



Every Season Offers A Reason To Visit Valley Forge

by *K. Bailey Fucanan*

(NAPSA)—History often paints Valley Forge and its pivotal winter encampment with unrelenting skies, white smoke and brown, muddy campsites. But today, more than 230 years later, the area's stunning landscapes evolve brilliantly with each new season.

Much like Washington, D.C.'s famous cherry blossoms, Valley Forge National Historical Park boasts an explosion of flowering dogwoods every spring. Planted in honor of George Washington, a blanket of pink and white generally arrives between the last two weeks of April and first two of May.

Lacy dogwood blossoms also dot the miles of trails along the Perkiomen Creek at the John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove Wildlife Sanctuary. Here, at the artist/naturalist's first home in America, is where Audubon learned to paint birds in natural poses and created his world-famous, four-volume "Birds of America."

Each spring, purple pansies and violas populate a man-made mountain at Ott's Exotic Plants in Schwenksville, showcasing the family-run nursery's tremendous selection of annuals, seasonal plants, vegetables and succulents. Along with the advent of autumn and its changing leaves, look for a kaleidoscope of fall colors on the spectacularly transformed "Mum Mountain."

For many reasons, fall reigns supreme as the area's most spectacular season. While the arrival time of peak grandeur varies each year, it's generally safe to plan a visit between late October and early November.

Visitors often start their quest for color at Valley Forge National Historical Park. The National



Visit Valley Forge between late October and early November to see peak fall foliage.

Park Service has named it one of America's top 10 national parks for leaf peeping.

From the observation deck at close-by Fort Washington State Park, some 30 species of mature trees create a rich, warm palette. From September through October, hawks and other birds of prey soar high above in an airborne parade. From Valley Forge, take the Pennsylvania Turnpike east two exits to Fort Washington.

Birches, elms, maples and oaks comprise the most colorful trees lining the area's 55 miles of trails. Perkiomen Trail parallels the Perkiomen Creek and provides regional access to Central Perkiomen Valley Park in Schwenksville, among others.

In winter, Valley Forge and Montgomery County become a wonderland of winter recreation, from cross-country and downhill skiing and sleigh riding to exploring the great indoors of museums, malls, theaters and historic sites.

To plan an escape to Valley Forge and Montgomery County or for more information on hotel packages, visit www.valleyforge.org.

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