 'Learning Pavilions'. Habitats include the open meadow, the forest edge and wetlands, all of which allow for various ecosystems to develop.



(Above) Looking across from the north side of the meadow, toward the old Du-Pont Farm.

(Right) A view across the wetlands toward the Webb Farmhouse; now used as a gallery and exhibition space, as well as housing interpretation for the meadow. It also has an interesting collection of pressed native plant specimens.



DAY 4 – MOUNT CUBA CENTER - WEDNESDAY 6TH MAY

AT A GLANCE...

Native Woodland Garden – Mount Cuba is home to a beautiful, naturalistic woodland garden, populated entirely with native plants of the region. This

Trillium Collection – The forest garden is also home to a large collection of trillium species from the American East Coast, including many rare specimens.

Late Season Meadow – in the Heart of the woodland garden lies a late season meadow, populated by Native Prairie grasses and perennials.

Trials Garden – Mount Cuba also operates a trials garden, in which it trails new cultivars of American Natives for garden use.

Formal Areas – The naturalistic style found in the rest of the gardens sits in sharp contrast to the Formal style gardens which surround the house. Grand bedding schemes of Tulips and phlox surround and impressive fountain, which led onward into a Lilac Allee.

Natural Lands Project – 500 acres of estate property has been set aside and maintained as a nature reserve and to focus on preserving the natural landscape and flora of the area.



BACKGROUND

Work on what is now the Mount Cuba Center began in the first half of the 20th century. The site lies just outside of the Village of Mt. Cuba, Wilmington, Delaware. The site became the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lammot du Pont Copeland in 1935. Closely related to the Pierre du Pont of Longwood fame, they also shared his passion for gardening. Atop the hill of Mr. Cuba they built a modest colonial-revival style manor house, and in the 1950's and 60's adorned this with formal gardens and terraces. The notable American landscape designer Marian C. Coffin was employed by the Du Pont Copeland's, and had a particular hand in the designing the Round Garden, which forms the centrepiece of the formal landscape.

Mrs. Lammot du Pont Copeland had always held a great love of wildflowers, and by the 1970s had become very concerned about the changes in land use that was destroying their habitats. In 1960 the family hired Landscape designer Seth Kelsey to help them lay out a large woodland garden. Already at this point there was a major focus on native plants, with a large intent that it be used to display and preserve them.

By 1983 the Mt. Cuba Centre was born, and with the appointment of its First Director of Horticulture, Dr. Richard Lighty the site began its transition from a private estate into a botanical institute. After Mrs. Du Pont Copeland passed away in 2001, the estate became a public garden, as the family had desired.

Extensive work on the gardens has been done since then, classes have been held since 2006, a Trials operation beginning in 2012 to focus on trialling native plants for the domestic garden and finally general membership for the public began in 2013.

The site is an ongoing project, much of the focus now is their advance into a 'Natural Lands' projects, which aims to restore much of the 500 acres of estate land back to a natural landscape and wildlife habitat.



THE TOUR

Mount Cuba was very kind, and provided us with a full guided tour of the site and the larger estate. We left our cars and approached the main house (pictured overleaf) by a sweeping driveway. The entrance to the house is impressive, though in many ways seems modest to the European manors to which we are accustomed. Flanked by two eagles atop pillars, the house spreads outward behind a large brick courtyard.

Inside, we received a presentation on the history of Mt. Cuba, its progression and the role it plays today. After this, we moved outside onto the terrace to meet our first tour guide, Donna Wiley, who maintains the formal gardens.

THE FORMAL GARDENS



Work first began in the 1950's on these formal gardens, which exquisitely match the formality of the house. The back doors open onto the terrace (Pictured left), The first terrace, adorned with pots and garden furniture is flanked by two large Willow Oak (*Quercus salicifolia*) which cast shade upon the seating area. The gardens have a lovely symmetrical nature to them. Which contrasts quite harmoniously with the rural landscape which can be viewed from this spot.

The steps, which extend down to the second Terrace are adorned with pots and Urns, here seen planted with Erigeron. These greatly soften the appearance, immediately giving it a very welcoming feeling.

The gardens then progress to the right, down a path with native Azalea on each side, this moves onto an area of fine cut lawn, which eventually brings you into the Round Garden.

(Pictured Left) Walking along this path I had my first meeting with this wonderful little perennial, *Aquilegia canadensis*, the native columbine. It's scarlet, reflexed petals making a stark contrast to our own *A. vulgaris*, with its purple bonnets.

(Pictured Overleaf – (Top) The path from the Terrace, and the lawn, pictured below.)





THE ROUND GARDEN

The Centrepiece of the formal gardens is the Round garden. Designed in the 1960's, it centres around a pool, in turn surrounded in perfect symmetry by round beds.

In the spring, these were bedded out as shown in the image below, with a mixture of red, yellow, white and purple tulips and the interior beds complement this with blue bedding Phlox and yellow violas.



From here we move through the Lilac Alle, which is planted with many different cultivars of lilacs. These were planted as Mrs. Lamot du Pont Copeland was very fond of the plant, having seen it trips to Europe, although the genus *Syringa* does suffer to some degree in the warmer American climate, it still put on a very good show for us!

THE FOREST GARDEN

We now entered the main part of the gardens, the forest garden which represents what Mt. Cuba's work is actually about. In stark contrast to the formal gardens that preceded it, this is a large, naturalistic woodland garden planted entirely with native flora.

On leaving the formal gardens, we entered the forest by a slope, leading down into the valley. The impact on entering this place is quite stunning, for at one moment you are standing in the formality of the lilac alle and the next into a lush and wild environment.



The canopy above is a mixture of the main broadleaf trees of the American East coast, *Liriodendron*, the tulip poplar tower above, along with the American Beech, *Fagus grandiflora* and white oak, *Quercus alba*.

Along the sides of the path are large drifts of *Tiarella cordifolia* (as pictured left), Woodland Phlox, *Phlox divaricata* and *Asarum canadense*, the wild ginger.

These are interspersed with smaller

colonies of *Dodecatheon* and *Trillium*. *Dicentra* also make a regular appearance, the wilder forms of *D. eximia* and *D. formosa* grace the gardens with their heart shaped flowers, in both red and white.

The shrub layer of the gardens too provides varied interest. The Dogwoods (*Cornus florida*) provide bursts of colour in the treeline while others, such as *Calycanthus* and the Paw Paw, *Asimina triloba*.



(Above) *Phlox divaricata*



(Above) A Flowering Dogwood



The path into the woods eventually led to a series of small ponds. The path takes you around the features by a series of bridges and stepping stones.

Aquatic and marginal plants are used to great effect here, *Sarracinia* are found on the edges of the water, along with Golden Club (*Oronticum aquaticum*), Skunk Cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*) and *Hellonias bullata*, the Swamp Pink.



