

ThursdayLife



IT'S BEGINNING TO
LOOK A LOT LIKE

Christmas

Get in yuletide cheer at one (or more)
of these celebrations of the holiday

Betsy Price Delaware News Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

Winterthur Museum's greatest Christmas decorating hits. The shapes of the holidays at Longwood Gardens. And a display based on Frances Hodgson Burnett's "The Secret Garden" at the Houses of Odessa. ■ Fans of holiday displays will find a wide array of ways to get into the holiday mood at annual Christmas exhibits in the Delaware area. ■ With Thanksgiving arriving so late in November this year, most are up and running. Longwood Gardens, which traditionally opens on Thanksgiving, opened Friday. ■ Here's a peek at what you'll see.

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Christmas

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Brandywine River Museum of Art

A Brandywine Christmas returns to the Brandywine River Museum of Art Friday, Nov. 29 with its traditional train display and critter ornaments, as well as an exhibit celebrating three beloved fairy tales. The exhibit, dubbed “Cinderella & Co.—Three Fairy Tales Reimagined,” explores the stories of Cinderella, The Three Little Pigs and Goldilocks and the Three Bears. The stories, reimagined over time and place, spark imaginations, teach life lessons, and touch on dark fears and basic truths.

Guest curated by H. Nichols B. Clark and organized by the Brandywine, the exhibition includes more than 100 drawings from books illustrated by 35 artists, revealing both cultural and stylistic diversity. The train exhibit includes model trains made by Lionel, Williams, Atlas, Mike’s Train House, K-line and others running on 2,000 feet of track. The museum’s annual critter ornament sale will be Dec. 5 from 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Dec. 6-8 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Christmas at Nemours Estate

Alfred I. du Pont’s home, designed to look like the Petit Trianon at Versailles, will feature 20 decorated trees, hundreds of feet of garland, dozens of wreaths and thousands of ornaments among its 30-plus displays.

Back by popular demand is the highly inventive mechanical tree on display in the Mansion’s boiler room. New this year is a stunning tree in the Chauffeur’s Garage featuring vintage automobile photos from the Estate archives.

For the first time, the display will feature a holiday gift shop in the Chauffeur’s Garage. It will be an extension of the Rocco and Mary Abessinio Gift Shop located in the Nemours/A.I. du Pont Hospital for Children lobby.

Hagley Museum

Holidays at Hagley will include a focus on Christmas trees at the du Pont ancestral home with “Christmas Trees: Past and Present.” That exhibit in Eleutherian Mills follows the evolution of Christmas trees in America from German immigrants to Queen Victoria and from electric lights at the White House to wrapped gifts underneath the dazzling decorations.

The holiday celebrations also include Hagley’s Gingerbread House Contest, on display through Jan. 1. More than 30 entries are expected in the contest, which will be in Hagley’s Visitor Center.

This year’s contest theme is “Christmas Trees: Past & Present” to coincide with the Eleutherian Mills focus on the American Christmas tree. Contest prize winners will be determined by popular vote and announced on Dec. 20, 2019.

Last year’s contest winner, Executive Pastry Chef Michele Mitchell, is creating Old New Castle’s Lesley Manor to be on display.

Houses of Odessa

The Historic Odessa Foundation’s 2019 Christmas exhibit will focus on Frances Hodgson Burnett’s “The Secret Garden.” That tale features a young girl living with a strict aunt while her soldier father recovers from the grief of his wife’s death. Scenes and vignettes will include the book’s Misselthwaite Manor and its secret garden.

The foundation has celebrated children’s literature for 33 years by recreating scenes from the classics in one of its 18th-century museum houses. Visitors



ABOVE: Longwood Gardens is known for its spectacular holiday displays, such as last year’s floating trees.

COURTESY OF HAROLD A. DAVIS/ LONGWOOD GARDENS

AT LEFT: The Mechanics Tree at Nemours Estate will return for the holiday displays in 2019.

COURTESY OF NEMOURS ESTATE

BELOW: A Brandywine Christmas will include the annual train display, trees decorated with its critter ornaments and an exhibit about the appeal of three classic fairy tales. COURTESY OF BRANDYWINE RIVER MUSEUM OF ART



have seen scenes inspired by the works of Louisa May Alcott, P.L. Travers, Beatrix Potter, Tasha Tudor, Washington Irving, Lewis Carroll, Charles Dickens and more. This year’s Storybook Trees exhibit of more than 30 trees decorated by families, schools, and organizations showcasing books and works of children’s literature will be displayed in the Wilson-Warner House (built in 1769).

Longwood Gardens

The Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, botanical gardens this year will focus on the many shapes of the season in a nostalgic and inventive display.

Its 4-acre grounds lit by more than 500,000 bulbs, the focal point of the exhibit is always the conservatory. The Exhibition Hall will be adorned with a larger-than-life 400-foot long ribbon entwined with giant ornaments. It will be nestled among a forest of trees rising to a towering Christmas tree decorated in red, gold, and silver ornaments.

