

# Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

## The Philadelphia Flower Show

The Philadelphia Flower Show is an annual event produced by The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) and traditionally held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in early March. It is the oldest and largest indoor flower show in the world, attracting more than 250,000 people annually. It has also been described as "the country's oldest, largest, and most prestigious celebration of flowers."

The show features large scale gardens, which range from elaborate landscaped displays to individual and club entries of a prize horticultural specimen. Each year, the PHS declares an official theme. The exhibits are submitted for judging in many categories, and are highly competitive.

A popular part of the show floor is the Garden marketplace where visitors can buy plants and seeds, cut flowers, craft items, and other flower, landscaping and horticulture-related items.

The Show boasts fabulous floral and garden design, live entertainment, culinary events and extraordinary gardening how-to workshops and lectures by experts.

From: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philadelphia\\_Flower\\_Show](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philadelphia_Flower_Show)

### 2025 PHS Philadelphia Flower Show, "Gardens of Tomorrow"

In 2025, the PHS Philadelphia Flower Show exhibits will take you into a new world of imaginative designs and boundless inspiration. The theme, Gardens of Tomorrow, invites you to explore the future through the eyes of visionary designers, expert gardeners, and passionate green enthusiasts as they merge nature's brilliance with human ingenuity.



Alongside all the Flower Show elements you know and love, like the world's biggest plant competition, unique shopping experiences, and activities for all ages, you'll see and hear what the most innovative plant experts from around world think the future of gardening will be through their exhibits at our Know to Grow speaker series.

Join us in creating a future where gardening plays a central role in enriching our lives and sustaining our planet. Whether you enjoy gardening for the many health and wellness benefits, you plant for your community and the connections it fosters, or you garden with sustainability in mind to strengthen our planet's ecosystem – every act of gardening is an act of hope that can improve our outcomes.

### The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society: A History

**Now over 184 years old, The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society continues in its mission to "motivate people to improve the quality of life and create a sense of community through horticulture."**

In 1827, the nation's first passenger and freight railroad, the Baltimore & Ohio, was incorporated, slavery was abolished in the state of New York, and on November 24, a group of gentleman farmers, botanists and other plant enthusiasts held a meeting to create the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. There, it was resolved "to establish a Horticultural Society in the City of Philadelphia for the promotion of this interesting and highly influential branch of Science." At this time, the fledging PHS boasted 53 members. Today, our membership is 17,000 strong. Community, friendship, and glorious gardens all describe PHS, but interwoven with these descriptions is tradition, and the tradition that looms in most minds, is the Philadelphia International Flower Show, held each year at the Pennsylvania Convention Center.



The first Flower Show was in 1829 at the Masonic Hall on Chestnut Street, where the well-known Christmas favorite, the poinsettia, was introduced. Over the decades, the event has grown dramatically to become the nation's grandest Flower Show, attracting 250,000 visitors annually over an eight-day period.

Our Philadelphia Green program is another integral part of the tradition at PHS. Initiated in 1974, it has become the nation's pre-eminent model for urban greening. From its grassroots efforts to plant neighborhood vegetable gardens, the program has grown to be a major player in all realms of the urban landscape. From neighborhood parks to the restoration of major public landscapes, such as Penn's Landing and the grounds of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia Green has involved thousands of city residents in an ongoing effort to make the city a more livable, likable place to live and work.

The greatest PHS tradition, however, is volunteering. If there is any single concept that gets to the core of PHS's mission, it is the act of getting together with other gardeners of all backgrounds and "working the soil." Whether it's planting fall bulbs in a Philadelphia neighborhood, taking a tour of other members' gardens, or joining other avid gardeners to help stage the Philadelphia International Flower Show, when gardeners come together, great things happen. Fostering the passion for sowing and growing together has been one of the greatest achievements to emerge in the history of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

From: [http://www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org/aboutus/phs\\_history.html](http://www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org/aboutus/phs_history.html)

## History of the Philadelphia Flower Show

Philadelphia gave birth to America's first horticultural society, The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, in 1827 and the nation's first flower show, the Philadelphia Flower Show, in 1829. The Show was held in an 82-by-69-foot building called Masonic Hall on Chestnut Street. Twenty-five Society members showed off their horticultural treasures including a variety of exotic and native plants like magnolias, peonies from China, an India rubber tree, the Coffee Tree of Arabia, and sugar cane from the West Indies.

From 1927 until the mid '60s, management of the Flower Show was under the auspices of Philadelphia Flower Show, Inc., a professional group of nurserymen and growers. During that time, the Society produced the amateur competitive sections that are now a major component of the Show, called Competitive Classes.