(Top Right) *Sarracinia purpurea*
 (Bottom Right) *Lysichiton americanus*
 (Above) *Oronticum aquaticum*



(Above) Swamp Pink, *Hellonias bullata*. (Below) A stream in the woodland



THE MEADOW

Across the ponds and in a clearing of the woods is an example of a late season American Meadow. At the time of our visit it was quite dormant, having been cut last autumn. Scatterings of *Phacelia*, *Chrysogonum virginianum* (Gold Star) – an attractive ground cover with marigold like flowers, and *Amsonia tabernaemontana* are found on the outer edges.

In summer it will become a blaze of colour, with *Rudbeckia fulgida*, and *Helenium autumnale* among others providing highlights of colour among the late-season grasses.



(Above) A view of the meadow from across the ponds.

(Left) *Amsonia tabernaemontana* on the edge of the meadow.

(Right) The meadow, looking back down into the woodland.



TRILLIUM GARDEN

The gardens also hold a large and varied collection of trillium species, many of which have been raised on site from seed. As we were told by the gardener in charge of this section, they are difficult plants to deal with.

Trilliums as we were told detest competition from other plants, especially when young and so the choice of companion plants is carefully considered, with anything overly vigorous removed.

They are also quite sensitive to damage, so the trillium are never pruned or cut back in any way. Weeding in the area also requires a good eye, as the seedlings of the Trillium can be very variable, and often look nothing like the adult plants. This is also quite often true for the adults themselves; sports are very common which makes the nomenclature of the genus very difficult.

The seeds can also take years to germinate, and after that perhaps three years until the plants are mature enough to flower, interestingly, we were told the seeds are transported by ants, who carry the seeds with their sugary coatings into their nests, where it germinates.

They also can be very variable in their emergence, and may sometime skip a year if the conditions were not favourable enough to bring them out of dormancy.

There are many different species in the collection, all of which range from the eastern coast of the United States all the way to the Mississippi river.

Perhaps the most recognisable of the genus, *Trillium Grandiflora* has lovely pearly white flowers with a yellow centre. But it was the Twisted Trillium (*Trillium stamineum*) that the gardeners were very keen to show us. With its almost black, upright flowers and a scent which quite accurately resembles that of a dead and decaying mouse!



DAY 5 – WINTERTHUR HOUSE AND GARDENS - THURSDAY 7TH MAY

AT A GLANCE...

A Beautiful show of native Azalea – In the wonderful Azalea wood, a large woodland garden under a canopy of huge Tulip Poplars.

The Glade – Lying between Azalea wood and the rest of the gardens, this wonderful area is carpeted by the Shuttlecock fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*)

Sundial Garden – A relaxed space in the centre of the gardens, with a wide display of flowering shrubs and winding paths.

Formal gardens – with reflecting pools, Terraces and sculpture surround the house. Including a magnificent specimen of the Dove Tree (*Davidia involucrata*)

Several Excellent Rock Garden Features – With a well laid out ‘Quarry Garden’

A Delightfully Designed Children’s Garden – A wonderful space in the Liriodendron forest for younger visitors, including woven structures, water features and games.

The Winterthur Museum –The whole house is now a museum, dedicated to displaying American decorative arts and furniture from the colonial period to the turn of the century.



(Above) Winterthur house.

BACKGROUND

The Winterthur estate covers 1000 acres, of which 60 acres are gardens. It was the residence of another line of the Du-Pont Family; Henry Francis du Pont (1880-1969).

The Gardens surround his impressive mansion, now a museum dedicated to the American decorative arts, filled with the collections that du Pont amassed during his life. But the gardens too are his own work, the existing gardens that stand today hold much to his eye for beauty.

Henry Francis du Pont specified in his will that the estate become open to the public after his death. He wanted everyone to enjoy his home and gardens as he had, his vast collections on display for all to see and appreciate:

"I sincerely hope that the Museum will be a continuing source of inspiration and education for all time, and that the gardens and grounds will of themselves be a country place museum where visitors may enjoy as I have, not only the flowers, trees and shrubs, but also the sunlit meadows, shady wood paths, and the peace and great calm of a country place which has been loved and taken care of for three generations." - Henry Francis du Pont



OUR TOUR

AZALEA WOOD

The first stop on our tour was Azalea wood. The *Liriodendron* here are such an amazing size, standing high and lofty above the ground. Perhaps half of the gardens exists within this enchanting setting. At the time of our visit, Azalea wood was a riot of colour, with a mixture of reds, whites and purples.



The azaleas are often arranged in drifts; bands of colour which catch the eye. Though care should be taken to not miss the delicate underplantings, Woodland Phlox (*Phlox divaricata*), American Cranesbill (*Geranium maculatum*) and the Spanish Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides hispanica*) among others weave a colourful tapestry on the forest floor.



(Above left) A view through Azalea wood

(Above Right) *Geranium maculatum*

(Middle Left) Azalea

(Middle right) Trilliums

(Direct Left) *Hyacinthoides hispanica*
naturalised in grass



In the centre of Azalea wood, rising out of the azalea drifts and standing below the great *Liriodendron* is this beautiful mature specimen of a white *Cercis* (*Cercis canadensis* var. *alba*), here shown in full bloom.

A short lived tree, which perhaps can live for 30 years or so, this one is probably on its way toward the end of its life.



In some of the shadier spots the Rue Anemone (*Anemonella thalictroides*) is found, this charming little perennials give some relief from the full-on impact of the Azalea. (Left)

Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*) adds interesting textural effects with its upright stems and pendant flowers. (Right)



THE GLADE

Lying in the centre of Azalea wood is the area known as 'The Glade'. Here the canopy opens, offering pockets of clearings where the azalea cease to dominate. Here the ground is covered by the Shuttlecock Fern, *Matteuccia struthiopteris*. When used on mass it creates a beautiful effect, especially when illuminated by the sunlight.



The glade cuts the forest in half, leading from the heart of the garden through to the fields beyond. The area is given a fine 'Cathedral Effect' by the tall trees on either side. Streams and Paths weave through the glade. Though it may seem dominated by the ferns other plants do grow here. Virginia bluebell (*Mertensia*) form small colonies in between the plants, and in some hidden corners Trillium, Hosta and Primula grow.



SUNDIAL GARDEN

Crossing the Glade, we came upon the Sundial Garden.



The canopy of the surrounding trees opens into this sun-soaked flower garden.

The centrepiece, as the name suggests, is a sundial (Pictured bottom left). Around this are mixed shrub borders.

The colour tones of this garden are much more relaxed than those inside Azalea wood, here whites and light yellows predominate, provided by Azalea, *Viburnum opulus* and *Spirea*.



THE QUARRY GARDEN

Winterthur also has a Quarry Garden dating from the 1960's. This makes an excellent feature from an original quarry, which was used for the construction of the house in the 18th Century.



