

Navigate Mount Vernon

Welcome to Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington! This orienteering course will guide you to interesting locations on the estate. As you complete the course, you will learn about George Washington, his family, and hired and enslaved workers. In addition, this course will provide the opportunity to utilize your navigation skills.

In March 1748, a sixteen-year-old Washington went on his first surveying expedition, which required the use of a compass. The expedition was filled with adventure; however, the young man faced challenges. Hoping for a comfortable night's sleep, Washington slept in a straw bed with no sheets, except for one threadbare blanket and plenty of lice and fleas. After one night, Washington chose from that point forward to sleep outside near a fire during this expedition. We hope that your adventures this summer have been more comfortable!

Instructions

To complete this course, use your compass to tour the Mount Vernon estate and walk in the footsteps of George Washington. Follow the compass coordinates and distances to navigate your way through the estate. In addition to the signage on the estate, this packet will provide additional information. At each stop, you will complete a challenge. You may do the course before or after your Mansion tour. Please be mindful of the Mansion line entry time as you complete the course.



To set your pace, please begin at these poles at point 3 on the estate map. The space between these poles is 14 feet 3 inches (4.34 meters)

1 - Begin at Bowling Green Gate

George Washington treasured the people in his life. Friends, family and other guests visiting Mount Vernon would have seen this striking image when visiting the estate. While we may be accustomed to such wide expanses of evenly trimmed grass, in the 18th-century, the broad swath of green would have conveyed a sense of the Washingtons' wealth, as lawns were expensive to plant and required extensive labor to maintain. Enslaved workers cut the grass with a scythe. Maintaining an even surface and uniform height required skill, and only the most experienced enslaved gardeners were allowed to perform this task.

Sketch the something that you see.

Can you see the original gate to the estate?

2 - Begin from the center of the Bowling Green Gate

Proceed 366 feet (111.6 meters) at 149° SE

George Washington's design for planting trees introduced symmetry into the naturalistic contours of the landscape. The trees framed carefully arranged views and offered welcome shade; the trees were more densely planted during Washington's lifetime than today. This is one of two large tulip poplar trees, directly across the bowling green from each other. Both are from Washington's time. The tree is approximately 145 feet tall and the Bowling Green is approximately 413 long.

If the tree was laying on it's side, what percentage of the length of the Bowling Green would be filled with the tree?

What year was this tree planted?

3 - Begin at the plaque from the last stop

Proceed 38 feet (11.6 meters) 186° S

This beautiful, yet functional garden provided fruits, vegetables, and herbs for the kitchen at Mount Vernon is an example of a Colonial Revival garden and its design is not true to the 18th century. Mrs. Washington supervised the plantings in this area as well as the preparation of fruits and vegetables from the garden by enslaved cooks. The brick walls and southern exposure create a microclimate that is generally warmer than the surrounding areas.

Find the area of the garden bed to your left. Please do not walk in thr garden beds.

What was the growing technique used on the fruit trees?

4 - Begin at one pace from the bottom center of the steps from your last stop

Proceed 189 feet (57.6 meters) at 134°

Turn to 226° and proceed 395 feet (68.9 meters)

Turn to 311° and proceed 120 feet (36.6 meters)

In the 1770s, George Washington unsuccessfully tried to cultivate grapes in this area. George Washington called this four-acre area as the "Vineyard Inclosure." A decade later, the area was transformed into an experimental nursery and fruit orchard. Approximately two-thirds of this area was reserved for an orchard, where Washington cultivated apples, cherries, peaches, and plums. A plant nursery was established in the other section. The nursery was intended to have plants that required more space to grow than those in the botanical garden. Ornamental plants for use within the landscape, trees for creating living fences, grasses for the collection of seed, and vegetables for the table were also grown here.

Select a tree and sketch it.