In 1964, the city of Philadelphia announced plans to tear down the old Commercial Museum, Philadelphia Flower Show, Inc. decided to abandon the Show for two years until the new Philadelphia Civic Center was completed. The executive director of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Ernesta D. Ballard, felt visitors would lose interest if Philadelphia was without a Show for that amount of time and she persuaded the PHS's Council members to stage the 1965 Show in the 23rd Street Armory to maintain the momentum.



In 1966, the Show was presented in the lower level of the Civic Center and, in 1968, PHS became the official producer. The Flower Show remained in the Civic Center through the mid-'90s. In 1996, the Show moved to its current location at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, where it encompasses 33 indoor acres, with exhibit space taking up 10 acres of the main exhibit hall. The Show's expanded size and scope makes it the largest indoor Flower Show in the world, entertaining crowds over 250,000 people annually.

In the state-of-the-art Convention Center, the Flower Show features a host of amenities including a larger lecture and demonstration series, culinary presentations, Garden Teas, and 140 Marketplace vendors. Under the direction of PHS president, Jane G. Pepper, the Philadelphia Flower Show has blossomed into the leading show of its kind in the nation.

Proceeds from the Philadelphia Flower Show, including sponsorship contributions of PNC Financial Services Group, help fund PHS's outreach programs including Philadelphia Green, the nation's largest and most comprehensive neighborhood greening program. Philadelphia Green works with more than 800 organized community groups on thousands of projects that include planting street trees, maintaining neighborhood parks, and creating vegetable and flower gardens.

From: [http://www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org/aboutus/pfs\\_history.html](http://www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org/aboutus/pfs_history.html)

# Three centuries of history lead to today's Philadelphia Flower Show

By Dan Sokil, Feb 12, 2015

*During the war years, flowers were luxuries. While flowers continued to be used for weddings, birthday celebrations, and funerals, the number and variety diminished and the floral trades suffered. There was no Philadelphia Flower Show from 1943 to 1946. By the time of this 1947 photo, Philadelphians, starved for peace and beauty, were eager to attend the Flower Show once again.*

The Philadelphia Flower Show has been an annual tradition for nearly two centuries, and the growth of the show throughout the years has closely tracked with the growth of the city, and with the growth of horticulture as a hobby.

It's also been a family tradition for longtime volunteers like the Slater family, who have had three generations involved with the show, right on through to today.

"My mother worked in nomenclature — ensuring the plant names are correct on the entries — and for that, she had to have a terrific amount of plant knowledge, which she did. She was involved for about 40 years, and 2006 was the last show she worked on," said Don Slater, this year's vice chair of the show's Competitive Classes Committee.

His mother, Irene, passed away in 2007, just after that year's show, but left a lasting legacy. In addition to her many years co-chairing the show's Horticulture Nomenclature Committee, she inspired Don to spend time on several show committees (Horticulture, Horticulture Staging, Cards and Ribbons) during the past two decades; his daughter Jessie "was typing entry cards when she was 10 years old," and has been vice chair and now co-chair of the Horticulture Staging Committee for the past three years.

"I was originally doing what's called 'staging' — the process of putting the plants in one class to be judged, and doing it so all of the plants are judged in an even manner — no one piece has an advantage over another," Slater said.

"It doesn't require much knowledge of plants at all, just some design sense," he said — and with some 9,400 plant entries expected at this year's show, there's plenty to do for anyone who wants to get involved.

To see what the show has looked like throughout the years, don't miss "Images of America: The Philadelphia Flower Show," a photo-heavy book published last year and edited by Janet Evans, senior manager of the McLean Library with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. Evans said while plenty has changed, much has also remained the same.

"Beginning with our very first show, which was the first public flower show in America, we were introducing new plants to a very curious public," said Evans.

"In that first show in 1829, the poinsettia was exhibited for the first time in America, and of course, over time it's become kind of the iconic potted plant for the holidays," she said.

That first flower show — held just two years after PHS was founded in 1827 — was held in Masonic Hall, an 82-by-69-foot building on Chestnut Street in Philadelphia, with displays by 25 PHS members — and Evans said that's one of several spots around the city that has hosted the flower show over the years.

An 1889 poster for that year's "Grand Chrysanthemum Show," hosted by PHS on Nov. 11 to 16 of that year, gives the location of that show as Horticultural Hall, and starting in the mid-1920s, the show was held at the Commercial Museum, located at 34th and Spruce streets — that's a location some of today's attendees may remember, because the show was held there through 1964.