The disused site makes for a perfect rock garden. Small trees, such as the Purple *Cercis canadensis* and the *Cornus florida* (Pictured in the distance) grow in the rock. Inside the pit, *Primula japonica* covers the ground between the stones, enjoying the wet conditions provided by the streams that trickle through the garden.

Ferns, *Hosta*, *Asarum*, *Iris* and *Phlox stolonifera* also contribute to the display.

A winding path of steps, hewn into the stone allow access into the pit, these gradually blend into the stone itself, all of this lends a very wild feel to this area.



CERCIS

The Cercis blossom was at its best just as we visited Winterthur, their common name, Redbuds quite captures their magnificent colours. Native to the east coast, they are one of the pioneer trees of the region. Happy in most conditions, they also tolerate shade; allowing them to also live deep under the canopy of the giant forest trees. They will bloom consistently for a period of 3-4 weeks, before bearing their heart shaped leaves in early summer. The leaves turn a brilliant orange and scarlet in the autumn, which also makes them a brilliant choice tree. It is a shame we do not see more in Britain.



THE FORMAL GARDENS

Around the house, the formal gardens reflect the stature of Winterthur. If the gardens are entered from the rear of the house, the first part that is found is the reflecting pool and old bath house.



This space, originally the family's swimming pool; is well adorned with planters and sculpture to break up the hard lines of the surfaces. At the far end the stairs climb toward the house, and to the left lies a small garden. The bank is planted with an array of flowering shrubs and small trees, to give height and colour.



(Left) *Cornus Florida* stands at the entrance

CHILDREN'S GARDEN

Back In the woodland garden, and quite in contrast to the classical formality of the reflecting pool is the children's garden.

Opened in 2001, this really impressed the group. Many public gardens, both in the United States and at home in Britain realised long ago that attracting families into their institutions is very important, but I can say with confidence that I have never quite seen it done as well as it was at Winterthur.

Often a bolted-on part of a garden, many play areas and 'Children's Gardens' can often look out of place and unintegrated, but this worked extremely well.

For a start, there is no divide between the 'Gardens' and this space. It sits quite happily in the woodland part of the gardens, and can be discovered almost by accident by the passer-by.



(Above) A ruined medieval style thatch cottage, perfectly placed in the heart of the Tulip-Poplar forest forms part of the children's garden. Inside it is furnished with child-size furniture (Right).





(Left) The centre of the garden is this crazy-paved area. There is a water-pump and trough for children to play with and bridges to cross the small stream.



(Above) A 'temple-like' seating area.

(Below) A fantasy-style house, made from the hollow stem of a long-gone *Liriodendron*.

The Garden includes many features, all playfully designed to have a fairy tale look to them, it is not hard for this to be imagined within these gardens. And by the sounds of laughter that we heard as we passed earlier in the day, it seems the children like it too!

(Below) Stools styled as mushroom, which act as fog machines when sat on. A very curious feature!



DAY 6 – CHANTICLEER – FRIDAY 8TH MAY

AT A GLANCE...

A Series of Curious and Individual Gardens – The gardens are made up of a number of different garden rooms, each with a different style and approach.

Formal House Garden & Terraces – The Formal spaces around Chanticleer house include fine lawns and excellent use of containers. The terraces here allow for a brilliant view across the great lawn.

The Ruin Garden – This garden was designed in 1999 on the site of an old cottage, which was first razed to the ground and then partially rebuilt into a ruined state. It is home to many crevice-dwelling plants, with ferns and mosses emerging from the walls, climbers covering the surfaces and trees pushing through the floor. It is also home to a number of pieces of sculpture and artistic features

Gravel Garden – A subtle and naturalistic gravel garden, planted with a range of flowering perennials, grasses and bulbs which benefit from the sun-baked and well drained conditions.

Pond Garden – A beautiful garden, with a series of ponds designed to reflect the surrounding treeline. It is planted with a vast array of marginal and aquatic plants. The ponds are stocked with carp and catfish and attract a range of wildlife.

Asian Woods – An Asian styled woodland garden, with plants from Korea, Japan and China; featuring large mature bamboos and Japanese styled garden buildings.

A Vegetable and Cut Flower Garden – A quirky vegetable and cut flower garden, designed with a cottage style design in mind.

Bells Woodland – A relatively new part of the gardens, opened in 2012 with an aim to showcase the plants of the American East Coast forests.

An Eclectic Mixture of Art and Gardening – The gardens feature numerous pieces of sculpture and craftwork, most made by the gardeners themselves, adding huge amounts of personality to the spaces.

BACKGROUND

Chanticleer was the home of Rosengarten family, who arrived in Pennsylvania in 1913. Chanticleer is one of many estates which emerged along the Pennsylvania Railroad's mainline in the early 20th century, as it became a very popular area for Philadelphia's wealthy to build their holiday homes to escape the heat and smog of the city.