The Music Room is transformed into a confectionery lover’s dream, showcasing antique candy molds from Shanes Confectionery in Philadelphia, and include two 18-foot Fraser firs dripping in pastel Christmas candy. The East Conservatory boasts the largest indoor tree in the display, a 24-foot tall white fir with a pine cone motif flanked by cut white pine trees and fountain jets. The Rose House will feature a living tree decked out in more than 150 ‘Christmas Joy Pink’ poinsettias as handcrafted chandeliers glow from above.

Outside, trees bordering the Large Lake will be the backdrop for a repeating illuminated light show set to holiday music classics and the Meadow Garden will sport a 140-foot tunnel of light along with a grove of glowing architectural orbs that pulse and change to the rhythm of holiday favorites.

Winterthur

Henry Francis du Pont’s country estate celebrates the 40th year of its Yuletide displays by bringing back favorites. Last year, 1,900 visitors were asked to vote for what they’d like to see this year.

“Holidays are about memories, so this special anniversary Yuletide Tour is a walk down memory lane,” says Debbie Harper, senior curator of education and coordinator of the Yuletide Tour. It will also include a record number of decorated trees.

The centerpiece will be Winterthur’s signature dried flower tree in the conservatory. Among the highlights:

■ The Court formed by the facades of historical buildings will be transformed into an 1860s market square. The rich, colorful display will include an immersive sound environment that surrounds visitors.

■ With a nod toward Winterthur’s “Costuming the Crown” exhibit, several Yuletide displays will look at royal influence on American winter celebrations in the mid-1800s. One room will recall Victoria’s practice of having separate Christmas trees for different family members, all decorated with gilded nuts, gingerbread and the red, white and blue candles of the British flag, towering over tables laden with gifts.

■ Trees will include cookie-laden evergreens from Pennsylvania German communities in the 1810s, the 1890s tree of Henry Francis du Pont’s boyhood decorated and his 1930s tree embellished with glass balls, tinsel and the new strings of colored electric lights.

■ The ballroom will include a chalked floor, an usual look that contrasts with the glittery room.

■ “Mr. Harry’s Party,” the annual staff party that the du Ponts hosted in the clubhouse, will be recreated in the Marlboro Room. It will be emptied for a

advance. \$30 adults, \$27 ages 62-up; \$27, college students with ID; \$16 youth; ages 4 and under free.

INFORMATION: longwoodgardens.org.

Christmas at Nemours

WHERE: Nemours Mansion and Gardens, 850 Alapocas Drive, Wilmington

WHEN: Through Dec. 29; Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday noon to 5 p.m. Late hours Thursday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., with half-price admission from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Closed today, Christmas Eve and Christmas.

TICKETS: \$18 adult; \$16 ages 62+, active military and students with ID; \$8 ages 5-16; \$40 family of 2 adults and up to 4 children.

INFORMATION: nemoursestate.org

‘The Secret Garden’

WHAT: Annual holiday tours and exhibit

WHERE: 201 Main St., Odessa

WHEN: Through Dec. 29. Open Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Sunday 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Close Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

TICKETS: Tour fees are \$10 adults; \$8 for groups, seniors students.

INFORMATION: 302-378-4119; www.historicodessa.org

Yuletide at Winterthur

WHEN: Through Jan. 5

WHERE: Winterthur Museum, Gardens and Library, 5105 Kennett Pike, Winterthur

TICKETS: \$22 adults; \$20 for students and seniors; \$6 for ages 2-11.

TIMES: Open 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily except for today and Christmas Day.

INFORMATION: www.winterthur.org

BONUS: Tickets will include a tour and a chance to see the “Costuming The Crown” exhibit before it leaves Jan. 5

Winter Wonderfest

WHAT: A light show and Christmas Village

WHERE: Hudson Fields, 29763 Eagle Crest Road, Milton

WHEN: Through Jan. 1. See the hours for the lights, Christmas village and rink at wonderfestde.org/

TICKETS FOR LIGHTS: Cars, \$15 online in advance and \$20 gate; vans, \$25 online in advance and \$20 at the gate; buses, \$55 online in advance and \$60 at gate. Enter through the North gate on Hudson Road.

INFORMATION: wonderfestde.org/

stage with floor-to-ceiling stage curtains, and feature vintage Christmas tree and toys.

Winter Wonderfest

The Sussex County light fest and Christmas Village moves to Hudson Fields in Milton this year, where it clearly visible from Del. 1. The 1.5-mile drive-through light show previously had been at the Cape May-Lewes Ferry terminal and Cape Henlopen State Park for three years. The new location will continue to include an ice rink, as it did at the ferry terminal, and a Christmas Village.

The show will have two entrances. The drive-through entrance is at the North Gate on Hudson Road. People who want to just visit the Christmas Village can enter from Eagle Crest Road. Parking fees apply. The event will also offer open-air hayrides through the light, but reservations are required. Tickets for those are \$10 adults and \$8 children 12 and under.