In 1965, the show was held at the Armory of the First Troop of Philadelphia City Cavalry — a military unit tracing its days back to the First Continental Congress — and that troop building still stands at 23rd and Ransstead streets. Starting in 1966, the show was held at



Philadelphia's Civic Center, and that's where the Slater family first started to get involved — with setting up, tagging plants and making sure all participants follow the same rules.

"People have always been competitive. I think they were just more polite about it back then. We have some very, very competitive people, and so we have to be respectful and hopeful and accommodating, but we do have very well-defined rules," Slater said.

"Sometimes a class [of plants] will say the pot size is 4 to 6 inches, and somebody will put something in an 8-inch pot, because it's a bigger, more interesting plant. Eight inches is not 6 inches, so you have to say, 'Sorry, that's the wrong pot size,'" Slater said.

A move in 1996 brought the show to the current location at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, where the show encompasses more than 33 indoor acres, with 10 acres of space in the main exhibit hall — and draws more than a quarter-million visitors each year.

"What you see over the years is the increases — both in physical space, how large a space the show occupied, and how large the crowds were. They absolutely have grown over the years, there's no question about that," she said.  
Besides the building where the show is held, what else has changed?

"Certainly, over time women have become a much more dominant force in the show, both as exhibitors and competitors, and with running the show," Evans said.

"Also, beginning in the 1980s, we really made a great effort to make the show more of an international one, by inviting participants from other countries to become exhibitors in the show — and that's true right up to the present," she said.  
Exhibitions this year come from as far as Malaysia, Australia, South Africa and Great Britain, "so we continue that trend up to this day," Evans said.

Browsing through the photo book brings back the images of those days gone by, and you can see echoes of the past that may seem familiar today. An engraved admission ticket to the 1874 show is included in the book, along with photos from successful shows over the years — from a Jazz Age display reminiscent of "The Great Gatsby" in 1929 to "Mr. Flower Show," J. Liddon Pennock Jr., who mentored countless gardeners during the more than 50 years of shows in which he took part.

Those who visit the flower show can even bring some of the old styles home — a "Make and Take" room will let visitors put together headwear with floral décor, similar to what you see on the cover of the "Images" book on the heads of a group of women in the 1950s.

"That's been something that our guests have really loved, and that's a recent innovation that will definitely be available this year," said Evans. Other features of this year's show harken back to prior years and venues — the PHS Hamilton Horticultur features floral displays by larger garden clubs, many of whom have taken part for decades, and this year's show theme of "Movies" allows displays to put a new spin on old classics.

"For many years the show used to be tied to locations: a few years ago the theme was England, a couple of years back it was Hawaii, we did one year where it was Ireland, another where it was Japan — a lot of area themes," Slater said.

"Last year's theme was art and horticulture — 'Art-iculture,' and will be a different way of looking at horticulture and flowers. It's exciting," he said.

Slater said other big changes he's noticed over the years are online features, both behind the scenes and visible to those who visit: the flower show is all over social media and visitors can hashtag their selfies and tweet their favorite displays straight to a social media stream on the PHS website — while participants can use online registration systems to smoothly enter the show and cut down on paperwork.

"We're always looking ahead, and looking at ways we can use technology to make the show as good an experience for our exhibitors as possible. We think the visitors have a pretty good experience already, and if we can make that any better, that will be a good thing," Slater said.

From: [http://www.montgomerynews.com/entertainment/flower\\_show/three-centuries-of-history-lead-to-today-s-philadelphia-flower/article\\_47bfd66-b4c1-5b7d-94a0-b7fce364f0d6.html](http://www.montgomerynews.com/entertainment/flower_show/three-centuries-of-history-lead-to-today-s-philadelphia-flower/article_47bfd66-b4c1-5b7d-94a0-b7fce364f0d6.html)



## Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library

Winterthur is located in northern Delaware and is the premier museum of American decorative arts, with an unparalleled collection of nearly 90,000 objects made or used in America since 1640. The collection is displayed in the magnificent 175-room house, much as it was when the family of founder Henry Francis du Pont called it home.

Winterthur is also 1,000 acres of protected meadows, woodlands, ponds, and waterways. The 60-acre garden, designed by du Pont, is among America's best, with magnificent plantings and massive displays of color throughout the year. The graduate degree programs and extensive research library make Winterthur an important center for the study of American art and culture.