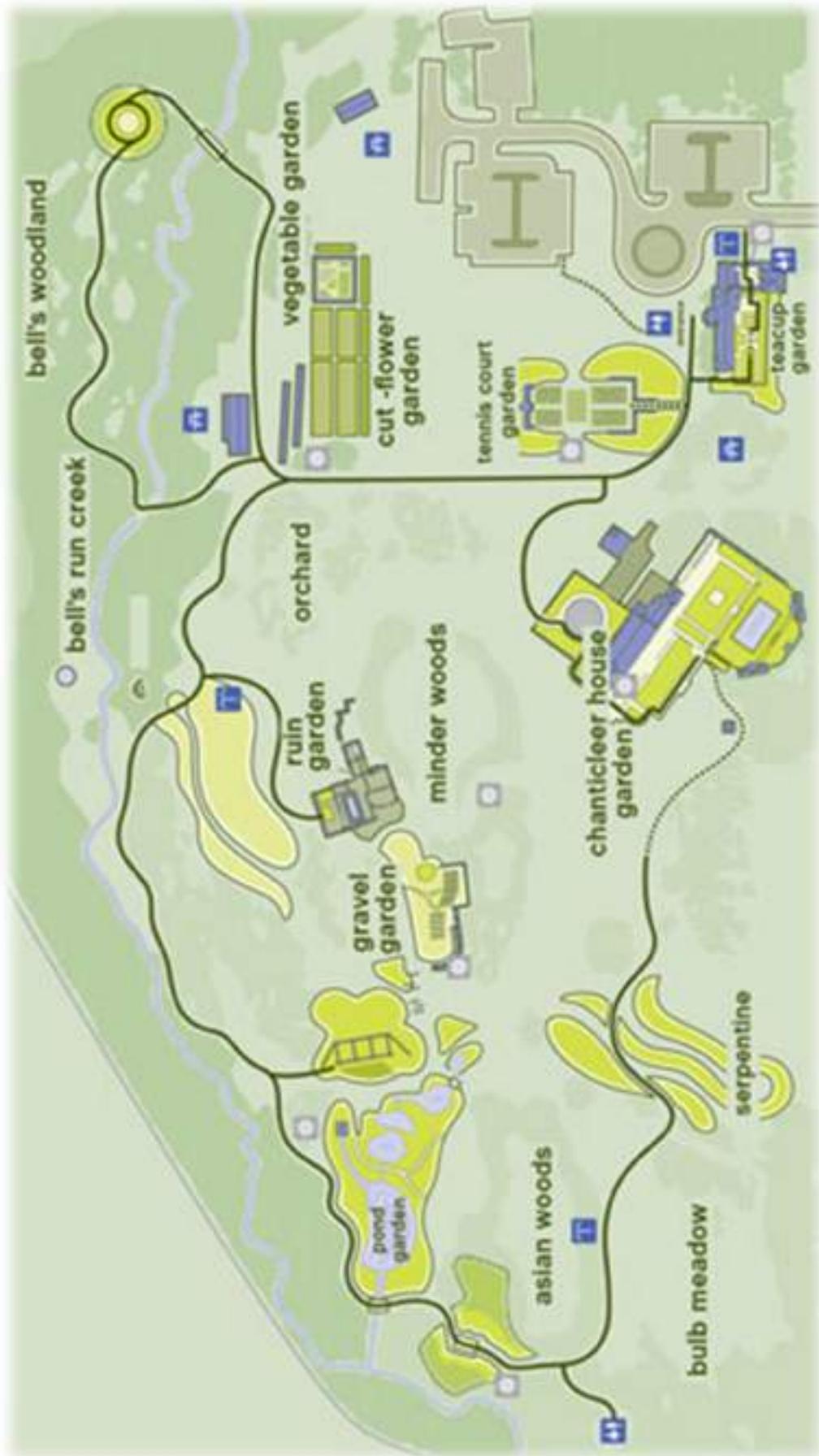
Its name was chosen by Adolph Rosengarten Sr. with humour much intended, it was named after 'Chanticleer' a fictional estate which features in the 1855 novel, 'The Newcomes' by William Makepeace Thackeray. In the book, the estate is said to be "mortgaged up To the castle windows" but still the "show of the country". In keeping with this literary joking, roosters are used as a kind of motif for the estate, and are found throughout the gardens and house; as Chanticleer is the name of a rooster who appears in the European fable 'Reynard the Fox' and in the Canterbury Tales.

The gardens were gradually developed since the 1920s and with the passing of Adolph Rosengarten jr. in 1990 the estate and gardens became the Chanticleer foundation. Mr. Rosengarten had wanted the gardens to be used for "the enjoyment and education of the public" after his death, and so the gardens are now managed under a board of directors; six of whom are relatives of the family.

It is during this period that much of the exciting developments in the gardens gave taken place. Chanticleer has grown to become quite an artistic garden, the gardens are full of quirky features, handmade sculpture and craftwork; much of which is made by the gardeners themselves.

Chanticleer always seems to feel like a small, homely garden. It is an odd thing to feel in a public garden, but is certainly true and works to excellent effect.





OUR TOUR

TEACUP GARDEN

The first stop on our tour was the teacup garden. This garden has two seasons, when we visited in spring, it was bedded out with tulips, allium and interestingly; ornamental cabbages and mustard.

It is home to many nice features; in the entrance courtyard there is a basin of water, in which floral displays are made (*as pictured right*). The space centres around an Italianate fountain, and maintains quite a formalised style. The garden is split into two terraces, with the first (*Pictured Below*) drops down into another with a simple square lawn surrounded by rectangular beds. (*Pictured overleaf*)



(Left) Mustard, Alliums and Tulips used as winter and spring bedding





(Above) The lower terrace of the Teacup Garden.

All of the plants used reflect a calm pastel palette, mainly whites, purples and blues. However, in the summertime the garden takes on a completely different persona; as a sub-tropical garden.



As can be seen to the left, (Photograph from the *Chanticleer Website*) The garden takes a radical change, with Banana replacing the spring tulips. According to the website, the summer Teacup garden also features Ginger, Papyrus, Coleus and Eucomis.

(Right) A view of the Teacup garden in spring, and the same spot again (Above) in the heat of summer.



CHANTICLEER HOUSE
The Terraces and formal gardens of the house contain many pleasant features.

The containers; like those throughout these gardens are interestingly approached and planted.



Here (Left) a pot of Muscari and tulips is wrapped in willow to give a novel effect. And below white delphiniums are intertwined amongst willow stems, and underplanted by deep blue anemones.



The plantings are a mix of permanent herbaceous and shrub plantings and seasonal bedding plants, as well as tender perennials, such as the potted Agave, above.



The Garden also features a swimming pool, which is apparently much enjoyed by the staff after a hot summers day!

RUIN GARDEN

Chanticleer's Ruin Garden is certainly a very inventive approach to the garden folly. The ruins are the remains of Minder house, built in 1925, inside which Adolph Rosengarten Jr. lived for much of his life. The concept for this garden was developed by Chanticleer's Director Chris Woods.



In 1999, the house was razed to the ground, and the new ruin built upon its original footprint. This has resulted in a very unique space, which is adorned with an interesting mixture of art and naturalistic, almost wild gardening.



Trees burst from the paving, climbers scramble amongst the beams and stonework and ferns and crevice-dwelling plants decorate the walls. The whole thing has a very artistic nature to it. And pieces, such as the dining table (Pictured bottom right) evoke this theme. It is designed to allow a thin layer of water on the surface, making it reflect everything around it. Elsewhere, giant stone acorns sit under a white oak and carved faces smile back at you from below the surface of the water (Pictured Right).



GRAVEL GARDEN



Chanticleer is also home to quite a lovely gravel garden which stretches down the hillside from the ruin to the pond gardens. This suntrap is perfect for the arid and drought tolerant plants which this garden supports. In the spring, the area is enlivened by many familiar bulbous plants; Allium, Tulips and Daffodils. In the summer this will be replaced by fiery yellows and orange.

A plant here of note are the Yucca (*Y. rostrata*); regarded as a difficult plant to grow in the region's climate, this is the only part of the garden where they can be grown successfully due to the sites excellent drainage.

The gravel garden leads to two of these fine Wisteria covered pergolas, which look down onto the ponds below.



POND GARDEN



The pond garden consists of four connected ponds, all of which are surrounded by a vast array of marginal plantings. The ponds are well stocked with carp and catfish. The space is also very attractive to wildlife, we spotted snapping turtles (Pictured bottom right) and also a variety of birds making use of the tranquil pools.



CUT FLOWER GARDEN

The cut flower garden is a beautiful space, found in the north end of the gardens.

It is very much an expression of the cottage garden style, where many different plants are grown for their flowers. The arches which straddle the central path are formed from driftwood and metal bars, which again lends a very crafty, cottagey feel.



VEGETABLE GARDEN

Chanticleer also has a small and very ornamental vegetable garden, a variety of crops are grown here, mainly brassicas and salads at the time of our visit. Whilst climbing beans are used to cover the handcrafted wooded structures seen in the image to the below.



