A menagerie of more than 300 native and exotic creatures and enough flowers and plants to fill a botanical garden will be featured at Maymont in 2015. This bounty of flora and fauna is not what guests see outside at the 100-acre estate, but the treasure trove of nature-inspired decorative and fine arts found at every turn within the opulent interiors of Maymont Mansion. “A Passion for Nature at Maymont,” a special exhibition presented March 6 through September 8, explores the fascination with the natural world – from Art Nouveau lilies and dragonflies to the realistic sculptures of lions and owls by followers of the French Animalier movement – as illustrated by James and Sallie Dooley’s collection and additional items on loan. Daily and specialty tours of the mansion will focus on the passion for Nature and desire to enjoy the outdoors demonstrated in many aspects of American life and culture of the Gilded Age, including the growth of American suburbs, the Golden Age of American Gardens, the popularity of casual sports and the Parks Movement.

Among the Dooleys’ nature-inspired treasures, guests will find the world’s largest permanent public display of a limited edition set of the Rutherford B. Hayes White House dinner service. A collaboration of famous porcelain company Haviland and artist Theodore R. Davis, the original set was created as a dinner service for the White House in 1880, and its production alone is a riveting tale that will be shared during tours. A vast array of American wildlife and plants, including distinctive designs for each formal dinner course, is represented within the spectacular set in the Maymont Mansion dining room. During the exhibition, the Dooleys’ collection, including pieces rarely seen on display, will be complemented by pieces on loan from the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center in Fremont, Ohio and private collections.

The growing interest in the natural world during the Gilded Age will also be reflected throughout the rest of the mansion. Fashions on loan from the Valentine will highlight nature-embellished textiles as well as design adaptations for outdoor pursuits. Original garden plans and plant catalogues will illustrate Sallie Dooley’s love and knowledge of horticulture. As spring blossoms at Maymont, guests are invited to step inside Maymont Mansion for a fresh look at the intricacies and wonders of the natural world that have flourished there for 100 years and continue to inspire “A Passion for Nature” throughout the estate.
A Passion for Nature at Maymont

Special Exhibition and Program Series

A PASSION FOR NATURE AT MAYMONT
Tuesdays-Sundays, March 6-September 8, 12-5pm, Maymont Mansion
Guided tours available every half-hour; last tour begins at 4:30pm. $5 suggested donation. For information, visit www.maymont.org or call 804-358-7166, ext. 329.

NEW LIGHT ON THE PRESIDENT HAYES WHITE HOUSE DINNER SERVICE
A lecture and reception sponsored by the Maymont Council
Presented by Bob Doares
Tuesday, March 17, 6pm, Garden Hall
The Dooleys acquired one of the limited copies of the Hayes dinner service made by Haviland in 1881. Today, these incredible pieces comprise the largest collection on public view outside of the White House. Bob Doares, an independent scholar, collector of French porcelains and leading authority on the Hayes service, recounts how his sleuthing revealed amazing discoveries, shedding new light on the riveting tale of the production of the official White House china. $15 per person/$10 members (includes lecture and reception). Reservations recommended. Register online at www.maymont.org or call 804-358-7166, ext. 329.

A RABBIT ON THE CABINET AT MAYMONT
Monday-Friday, April 6-10, 2-2:30pm, Maymont Mansion
Discover the enchanting home of Major and Mrs. Dooley as their nieces and nephews must have seen it more than 100 years ago. Find a lion in the fireplace, a swan in the bedroom, a rabbit on the cabinet and more as a Victorian nanny reveals the wonders within the mansion to children of all ages. $5 per person. For information, call 804-358-7166, ext. 329.

A PASSION FOR NATURE CURATOR’S TOUR AT MAYMONT
Thursdays, April 23, May 28, June 25, July 23, and August 27, 5:30-6:30pm, Maymont Mansion
Join a member of Maymont’s curatorial staff for an in-depth tour of James and Sallie Dooley’s restored Gilded Age home, featuring the exhibit “A Passion for Nature.” Discover the artistic influences and inspiration behind the diverse depictions of plant and animal life adorning their 1893 residence, and hear the fascinating story of the creation of the White House Dinner Service, produced by the famous porcelain maker Haviland and the artist Theodore Davis. $10 per person/$5 members. Register online at www.maymont.org or call 804-358-7166, ext. 329.

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