We welcome you to the cities of Jacksonville and St. Augustine, sites of the first colonization by Europeans in what is now the continental United States. According to legend, in 1513 Juan Ponce de León was the first Spanish explorer to arrive in "La Florida" in his search for the mythical Fountain of Youth, and for more than two centuries the Spanish, French, and British fought for control of this desirable part of the New World along the St. Johns River.

We invite you to join us for lectures revealing our rich cultural history, tours of private gardens, an elegant dinner at The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens (site of the Italian Garden, one of only a handful of extant gardens designed by Ellen Chiapponi), and a trip to St. Mary’s, the oldest continuously operating monastery in Florida. The optional Sunday Tour will take us to St. Augustine, a city known for its many fine examples of Spanish Colonial architecture. Founded in 1565, St. Augustine offers us private tours of the Lightner Museum and the Ximenez-Fatio House Museum. Jacksonville also boasts the largest urban park system in the nation with more than 80,000 acres of parks. With its subtropical climate, historic neighborhoods, and stunning beaches and waterways, Jacksonville is a destination for anyone who loves gardens and history. Join us in the Sunshine State!
We will board buses for dinner and a visit to Glen St. Mary's, Mary's Annexe, established in 1863 by George Leding Taber, a Chicago trader who was given one year to live when he was sent for Florida to die. Taber purchased a large, abandoned cotton plantation and established his monastery, still owned and operated by Taber descendants. Known for its eponymous azaleas, this nursery was also a center for citrus production. Harsh flames, the author of numerous publications on fruit and nursery trees, served as general manager from 1907 to 1929. The families of "Taber" (TI) and "Taber" (TV) will share us the fascinating story of the Monastery Garden's restoration process and will introduce the new LAH publication, "Taber and the American Garden.

After a hike at the headquarters of the Garden Club of Jacksonville (located in the early 1920s for Mr. E.M. Cummer and others), we will board buses for tours of four private gardens in the Riverside neighborhood. The Cummer and the Garden Conservancy have collaborated with the SGHS in order to schedule garden tours coinciding with this annual meeting.

The day will end with cocktails and dinner on the banks of the beautiful St. Johns River at The Cummer, allowing for SGHS members to enjoy time with luncheon, experts, locals, and old friends.