DAY 7 –SCOTT ARBOURETUM OF SWARTHMORE COLLEGE – SATURDAY 9TH MAY

AT A GLANCE...

One of America's most beautiful College Campuses – The entire campus is surrounded by attractive gardens in which students can relax.

Mature Specimens of the American elm – which have so far resisted Dutch elm disease.

A large variety of different Styles – Both informal and highly formal spaces can be found on the campus, ranging from very symmetrical, bedded out spaces to semi wild ones, including a fragrance garden resembling a medieval cloister and a natural amphitheatre.

A Metasequoia alle – A majestic display of dawn redwoods in a setting they are seldom found.

Collections of Lilacs and Peonies – The campus houses a large collection of both of these spring flowering species.

A practical approach to Storm Water Management – The College has excellent floodwater control measures, including permeable paving, the use of beds to absorb storm water and the 'Biostream', an attractive and practical way of managing excessive rainwater.



BACKGROUND

Swarthmore College is regarded as one of the most beautiful in America. Its 425 acre campus is home to the Scott arboretum, which provides it with some of the finest planting displays in the country.

Established by liberal Quakers in 1864 it was one of the first colleges to be established in the United States. The arboretum itself was founded in 1929 in order to be a 'Catalogue of Plants for Pennsylvania', "for the purpose of enabling Swarthmore College to acquire, cultivate and propagate the better kinds of living trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants which are hardy in the climate of eastern Pennsylvania and which are suitable for planting by the average gardener."



(Above) The Swarthmore friends meeting house is the original College building.



The collections are set out to display their uses, there are dry gardens, woodlands, gardens with plants for fragrance and native plants gardens to name a few.

METASEQUOIA ALLE

This Metasequoia alle was planted in the 1950s and is a grand sight. The understory is planted up with mainly white, summer flowering plants, such as Hydrangea, Anemones, Callicarpa and Hosta.

The upright nature of the trees makes them perfect for this setting.



PEONY COLLECTION

The collection of Peonies (Pictured above) includes 130 different species and cultivar, mainly of tree peonies. The collection is organised by the peonies' country of origin and their breeder. Brilliant as ever was *Paeonia rockii* (Pictured Right). It is an exemplary Peony with white petals which have deep red markings. It is perhaps one of the most garden-worthy Peonies, and also has a very strong and wonderful scent.



THE AMPHITHEATRE



Built in 1942, this outdoor amphitheatre provides a spectacular setting for the college's graduation ceremonies. When the site was constructed some trees (A mixture of Tulip-poplar and American Beech) were cleverly left so that they would form columns between the steps, some of course have now been lost to disease or old age, but the effect today is still very impressive.

It is a very well designed and executed use of space, which looks out onto the woods beyond.



DAY 7 – CHARLES CRESSON’S GARDEN – SATURDAY 9TH MAY

AT A GLANCE...

The Private Garden of Garden Writer Charles Cresson – which is home to a large variety of curious plants.

A view of an American Domestic Garden – A family home and garden developed over 100 years by the Cresson’s.



OUR TOUR

It was very kind of Charles Cresson to invite us to see his lovely garden in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. A 20 minute drive from The Scott arboretum brought us to a quiet and unassuming suburban street.

He spent some time at RHS Wisley during the 1980s and was more than welcome to show us his own personal garden.



Outside Charles' house is a 100 year old Japanese maple, almost cloud pruned giving it such a nice effect.



The Flower Garden is host to many species of Azalea, as well as magnolias, Hydrangea and viburnums. It all felt quite intimate and handmade; much unlike any of the other gardens we saw on our tour. This of course is because it is the work of three generations of garden lovers, who have all left their mark on the property. Charles works a fine balance by trying to preserve the older features which are part of the garden and family's history, but removing those that no longer work or which could be refined.

DAY 8 – NEW YORK CITY – SUNDAY 10TH MAY

SIGHTSEEING



DAY 9 – WAVE HILL – MONDAY 11TH MAY

AT A GLANCE...

A Naturalistic Retreat, Just outside New York City – The gardens lie within a stones throw of the city, yet has all the charms of a country estate.

An excellent ‘Wild Garden’ – inspired by the works of William Robinson.

A Conservatory – Housing a large succulent and tropical plant collections

Arts and Culture connections – Wave Hill acts as a cultural Centre for New York, and hosts events on a regular basis.



BACKGROUND

Wave Hill was built as a country home 1866 and has seen many notable owners, guests and tenants pass through its gates. Mark Twain leased the property from 1901 to 1903 and Theodore Roosevelt's family also resided here in the early 1870's.

The estate was eventually given to the City of New York in 1960, it is operated as a public-private partnership, from which it receives 18% of its annual funding from the City's Arts council.

Wave Hill hosts many cultural events through the year. It provides education in horticulture, ecology, woodland management and also provides performing arts courses; its aim to help people connect better with nature.

WISTERIA



Our Visit to Wave hill coincided perfectly with the flowering of the Wisteria. Pictured on this page are three of the large and very old *Wisteria floribunda* that clothe the main house. In the image above, it can be seen planted alongside *Cercis canadensis*, a lovely pairing.



THE WILD GARDEN



The wild garden was inspired by the works of the English garden designer and writer William Robinson. It is designed to appear 'Planted by Nature'.

All kinds of species from around the world are used to create this effect, it is also a mingle of bulbs, herbaceous perennials and shrub; the result of which is a beautiful, meadow-like landscape.



THE CONSERVATORY



Restored in 2002, the Marco Polo Stufano Conservatory holds quite a large collection of Tropical, Temperate and Arid plants.



(Above) The Temperate house, pictured above and right houses palms, yucca and other tender or half-hardys from around the world. Pictured right is a beautiful specimen of *Echium Wildpretii*.

(Below) The Tropical house contains many vibrant moisture loving plants from the hot and humid parts of the world.

(Right) The Arid house houses a substantial potted cacti and succulent collection.



Outside the conservatory is a wonderful landscape. On the image right a view across to the Hudson River can be seen, it is separated from the estate by a classically styled stone balustrade and terraces. A covered seating area lies to the left, (As pictured below). Again in the classical style.



The flower garden (Below) which surrounds the Conservatory contains a rich mix of perennials and shrubs, with bulbs including Tulips which provide extra impact in spring.



(Below) A large *Spirea japonica* sits beside a rustic arbour. It is underplanted with white and black tulips.



DAY 10 – NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN – TUESDAY 12TH MAY

AT A GLANCE...

A World Class Botanical Garden – with vast collections of plants from around the world.

A fine Late Victorian Conservatory – with Arid, Temperate and Tropical houses.

Extensive Science and Education – The institution plays a vital role in the botanic world. It houses a huge herbarium with 7 million specimens currently held. It also houses

A Large and Dedicated Native Plants Garden – Divided into zones and habitats, this native plants garden supports a wide range of plants from the American East Coast.

