



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

NEW WINTERTHUR EXHIBITION FEATURES GARDENS OF THE BRANDYWINE VALLEY

Open March 27–July 25, exhibition highlights area gardens of the 1920s and '30s

(Winterthur, DE) – March 16, 2010 – *Lost Gardens of the Brandywine* opens at Winterthur on March 27 and runs through July 25. Through the use of antique garden furniture, rare color photography, and never-before-seen family images, the exhibition explores how Wilmington became a focal point of horticulture in the United States during the clamorous years before World War II, when American gardens developed into a high art.

The great public gardens for which the area is known today—Winterthur, Longwood, Mount Cuba and Nemours—were all thriving private residences in the 1920s and '30s. Dozens of smaller spaces also flourished. Many of these smaller gardens have not survived. The ones still extant struggle to balance historic integrity with the dynamic life cycle of plants and the long-term maintenance of garden sculpture and ornaments.

Exhibition Highlights

Hagley Museum and Library, Longwood Gardens and Nemours Mansion and Gardens all contributed to *Lost Gardens*, making it the first exhibition collaboration among these museums and gardens. Exhibition highlights include a dramatic 7 x 5-foot auricula theater—a traditional display of botanical specimens on tiered shelves—filled with plants representing the horticulture legacy of the du Pont family. In a small theater area, visitors can sit on antique garden benches and view a show of color garden photos from the 1920s. Previously unpublished photos were provided by garden clubs, families of the gardeners and descendants of the original garden owners. One section of the show is devoted to the contributions of garden clubs, influential groups that have seldom been given the recognition they deserve.

Behind the Scenes

Maggie Lidz, Winterthur's estate historian and the curator of the exhibition, began *Lost Gardens* as an

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Lost Gardens

Add One

outgrowth of her book, *The du Ponts: Houses and Gardens in the Brandywine* (Acanthus Press, 2009). “There were so many beautiful photos that I couldn’t use in the book,” Lidz explains. “I loved having the opportunity to use them here.”

Although Lidz began her research with garden owners, she quickly found herself engaged with the children and grandchildren of the estate gardeners, many of whom came to this area from Italy during World War I to work in the ramped-up gunpowder factories. In 1921 when the mills closed, a surprising number of laborers found gardening jobs on du Pont estates. Lidz notes, “Interviewing the descendants might have been the most interesting part of the last year. They had so many fascinating stories and photos to share.” This and many other surprising discoveries will be highlighted in programs related to the exhibition, running throughout the spring and summer.

Related Programming

Guided exhibition walks will be held every Saturday and Sunday, March 27–July 25, at 11:30 am, 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm (included with admission). The two-hour reserved tour, “Winterthur Then and Now,” visits spaces in both the house and the garden and focuses on the life of the du Pont family in the first half of the 20th century. In addition, guests can enjoy:

Lunchtime Lecture Series

12:15–1:15 pm, Rotunda

Winterthur experts and other local historians discuss notable gardens of the area. *Members free. Included with admission. Feel free to bring your own lunch or to purchase one at Winterthur.*

April 8: Grace Gary, Executive Director of Nemours Mansion and Gardens, “Unbuilt and Unexpected Nemours”

May 6: John Feliciani , Director of Horticulture at Winterthur, "The Felicianis: Three Generations of Gardening at Winterthur"

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Lost Gardens

Add Two

May 20: Jeff Groff, Director of Public Programs at Winterthur, “The Lost Gardens of the Main Line”

May 27: Diane Newbury, Landscape Historian, “Women Garden Writers of the 1920s and ’30s”

July 1: Jenny Carey, Landscape Historian, “Jazz Age Gardens”

Proud to Be Italian Day

June 13

Winterthur celebrates the Italian immigrants who helped create the area’s superb gardens in the 1920s and ’30s, especially those from Giusvalla, Italy, whose families continue to live nearby

(<http://www.giusvalla.blogspot.com>). All guests with an Italian Festival ticket, or who say they are “proud to be Italian,” will receive \$5 off general admission to Winterthur.

Lecture: “The Development of Patterns”

June 17, 6:00 pm, Copeland Lecture Hall

Mrs. Pierre du Pont IV will discuss Patterns, the private residence of Mrs. du Pont and her husband, Governor Pierre “Pete” du Pont, which has one of the most extraordinary modern gardens of our times. The garden is a collaboration among the du Ponts, landscape architects Dan Kiley and Peter Myer, garden designer Penelope Hobhouse, and landscape ethicist and contextual designer Rick Darke. *Members free. Included with admission.*

Lost Gardens of the Brandywine is funded by Mr. and Mrs. Pierre duP. Hayward, Mrs. George P. Bissell, Mrs. Edmund N. Carpenter II, Mr. and Mrs. David L. Craven, Mr. and Mrs. Richard A. Dobbs, Mr. and Mrs. Irénée du Pont, Nathan and Marilyn Hayward, Mrs. John G. Holmes (Ruth Lord), and Mrs. Christopher Livingston Moseley. Silk flowers in auricula theater donated by Diane James Designs, Inc.

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Winterthur—known worldwide for its preeminent collection of American antiques, naturalistic garden, and research library for the study of American art and material culture—offers a variety of tours, exhibitions, programs, and activities throughout the year. General admission includes a tour of some of the most notable spaces in the 175-room house, as well as access to the Winterthur Garden and Galleries, special exhibitions, a narrated tram tour (weather permitting), the Campbell Collection of Soup Tureens, and the Enchanted Woods children’s garden. \$18 adults; \$16 for students and seniors; \$5 for ages 2–11. Tickets are valid for two consecutive days.

Regular operating hours are 10 am–5 pm, Tuesday–Sunday. During Yuletide at Winterthur (November 20, 2010–January 2, 2011), the museum is open daily 10 am–5 pm. Winterthur, located on Route 52, six miles northwest of Wilmington, Delaware, and five miles south of U.S. Route 1, is committed to accessible programming for all. For information, including special services, call 800.448.3883, 302.888.4600, or TTY 302.888.4907. Online, visit winterthur.org.