In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Northwest Philadelphia was the summer destination for wealthy city dwellers looking to escape to higher elevations and cooler temperatures. Today, their estates have grown into lovely gardens that share their horticultural beauty with visitors near and far.

Spend the day or stay overnight at the Chestnut Hill Hotel, which is within easy traveling distance to the gardens in the region. If you plan for one day be sure to see:

Stop No. 1
Morris Arboretum, an American Victorian Eclectic Garden
100 E. Northwestern Avenue
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Open 361 days a year. Review the website before you visit [morrisarboretum.org](http://morrisarboretum.org).

Begin your day at 10am when the garden opens, and spend the next two-three hours exploring the 92-acre garden, known for its specimen trees, engaging garden features and more than 12,000 plants in the living collection. Original owners, John and Lydia Morris, Victorian brother and sister traveled the world, returning with unique plants and ideas that influenced their garden aesthetic. The result - a distinctive compilation of gardens and garden styles that include Japanese, Chinese, American and traditional English garden influences.

There are many “must see” plants and places, including the renowned Rose Garden, a mix of roses, perennials, annuals and woody plants. Look for more than 20 champion trees that dot the Arboretum landscape, such as the Katsura tree, with its spreading canopy, reaching beyond 100 feet. Spend time at member favorite, the Garden Railway, where G-scale size trains chug along a ¼ mile track through a miniature, natural world. Also not-to-be-missed are Out On a Limb – A Tree Adventure H. Hamilton Fernery, the only remaining freestanding Victorian fernery in North America.

Need to nosh? Visitors may pack a picnic, or enjoy a light breakfast and/or lunch at the garden’s Compton Café, open April-October with varying hours. If you’re looking for a sit-down restaurant, there are several in downtown Chestnut Hill, www.chestnuthillpa.com, only minutes from the Arboretum gates.

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Stop No. 2
Awbury Arboretum, an English Landscape
1 Awbury Road, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Open year round from dawn to dusk. Visit awbury.org to plan your visit.

➔ Another Victorian garden estate, Awbury was designed in the English Picturesque Landscape style. Originally the summer home of the Cope family, the estate grew to accommodate extended family members with several Victorian and Colonial Revival houses built, forming a unique cultural landscape. Now recognized as a National and City Historic District, these homes are privately owned with only the Francis Cope house open for visiting.

➔ The Arboretum’s 55 acres of green space were intended to be for the “quiet enjoyment of nature.” With extensive lawns and meadows, wetlands, rolling hills, and notable trees, including a champion size River Birch. The Arboretum still has a natural look and feel as expressed by the Copes.

➔ There is plenty to see and learn in Awbury’s Agricultural Village that houses many community-based programs, such as the Pollinator Habitat, Philly Goat Project, Awbury Food Forest, Greenhouses and the Education Building. If you are visiting on a Wednesday or Saturday morning (see www.awbury.org/adventurewoods for exact times), stop by AdventureWoods, a natural materials play space designed for the youngest guests.

Stop No. 3
Wyck House, Farm, and Garden
6026 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wyck is open year-round. Visit wyck.org to learn more.

➔ Dating to 1690, Wyck is known as one of Philadelphia’s oldest houses. The original home was renovated and enlarged in the early 1800’s with additional buildings added to the estate to accommodate the practical needs of the day, including a coach house and an ice house. All of these structures still stand today. Tour the first floor of the house, where the Wyck story is presented with a nine generation Haines family collection of decorative arts, family papers, and ephemera that details everyday life and pivotal moments during the past three centuries.

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After exploring indoors, step outside to the Wyck Rose Garden, which dates to the 1820’s and contains more than 80 cultivars of historic roses growing. You’ll discover many of the original rose plants from the 19th century design, as well as plants from the 18th century kitchen garden.

Walk on to the Wyck Farm covering a ¼ acre of the 2.5 acre site that interprets Wyck’s agricultural traditions and enhances the pastoral landscape. The Home Farm includes perennial herb & fruit crops, beds of annual vegetable and flower production, laying hens, beehives and a 1914 Lord & Burham glass greenhouse.

Additional recommendations for what to visit nearby

If you’d like to add a new plant to your own country or city garden, stop by Primex Garden Center, in Glenside, PA. Known for their woodies, this nursery offers a wide selection with knowledgeable staff to help you choose the best plants for your soil.

Time for a drink or dinner? Germantown Avenue in Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy are home to many wide-ranging restaurants. Try Earth-Bread & Brewery for pizza and a home brew, El Poquito a delicious Mexican cantina, Cin Cin for its inventive Chinese food, or McNally’s Tavern, famous for its Schmitter® sandwich.

If you’re looking for more nature, take a hike in the nearby 2,000+ acre Wissahickon Valley Park. With 50 miles of trails, historic structures & landmarks, activities and plants & wildlife, the Park is one of 600 National Natural Landmarks of the United States.

To learn more about Chestnut Hill’s early days, stop in at the Chestnut Hill Conservancy. Review photographs, maps & records highlighting the architecture, open space and social history of “the town” and the surrounding communities.

Enjoy this self-driving itinerary that will help you discover new places to get outside, enjoy nature and learn about horticulture! The Philadelphia region has a rich tradition of public gardens, arboreta and historic landscapes. There are more than 30 gardens within 30 miles of Philadelphia. The gardens mentioned in this itinerary are just a sampling of the rich diversity in the Philadelphia region where there is so much to discover and explore. Learn more at www.americasgardencapital.org.