A large Native Woodland – 50 acres of preserved native woodland, the largest such space in New York.

Extensive Arboretum & Pinetum

Various Demonstration gardens – with ideas for domestic gardeners.



BACKGROUND

Founded in the 1891, New York Botanical Garden was one of the first to be established in the United States. It covers a site of 250 acres which contains landscaped gardens, both formal, informal and naturalistic, 50 acres of Native untouched woodland and a beautiful Victorian glasshouse complex.

It follows to much the same ethos of other classical botanic gardens such as Kew, and also operates a far-reaching science department, one of the most important in the world, and provides education and courses in various forms.

COLLECTIONS

New York Botanical Gardens (NYBG) has a wide range of collections, and exhibits plants from all around the world. In addition to its wider collections, the gardens also hold large numbers of several species.

- Peonies (150 species and cultivars)
- Crab apples (80 cultivars)
- Roses (600 Cultivars)
- Magnolias
- Conifers
- Azaleas & Rhododendron (3000 specimens)
- Ornamental Cherries
- Daffodils

(Right) The Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden, built in 1916 contains 600 different cultivars of Roses



NATIVE PLANTS GARDEN

One of the Gardens most attractive features is the new native plants garden, opened in 2013, which is a redevelopment of a previous native flora garden which dated from the 1930's. It contains four zones which reflect the four main habitats on the east coast.

The Woodland reflects the forests of Northeastern North America, familiar native trees; *Fagus grandiflora*, *Liriodendron*, *Quercus alba* and *Acer saccharinum* (Sugar Maple) feature. The understory, familiar by now from our visit to Mt. Cuba features *Tiarella*, *Dodecatheon* and *Phlox divaricata*.

The Wetland features marginal and swamp plants, including a collection of *Sarracenia*.

The Glade contains plants which live in the lightly shaded conditions of a forest glade, such as *Asters*, *Echinacea*, *Sambucus* and *Iris*. Small trees and sub-shrubs, such as *Rhus* (Staghorn) and *Cornus florida* make up the canopy.

The Meadow reflects a typical North American meadow, and features familiar prairie plants, such as *Coreopsis*, *Rudbeckia*, *Solidago* and *Liatris*.



THE ENID A. HAUPT CONSERVATORY
NYBG's grand display glasshouse, the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory dates from 1902, and features nine individual houses to represent each of the different climatic zones on earth.

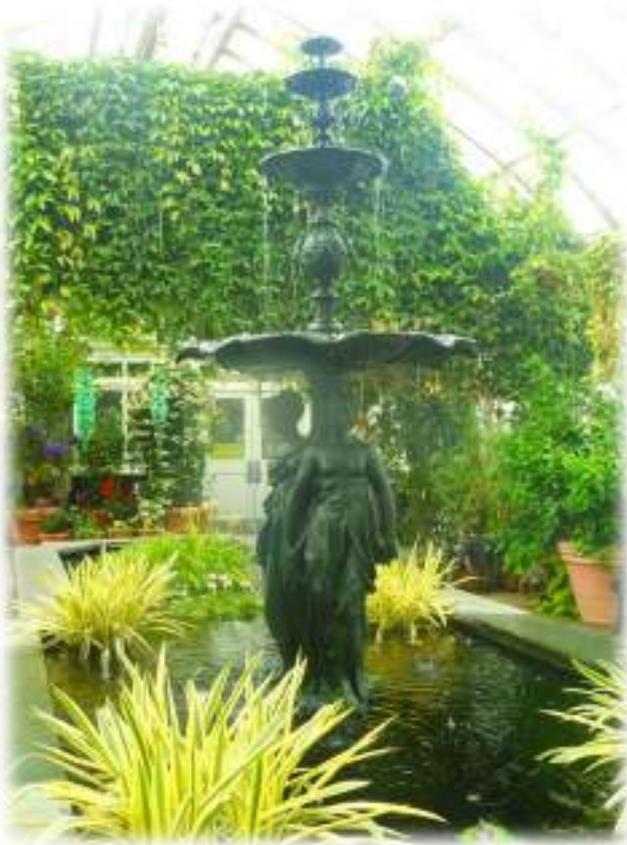


(Above) The Impressive dome of the Palm House, and a view from the interior (Right)



(Below) An aquatics pool sits in the centre of the complex. (Right) The Arid house.





(Above) One of the Tropical Houses exhibiting plants from the exotic regions of the world, including a Jade Vine (Above Right) in full bloom. A large collection of Orchids and Aquatics are also housed within the tropical section.



THAIN FAMILY FOREST

The gardens centre around 50 acres of uncut ancient woodland, the last of its kind anywhere in New York City. It was the existence of this forest that led to the site being selected for the Botanical Garden in the 1890s.

The River Bronx cuts through the woods, and at its centre sits an old watermill dating from the 1860's.



The forest offers an interesting insight into the native forests of North America in a wild sense. The management of this woodland began properly in 2010, but this does not mean the area is gardened in such a sense as in Mt. Cuba. The woodland is left to manage itself. Unless it obstructs the paths fallen trees and deadwood are left where they fall to provide habitat for animals, plants and fungi as part of the natural cycle of the woods.

NYBG try to allow this ecosystem to thrive without too much human interference. It is protected by NYBG as much as possible from the introduction of invasive species, the control of Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) is an ongoing battle for the woodland team.



DAY 11 – THE HIGH LINE – WEDNESDAY 13TH MAY

AT A GLANCE...

A Modern and Innovative Garden Above the Streets of New York – Which has transformed a disused and derelict part of New York’s industrial past into an inspiring and highly attractive green space.

A Very Artistic Garden – Filled with Sculpture and artistic flair.

Extremely Intelligent Use of Space & Setting – Clever planting choices and landscaping make the best use of the unusual environment,

A Truly Special Way to See The City – The Garden offers many fine and special views of the city, as it cuts through and between the streets and buildings.



BACKGROUND

The first section of the highline opened to the public in 2009, this was the culmination of a ten year project by the 'Friends of the Highline' to save one of New York's old overhead railways and to turn it into a public space.

These railways were a common sight from the 1930's onward, when they were the main way of moving goods in and out of the city, but by the 1980's most had fallen out of use. Many were demolished, and the Highline would have followed a similar fate if it had not been for the vision of a group of residents. The Highline had been enjoyed by many locals after its fall into disuse, who saw it as a part of the districts heritage, and many who enjoyed walking it and admiring the wildflowers that had colonised the structure.

The site has been progressively improved and added to, with the final section set to open in the near future. Piet Oudolf designed the planting of the garden, with his familiar prairie style, using mainly US natives (50%). The design makes good use of the space, and is sympathetic to its original use, large sections of the original train lines still exist, now clothed with rich plantings.