Winterthur Museum is filled with historic and decorative objects collected and arranged according to the aesthetic principles of its visionary, Henry Francis du Pont. A passionate collector throughout his life, he transformed his family home into a showplace for objects made and used for centuries, then opened it as a museum to share America's diverse stories with the public. The collection of more than 90,000 objects includes items ranging from the streamlined, functional furniture produced by the Shakers to opulent masterworks of 18th-century craftsmanship. Fine art such as works by America's greatest early painters fill the rooms, as well as objects newly discovered and understood to be the work of enslaved individuals. Du Pont created spaces where his visitors would be immersed in beauty as well as history. We honor that tradition today, preserving the aesthetics of the museum while also telling the lesser known stories of people and events that shaped our nation.

### Gardens

Henry Francis du Pont had three lifelong passions: gardening, cattle breeding, and collecting American antiques. Gardening was his greatest. Even after he turned his home into a museum in 1951, he kept ownership of the garden until his death in 1969. He often said that though he was a mere visitor to the museum, he was always Winterthur's head gardener.

Three generations of the du Pont family gardened at Winterthur beginning in 1839, when Evelina du Pont and her husband, Antoine Bidermann, came to live here. Before they named the estate, built the house, or even chose the site for the well, the Bidermanns considered flowers.

Flowers were Evelina's passion, and the same is true of all the owners of Winterthur. Each generation built on the work of its predecessors, all preferring a garden that made the most of the natural landscape.





### **The Big Ideas Behind the Winterthur Garden**

The most formally landscaped and gardened areas at Winterthur are those closest to the house, and were designed by du Pont and his dear friend Marian Cruger Coffin, the first woman in the country to own a landscape architecture firm. As you move farther away, the tame, cultivated garden gives way to the freer Wild Garden style.

The Wild Garden, a book by William Robinson, inspired a new type of garden design in Great Britain, Ireland, and America at the turn of the 20th century. An idea that appealed to large landowners such as du Pont, the Wild Garden realizes gardening on a broad scale, “placing perfectly hardy exotic plants under condition where they will thrive.”

At Winterthur, “Color is the thing that really counts more than any other,” du Pont said. The flora, mainly naturalized exotics planted in large drifts and grouped with other plants that harmonize in color and form, is arranged to appear as if it grew spontaneously.

The 60-acre Winterthur Garden is surrounded by nearly 1,000 acres of meadows, farmland, and waterways. The views in every direction are carefully designed and important to the whole. The paths are an integral part of the overall design, curving rather than straight, following the contours of the land, passing around trees, drawing walkers into the garden.

### **H. F. du Pont as Master Gardener**

H. F. du Pont said a garden “should fit in so well with the natural landscape that one should hardly be conscious that it has been accomplished.” He took inspiration from the landscape he grew up in. The Winterthur Garden is built out of the fields, streams, hills, and woodlands of the beautiful Brandywine Valley.

After gardening at Winterthur for almost 70 years, du Pont was awarded with Garden Club of America Medal of Honor in 1956. The club proclaimed him “one of the best, even the best, gardener this country has ever produced.” The award noted the garden’s woodland layers, which du Pont had opened to create beautiful vistas.

“The woodland trees under planted with a profusion of native wildflowers and rhododendron, acre upon acre of dogwood, great banks of azaleas, lilies and peonies, iris and other rare specimens from many lands, each planted with taste and discrimination, each known, loved and watched, looking as though placed there by nature, forms one of the great gardens.”

Most early 20th century Wild Gardens have since yielded to land development and natural disasters. Winterthur is one of the last. It is surrounded by nearly 1,000 acres of farmland, all of it protected under a conservation easement so the property can never be commercially developed. We manage the garden today as though H. F. du Pont were alive, and his vision still informs our every decision. We hope you enjoy it.



### **On Tour: Lafayette, America’s Revolutionary Rock Star**

September 24, 2024–June 1, 2025

Celebrate one of America’s first celebrities with Winterthur Museum’s latest exhibition, On Tour: Lafayette, America’s Revolutionary Rock Star. Commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Marquis de Lafayette’s 1824–25 “Farewell Tour” of the United States, the exhibition explores Lafayette’s incredible impact on the young nation through a fascinating selection of Winterthur memorabilia and objects honoring the Revolutionary War hero.

This small exhibition officially opens September 24, 2024, with a special event on September 29 in collaboration with People to People of Delaware, an organization dedicated to enhancing international understanding and friendship through educational, cultural, and



humanitarian activities. The day will feature interactive activities that celebrate Lafayette's enduring legacy and the deep bonds of friendship he forged between the U.S. and France.

### Lafayette: A Revolutionary Icon

At just 19 years old, Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier—known to history as the Marquis de Lafayette—left his home in France to fight for American independence. He played a pivotal role in key battles, such as the Battle of Brandywine (1777) and the decisive Battle of Yorktown (1781), where his leadership helped secure victory for the colonies. A close confidant of George Washington, Lafayette came to be seen not just as a military hero but as a symbol of the revolutionary spirit.

