Journeys in America’s Garden Capital
Plant Enthusiast Garden Tour

Are you crazy about plants? Always looking for something unusual to plant in your garden or grow on your windowsill? Then spend the day immersed in horticulture at three fabulous gardens with fantastic plant collections.

Plan for a very full day of adventure! If you want to make it a weekend of plant exploration, treat yourself to an overnight stay at the Joseph Ambler Inn in North Wales, a short drive from the gardens listed below and downtown Ambler.

Stop No. 1
The Ambler Arboretum of Temple University
580 Meetinghouse Road, Ambler, Pennsylvania
Open year round from dawn to dusk. Visit their website for more information, ambler.temple.edu/arboretum.

➔ Temple University Ambler has a long history of horticulture and landscape design. Established as the Pennsylvania School of Horticulture for Women in 1910, the 187-acre campus represents a unique mix of natural and designed landscapes. The Ambler Arboretum of Temple University has a diverse range of learning gardens, from formal perennial gardens to a green roof garden, which provide a rich diversity of garden experiences. They are committed to celebrating the achievements of the Pennsylvania School of Horticulture for Women and preserving the historic significance of the campus. Its three areas of focus are sustainability, the health benefits of gardens, and the history of women in horticulture, agriculture, and design.

➔ One garden feature that you must see while visiting is the Arboretum’s centerpiece garden – the Louise Bush-Brown Formal Perennial Garden. This magnificent garden was first planted in 1928 and was designed by Beatrix Farrand, with input by James Bush-Brown. Another garden feature you must see is the Wetland Garden, located behind Cottage Hall. Sustainable elements include recycled-glass pavers, biological filtration of campus storm water runoff, a solar fountain and native plant communities.

➔ Schedule a guided tour with the arboretum director or take a self-guided tour of the rich campus environments.

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Stop No. 2
Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania
100 E. Northwestern Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Open daily, hours vary with the season. Visit morrisarboretum.org to plan your visit.

→ Morris Arboretum is a historic public garden and educational institution. It promotes an understanding of the relationship between plants, people and place through programs that integrate science, art and the humanities. More than 12,000 labeled plants of approximately 2,500 types are growing in the Arboretum’s living collection. These include representatives of the temperate floras of North America, Asia, and Europe. This historic collection traces its foundation to John Morris’s interest in plants from around the world, and includes plants collected in China by E.H. Wilson at the turn of the century. Many of the Delaware Valley’s "trees-of-record" (the largest of their kind) are found in the Arboretum. Most notable are the katsura, Engler beech, Bender oak, and trident maple.

→ As a plant enthusiast, you can’t miss The Dorrance H. Hamilton Fernery. It is the only remaining freestanding Victorian fernery in North America. Originally built in 1899 under the supervision of John Morris, the fernery stands today as a historical time piece, documenting the British obsession with ferns and glasshouses during the Victorian era. Whether accompanied by children or not you will want to explore Out on a Limb, a Tree Adventure Exhibit. Get a bird’s eye view of the forest from 50 feet up, perched on a canopy walk high above ground level.

→ Enjoy fresh, locally sourced gourmet cuisine from Chef Josh Hunter on site at the Compton Café. After your meal stop by the Shop to treat yourself to a locally crafted item or a book on identifying local birds, your purchase supports the Arboretum’s mission.

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Stop No. 3  
**PHS Meadowbrook Farm**

1633 Washington Lane, Jenkintown, Pennsylvania  
Open April through September. Visit [meadowbrookfarm.org](http://meadowbrookfarm.org) to plan your visit.

PHS Meadowbrook Farm is a destination for every plant enthusiast! Meadowbrook is a 25-acre property where visitors can enjoy formal and informal gardens, seasonal plantings, and an extremely diverse plant palette. Bequeathed to the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society by J. Liddon and Alice Herkness Pennock in 2004, The Gardens at PHS Meadowbrook Farm have been lovingly cultivated for more than 80 years. The terraced garden was designed on a linear axis with intimate focal points directing your gaze down the vistas. Many of the focal points and accents in the garden are gazebos, structures, and statues repurposed from the years Mr. Pennock spent exhibiting at the Philadelphia Flower Show. Pennock created a series of lush “garden rooms” throughout the terraces using evergreen backdrops for colorful, seasonal plantings. The gardeners draw inspiration from what he left behind and still fill the garden beds and containers with hundreds of annuals, tropicals, and perennials every spring and summer to provide a stunning show to visitors throughout the growing season.

There is much to admire as you walk through the gardens an old pair of cloud pruned *Tsuga canadensis* (eastern hemlock), an enormous cloud pruned *Taxus baccata* (English yew), espaliered *Magnolia grandiflora* (southern magnolia), a grove of *Franklinia alatamaha*, and a large *Acer griseum* (paperbark maple). In addition to formal garden beds around the house, the PHS Gardens at Meadowbrook Farm include a large display garden, pollinator garden, cutting garden, xeric garden, cacti and succulent garden, rain garden, rock garden, and woodland path. All the plant material used in the garden is grown by the fabulous PHS Growing Center on the property. This unique opportunity allows for some very unusual plant material that you will find tucked away in all corners of this garden.

It is free to wander the gardens, but docent led tours of the house and grounds are offered the third Thursday of every month or by appointment. Be sure to stop by The Plant Shop, where you can purchase some of the plants on display in the gardens, as well as unusual varieties of cacti, succulents, ferns, begonias, tropicals, alpines, and perennials all grown on site in the Growing Center. Water, coffee, and snacks are available to purchase in the Lizard Lounge inside The Plant Shop. Visitors are encouraged to bring a picnic. Spread out a blanket in the grass, take a seat by the pool, or find a quiet spot in the shade to enjoy your food.

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Additional recommendations for what to visit nearby

➔ Other gardens in the area to consider visiting, Andalusia Historic House and Gardens, Awbury Arboretum, The Highlands Mansion and Garden, Hortulus Farm Garden and Nursery, or Wyck Historic House and Garden.

➔ Take a stroll through quaint downtown Ambler, grab some food at one of the many restaurants, a drink at Forest & Main Brewing Co., or enjoy the Ambler Farmers' Market. If you are looking for an activity to do after dinner, swing by the Act II Playhouse for a play or the Ambler Theater that specializes in independent, art, and foreign films.

➔ Art and horticulture seem to pair very well together. If you have time, consider visiting Woodmere Art Museum, just a 5-minute drive from Morris Arboretum. Housed in a 19th-century stone mansion on six acres in Chestnut Hill, Woodmere Art Museum is dedicated to the art and artists of Philadelphia.

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.