OUR TOUR



(Left) Large sections of the Original tracks were lifted and then replaced in their exact positions during construction. This sympathetic relation to the past life of the highline adds real charm. Here it is pictured 'overgrown' with Amsonia, Stipa tenuissima and Baptisia.

(Below) The tracks feature again in this paved area.



(Left) Dense planting in a woodland style, reminiscent of what we saw in Pennsylvania.

The Highline shows how much can be made of thin beds, the width of the platform greatly restricts the size that can be utilised. The space is very cleverly designed, so that the maximum space possible is used. The bed pictured right is no more than 7ft deep, but the planting makes it seem much larger.





(Left) Trees are used regularly on the highline, despite the fact that there is only 18 inches of soil to plant into. The selection of trees which can survive here has been a process of trial and error but three species, the Kentucky Coffee Tree (*Gymnocladus dioica*), Quaking Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) and *Magnolia macrophylla* have proved to be resilient survivors to date.

Environmental conditions also play their hand in making cultivation difficult. The garden sits in an area of New York which is currently undergoing massive redevelopment, with many new tall building now overshadowing the site. The nature of the city streets also can allow for high winds, which have been attributed to many plant deaths.



A wetland is also incorporated into the design, as seen pictured left, as is a large 'Woodland' area with numerous established trees. (Below)



DAY 11 – CENTRAL PARK – WEDNESDAY 13TH MAY

AT A GLANCE...

One of the Most Iconic Parks in the World – 843 acres of landscaped parkland in the heart of New York City.

Many Different Gardens – The Park contains a huge variety of styles and settings. From grand parkland to intimate formal gardens and naturalistic plantings across 9 sections.

A Very Successful Restoration Project – Central Park has been restored to its former glory since the 1980's, reclaiming the land from its derelict state in the 1960's.



BACKGROUND

Central Park opened in the 1860's to answer New York's demand for open, green public spaces. It was modelled on the grand city parks of London and Paris, with wide landscaped parkland, avenues and fountains. The park fell into neglect and disrepair following the great depression in the 1920's and continued this decline well into the 1960s, much of the structures and gardens became derelict and the park became a hot-spot for crime.

During the 1980s the park received a new lease of life, the Central Park Conservancy, which now oversees the park began a huge project of restoring the park to its former glory and reclaiming the space for the general public.

BETHESDA TERRACE

Often thought of as the 'Heart of Central Park' Bethesda Terrace is a grand plaza. At its centre is the iconic Bethesda Fountain, which at 26 feet high and 96 feet wide is one of the largest in New York.



The Angel of Waters (Left) is one of the iconic symbols of New York. (Below) The arcade, runs below the terraces.



THE MALL

Central Park's Mall, which runs from the south side of the park to the Bethesda Terrace boast one of the largest plantings of American elm (*Ulmus americana*) in existence. The trees are under constant check, as are all elms, for Dutch Elm disease and many are being treated to control the fungus.

The Mall is also lined with statues of famous and influential individuals, such the Scottish Poet Robert Burns (Right)



(Left) A lovely bedding display at one end of the Mall, with black and white Tulips, sprays of blue Forget-me-not (*Mysotis*) and Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum*)



THE LAKE

Central Park also boasts four huge bodies of water and other smaller ponds, many of which feature in iconic views of the park; one of the most familiar is Bow Bridge which spans the central lake (Right)



(Left) A view across The Lake, with Spanish Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides hispanica*) in the foreground. At one time the lake was used for Ice-Skating when it froze over during the winter.

THE POND

Another pond lies in the southern corner of the park, The Pond. This tranquil space sits below street level, therefore reducing the noise from the busy road which is no more than a few yard from the edge of the water.

A nature reserve too has been established here which supports around 240 different species of migratory and native birds.

THE RESERVOIR

In the centre of central park lies a huge reservoir, at least 500m wide, which feeds into the New York City water supply,.



CONSERVATORY GARDENS

In contrast to the open parkland style of the rest of Central Park, this garden exudes formality and order. The Conservatory Garden dates from the 1930s, replacing an earlier formal garden that stood on the site before.



The garden can be split into around three garden rooms, the central one of which (Pictured Above) centres around a circular theme, with everything surrounding a water feature in the centre, low Hedge of Box, Beech and Yew separate the garden into a series of three rings which spread outward.

The plantings in the beds is not of a strictly formal nature. Grasses, such as *Hakonechloa macra*, are perennials including *Baptisia*, *Amsonia*, *Hosta* and *Geraniums*. Bulbs have been employed for spring impact, such as *Alliums* and *narcissus*.

DAY 12 – BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN – THURSDAY 15TH MAY

AT A GLANCE...

New York's Second Botanic Garden – 52 acres of gardens and collections

A Large Glasshouse Complex – The Steinhardt Conservatory boasts collections of Tropical, Arid and Temperate plants from the old and new world across three pavilions; the fourth house a large Aquatics house and orchid collection. The Conservatory also contains a large Bonsai museum, the largest collection outside of Japan.

Cherry Esplanade – A long double alle of Prunus 'Kanzan' features in the centre of the garden which are in full bloom in April and are part of the garden's annual Cherry Blossom Festival.

A Large Rose Garden – The Cranford Rose Garden contains one of the largest Rose collections in North America, with a wide variety of cultivated and wild forms.

Native Flora Garden – A native flora garden dedicated to the flora of New York State. It also features two spaces which represent specific habitats, one designed on the Pine Barrens and another modelled on Long Island's Hempstead Plains.

A Modern Herb Garden – Much in the style of the traditional French potager, this contemporary garden is both productive and beautiful. Crops are divided geographically, representing vegetables, fruits and herbs from the five continents. The garden also represents Brooklyn's diverse people and cultures and their native foods.



BACKGROUND

Founded in 1910, Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG) covers 52 acres in the heart of Brooklyn. The Garden aims to provide an inspirational green space, bringing the residents of a huge metropolitan area closer to nature. BBG also provides education, with 9 month internships offered to training horticulturalists and also courses for the general public.

THE STEINHARDT CONSERVATORY



Built in 1988, the Steinhardt Conservatory consists of four pavilions. Three octagonal houses house collections of Arid, Warm Temperate and Tropical species. The pavilions are sunken, so that they can be viewed from above whilst outside. The houses hold large collections of both old and new world plants.



MAGNOLIAS

Brooklyn Botanic Garden was historically one of the most important gardens for breeding Magnolias. In 1977 it bred the world's first yellow cross, *Magnolia x brooklynensis* 'Elizabeth'. It is a beautiful soft shade of yellow and is now very popular worldwide.



LILYPOL TERRACE

The garden holds a collection of 100 species and cultivars of hardy and tropical waterlilies, which are displayed in the splendour of the formal Lilypool Terrace (*Pictured on Page 78*). On either side are two borders, one which is designed with Annuals and another with perennials.

