Journeys in America’s Garden Capital
Gems of the Brandywine

Take a tour of these Brandywine Valley gems, which each carry a legacy of the du Pont family’s dedication to public horticulture. Start the day at Hagley Museum and Library, where the du Pont story begins, then travel to nearby Nemours Mansion and Estate to be dazzled by the largest formal French gardens in North America, and end the day in Mt. Cuba Center’s serene naturalistic landscapes.

Stop No. 1
Hagley Museum and Library
200 Hagley Creek Road, Wilmington, Delaware
Plan your visit and confirm hours of operation at hagley.org

➔ Located on 235 acres along the banks of the Brandywine in Wilmington, Delaware, Hagley is the site of the gunpowder works founded by E. I. duPont in 1802. This example of early American industry includes restored mills, a workers’ community, and the ancestral home and gardens of the du Pont family. Budget at least 90 minutes here to walk the gardens and see the residence, more if you wish to tour other historical structures.

➔ Don’t miss Hagley’s Osage Orange tree that was already more than 100 years old when the du Ponts arrived, and the home of E.I. du Pont.

➔ Purchase refreshments at the Belin House Café.

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Stop No. 2
Nemours Mansion and Gardens
850 Alapocas Drive, Wilmington, Delaware
Plan your visit and confirm hours of operation at nemoursmansion.org.

➔ The truly palatial residence of Alfred I. duPont is built to resemble a French chateau, and its gardens are equally grand. The mansion’s rooms feature 18th-century furniture and decorations and include a bowling alley. Guests may walk freely between rooms and throughout the gardens, interacting with docents along the way.

➔ Don’t miss the Colonnade, built in 1926 and designed by Thomas Hastings.

➔ Plan to spend at least two hours here – one hour for the house, and one for the gardens.

Stop No. 3
Mt. Cuba Center
3120 Barley Dill Road, Hockessin, Delaware
Plan your visit and confirm hours of operation at mtcubacenter.org.

➔ The serene beauty of Mt. Cuba Center’s formal and naturalistic gardens is made all the more inspiring by the fact that they feature native plants and work with nature, instead of against it. The former home of Mr. and Mrs. Lammot du Pont Copeland, Mt. Cuba features stunning vistas, statuary, woodlands, meadows and ponds. On Fridays in the summer (Memorial Day through Labor Day) the gardens stay open ‘til 8 pm. Mt. Cuba Center is BYOB, so bring a picnic!

➔ Visit the Trial Garden, a working research facility, to compare plant cultivars and choose your favorite, and find a cubby of activities and games down by the Ponds to extend your stay.

➔ Snacks are available for purchase on-site.
Additional recommendations for what to visit nearby

➔ Inspired to add native plants to your landscape? Visit Gateway Garden Center in nearby Hockessin (7277 Lancaster Pike) for a variety of plants and helpful sales associates.

➔ Brew HaHa! Café (3838 Kennett Pike, Greenville, DE 19807) is centrally located and serves delicious, light fare at breakfast, lunch and dinner in a charming atmosphere.

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.