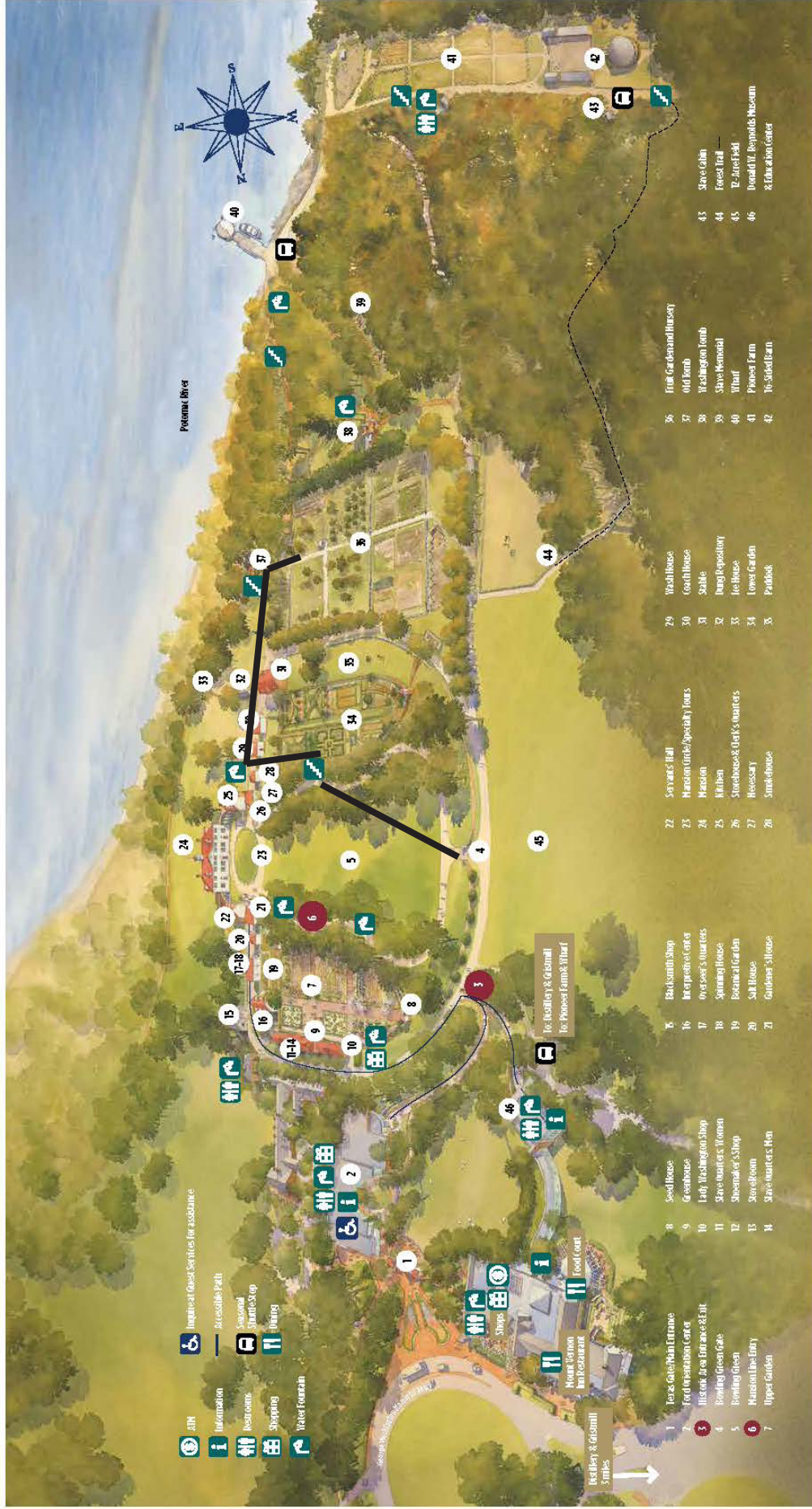
Which plants were grown here?

5 - Continue your journey...

Now that you have completed the orienteering course, you may continue exploring the estate. South from the end of the course is the Pioneer Farm Site. You may also visit the Washingtons' Tomb and the Slave Memorial and Cemetary. You may pay your respects to George Washington by laying a carnation at the Tomb.

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S MOUNT VERNON

mountvernon.org



- Information
- Restrooms
- Shopping
- Water Fountain
- Inquire if Guest Desires for assistance
- Accessible Path
- Seated
- Shuttle Stop
- Dining

- 1. Lee's Gate Main Entrance
- 2. Ford Washington Center
- 3. Historic Free Entrance St. Hill
- 4. Bowling Green Cafe
- 5. Bowling Green
- 6. Mansion Line Entry
- 7. Upper Garden
- 8. Seed House
- 9. Greenhouse
- 10. Lady Washington Shop
- 11. Slave quarters, Women
- 12. Shenandoah Shop
- 13. Slave Quarters
- 14. Slave quarters, Men
- 15. Beech Smith Shop
- 16. In or private car or over-seer's quarters
- 17. Over-seer's quarters
- 18. Spinning House
- 19. Botanical Garden
- 20. Salt House
- 21. Gardens, Silos
- 22. Servant's Hall
- 23. Mansion (Free/Specialty) Tours
- 24. Mansion
- 25. Kitchen
- 26. Storehouse Clerk's quarters
- 27. Bessie's
- 28. Smokehouse
- 29. Wash House
- 30. Coach House
- 31. Stable
- 32. Hung Depositionary
- 33. Ice House
- 34. Lower Garden
- 35. Pasture
- 36. Fruit Garden/Hillside
- 37. Old Tomb
- 38. Washington Tomb
- 39. Slave Memorial
- 40. Wharf
- 41. Pioneer Farm
- 42. 16-sided Barn
- 43. Slave Cabin
- 44. Forest Trail
- 45. 12-sided Hill
- 46. Donald W. Reynolds Museum
- 8. Education Center