

Japanese-style Gardens & Accessibility 2024 Garden Docent Training Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens

While the Vista Terrace is not an actual room on the docent-led garden tour, its location does serve as a useful launching pad into the Japanese-style garden and offers an accessible space for visitors who cannot navigate stairs. Depending on the mobility of your group, you have a few options to select from when choosing a location to discuss the Japanese-style garden that best suits the group's needs.

During the tour, you can ask the group their preference for the space, such as "Our next stop on the tour is located on a small hillside and has stairs. Show of hands, who prefers to avoid the stairs today and stay here at the Vista Terrace during this stop?" Select an option below based on the group's response.

Option 1: Descend into Garden

Visitors: People without mobility challenges, i.e.: able to descend/ascend the stairs

- Orient the group to the Japanese-style garden at the Vista Terrace.
- Walk with the group down the steps, encouraging visitors to use the handrail and watch their steps as you travel to the bottom of the garden (by the gate).
- Discuss the garden together then walk back up the steps to continue to tour.

Option 2: Split Activities

Visitors: Mixed mobility, i.e.: some visitors elect to descend the stairs, some visitors elect to stay at the Vista Terrace

- Orient the group to the Japanese-style garden at the Vista Terrace.
- Encourage those who want to venture down into the garden to do so and to return at a specified time.
 - For those who venture into the garden, docents can give those folks an "assignment" to direct their exploration (example: "See if you can see how the waterfall flows down the mini mountainside to the calm water at the bottom.")
- The docent then stays with those who stay at the Vista Terrace and continues to discuss the garden.
- Once visitors who ventured into the garden have returned to the Vista Terrace, discuss the "assignment" you have given with the entire group.

Option 3: Stay at Vista Terrace

Visitors: All visitors opt to not walk the steps and elect to stay at the Vista Terrace

- Docents can lead the entire garden talk on the Japanese-style garden from the Vista Terrace.
- If any visitors need to rest, please encourage them to use the outdoor lawn furniture available at the Vista Terrace.
- Note: Visitors can view images and learn more about the garden from the nearby garden sign, downloading the mobile app, and visiting Hillwood's website.



The Vista Terrace is located adjacent to the Japanese-style garden, offering a peripheral view into the garden. The Vista Terrace also provides visitors with a place to rest, with a selection of outdoor furniture.