### The Farewell Tour: A National Sensation

By the time Lafayette returned to the United States in 1824, he was hailed as a national treasure. His "Farewell Tour" took him across the country, where he was celebrated by people of every background, class, and community. To commemorate his visit, Americans produced an array of souvenir items, from buttons and medallions to handkerchiefs and ceramics. These and other objects are featured in Winterthur's exhibition.



### A Legacy Preserved at Winterthur

Winterthur founder Henry Francis du Pont, a passionate collector of Americana, amassed an extensive collection of objects related to Lafayette. Winterthur's items related to Lafayette are surpassed only by the number of items related to George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. Visitors to On Tour: Lafayette, America's Revolutionary Rock Star will have the rare opportunity to see these cherished pieces up close and explore the fascinating intersection of history, patriotism, and popular culture.

<https://www.winterthur.org/>

## Kimpton Hotel Monaco Philadelphia

The historic Lafayette Building, at 5th & Chestnut Streets, has been renovated into a luxury, four star hotel, by Kimpton Hotels, known as Hotel Monaco. The former office building, built in 1906, has been empty for a few years. In case 5th & Chestnut sounds familiar, it is the same address as Independence Hall, which is catercorner to the Lafayette Building, and the Liberty Bell Center, across the street from the new hotel. This is the first hotel officially on the Independence Mall. The 11-storey Lafayette Building was one of the few early twentieth century office buildings built on what is now the Independence Mall, as that area was mostly industrial until the Mall was created in the 1950s. It sits next to The Bourse, a former stock exchange built in the 1800s, which is now office space and shops. The building was used as an office building until a few years ago, when a developer bought it with plans to convert it to condos, with a modern addition, but has sat vacant since that plan fell through because of the recession.



## The Victor Café: Music Lover's Rendezvous

One hundred years ago a young Italian immigrated to America bringing with him little more than a great love for classical music and grand opera. It seemed only natural that his way of living would somehow include that love. John DiStefano settled in Philadelphia in 1908 and in 1918 opened his first business: a gramophone shop. Here, friends and neighbors came and enjoyed an espresso and spumoni while they listened to newly recorded operatic arias, symphonies and popular music of the day. DiStefano's Victor dealership became a meeting place not only for the musically inclined but also a nexus for companionship and advice.

John often took the South Street Ferry to visit the directors of RCA Victor, located just across the river in Camden, arranging auditions and making suggestions of selections to be recorded. Because of his broad knowledge voice and vocal repertoire he earned the respect and trust of those at RCA, and established a lasting relationship with numerous budding artists, some of whom went on to musical renown.



His efforts to bring together artist and recording studio are well documented by the signed photographs and operatic memorabilia which literally cover the Café's walls. The collection includes thousands of the family's considerable collection of 78 rpm recordings, treasures of another era. Many discs are rare, out of print, or never published but still earn their keep. A larger-than-life replica of Nipper, well-known canine mascot of "His Master's Voice" fame, stands sentinel at the front door, mute witness to a century of devotion to an ideal.

Upon the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, and in response to grim economic times, John purchased a beer and wine license and what had been DiStefano's Gramophone Shop became The Victor Café, "Music Lover's Rendezvous."

As time passed, John relied on his two sons Armand and Henry for daily operation of the restaurant, and fifteen years after his death in 1954 it began operating under the sole proprietorship of Henry. Following Henry's death in 1986, operations remained in the hands of Henry's wife and children.

In years gone by, live performances of arias and instrumental solos, with the occasional soliloquy or poetry recital, were exclusively by patrons. In 1979, an opera student working at The Victor Café between singing engagements sang for his customers and another tradition was born. On a shelf where a staircase connects the two brownstones which house the little café, sits a bell. Every twenty minutes or so the wait staff will take a moment between courses to ring the bell, announce a performance, and fill the café with song.

Since its establishment in 1918, Victor Café has continued to cultivate old traditions and establish new ones. This blend has resulted in the "living history" atmosphere to which our many patrons and friends return year after year.

### Live Opera

Every evening that you dine with us, you'll be enchanted by live opera, as our singing waiters perform every fifteen to twenty minutes. Our singers are all local performers in the Greater Philadelphia area, and represent some of the greatest talent in the country. They provide the perfect backdrop to a romantic dinner, anniversary or family reunion. Our operatic performances are something you'll be talking about for years to come! From: <https://victorcafe.com/>