SHAKESPEARE GARDEN

One area which requires special attention is BBG's Shakespeare Garden. Many American gardens have an area which relates to the work of Shakespeare, laid out in a cottage style and featuring plants which appear in his works. The garden is a naturalistic mingling of wild and cultivated plants; many of which are labelled with the related poems or texts written below.

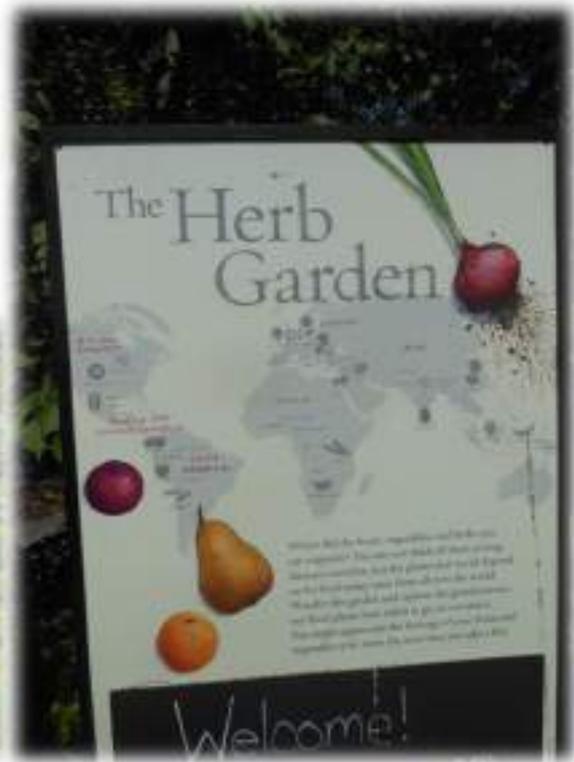


HERB GARDEN

BBG's Herb Garden is a medley of vegetables, fruit and culinary and medicinal Herbs from around the world. Regenerated in 2010, it is part of BBG's 'Campaign for the Next Century' which aims to engage with new audiences and secure the future of the Botanic garden as a relevant and useful institution.

The new herb garden, much larger than the one it replaced and is highly linked to the ethnic foods of Brooklyn's varied cultures. Crops are grouped by the continent of its origin, with lots of interpretation to evoke their stories.

The garden is laid out in a very attractive ornamental style, with crops arranged in patterns, not unlike a traditional French potager but is inherently modern.



DAY 13 – BROOKLYN GRANGE ROOFTOP FARM – FRIDAY 16TH MAY

AT A GLANCE...

A Functioning and Sustainable Vegetable Garden in the Heart of the City – Which supplies local shops and restaurants with fresh vegetables all year round.

Some very Innovative Methods of Growing – The Farm displays how to utilise the small space available and how to make the best of it,



(Image above from the Brooklyn Grange Website)

BACKGROUND

The World's largest and leading Rooftop farm was founded in 2010. It is a fully organic and commercially viable operation which stands in the grounds of the old Brooklyn Navy Yard.

Brooklyn Grange and its sister farm, Flagship Farm in Long Island City together have 2.5 acres of growing space. All of the produce is sold to local businesses and made available for the public.

The majority of production is centred on salad greens, which amounts for some 55% (Including microgreens cultivated under glass for the winter months). This is in addition to seasonal vegetables, kale, baby carrots, Tomatoes, Peppers and also culinary herbs. Although the farmers said that from experience there is very little that can't be grown on the site.



CHALLENGES

One of the biggest challenges that the farm faces is the lack of soil depth, like the High line it has only a few inches of soil to use. Also, because of the weight limits of the roof the medium had to be chosen carefully.

The soil which results requires constant regeneration, and so composting is very important to the site. As well as creating their own compost from their waste, organic waste from all sources is acquired and brought to the farm to improve the soil.

STRUCTURE

The Farm is a fully staffed project, there are 11 farmers who work the site who are helped by groups of volunteers and trainees. The site is also operated as part of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) partnership, many customers have a hand in deciding what is grown by their demand and some customers also help on the farm and are paid with produce for their labour.



DAY 13 – BATTERY PARK – FRIDAY 16TH MAY

AT A GLANCE...

One of New York's Oldest and Most Historic Parks – The Park sits at the tip of Manhattan Island, on the site of New Amsterdam.

Another Successful Restoration Project – Like Central Park, the Battery has been rejuvenated and restored since falling into disrepair during the 1960's.



BACKGROUND

Battery Park sits on land reclaimed from the sea, jutting out at the southern tip of Manhattan Island. In its history, the land has been a fortress, first to defend the settlement of New Amsterdam and later to defend New York against the British in the war of 1812. After the fortress, Castle Clinton was decommissioned the site was developed into a public park, with the castle becoming an aquarium. Like many of New York's public parks, it suffered greatly from neglect and crime and was restored in 1994. The park's 25 acres has now been completely revitalised, the planting is the work of Piet Oudolf with drifts of perennials, grasses and bulbs.





Images

(Top left) Drifts of Tulips and Alliums

(Top Right) Seakale, *Crambe maritima*

(Bottom Right) The Sphere, which stood between the original World Trade Center Towers now acts a memorial in Battery Park's gardens, only a few blocks from the site.

SUMMARY

This once in a lifetime trip has been a fantastic experience, through which I had the chance to visit so many excellent gardens, each with their own particular characters and charms. The American Flora is rich in enchanting plants, and nearly all of the gardens visited reveres and makes good use of their own native plants.

From the splendour and exuberance of Longwood, to the naturalistic wonderland of Mount Cuba and the urban gardens of New York this tour has offered many interesting contrasts and shows the excellence of American Horticulture, which seems so much to steer its own path whilst maintaining and utilising its European roots.

COSTINGS

Our Tour was funded by the RHS Bursary Committee and the Merlin Trust. The Merlin Trust funded each of us to the sum of £200 each, amounting to £1,600 for our party of eight. With this we funded our flight tickets and part of our accommodation costs for the trip. I would like to thank the Merlin Trust again for this kindness, as it helped us greatly in making our tour a reality.

USEFUL LINKS

Below I have listed a variety of useful links to the webpage of all of the gardens visited.

Pennsylvania & Delaware

Chanticleer Garden

– www.chanticleergarden.org

Longwood Gardens

– www.longwoodgardens.org

Mount Cuba Center

– www.mtcubacenter.org

Morris Arboretum

– www.morrisarboretum.org

Scott Arboretum

– www.scottarboretum.org

Winterthur

– www.winterthur.org

New York

Battery Park Conservancy

- www.thebattery.org/

Brooklyn Botanic Garden

- www.bbg.org

Brooklyn Grange Rooftop Farm

- brooklyngrangefarm.com

Central Park Conservancy

- www.centralparknyc.org

New York Botanical Garden

- www.nybg.org

The High Line

- www.thehighline.org

Wave Hill

- www.wavehill.org



