

# Gardening for One Hundred Years 1923-2023



Groton Garden Club

# Dedication



The Groton Garden Club has grown and thrived throughout the past century because of its hundreds of enthusiastic members. Many contributed by chairing projects and committees. Others preferred to be in the background, quietly maintaining the Club's municipal gardens or working on other committees. Whether installing plantings, creating flower arrangements, or beautifying the town through our community projects, the common threads of our shared interests connected us all. Club members also supported each other during difficult times and celebrated many friendships forged through our love of gardening and the natural world.



This book is dedicated to all Garden Club members - past, present, and future. Thank you for your love of plants, gardening, and commitment to our community. Together, we will continue to make the town of Groton a beautiful place in which to live.

**Groton Garden Club  
Gardening for 100 Years  
1923 - 2023**



PO Box 413  
Groton, Massachusetts 01450

[www.grotongardenclub.org](http://www.grotongardenclub.org)

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# Introduction

The Groton Garden Club (GGC and/or the Club) turned 100 years old in 2023. As the Club approached its 100th Anniversary, a committee was formed to publish a book which chronicled the Club's history. The result details the projects created and activities our Club engaged in that beautified the Town of Groton and educated its citizens about gardening.

Since its founding on April 2, 1923, the Club has made a significant impact on the aesthetic of the Town of Groton. Over the past 100 years, the Club has endeavored to fulfill its object or purpose. Initially, this was: "The object of this Club shall be the promoting of, interest in, and development of flowers, trees, and shrubs throughout the town." By 1950, the statement had changed to: "The object of the Club shall be the promoting of interest in and development of horticulture throughout the town." In 1967, another change was made: "The object of the Club shall be to encourage and promote interest in and development of horticulture and conservation." In 1997, the object was changed to a purpose and read: "The purpose of the Groton Garden Club shall be to encourage and promote interest in, and development of, all aspects of gardening." In 2023, the word purpose was changed to mission and currently reads: "The mission of the Groton Garden Club shall be to encourage and promote interest in, and development of, all aspects of gardening."

# The First Meeting

The minutes of the meeting read as follows:

On Monday afternoon, April 2, 1923, at the home of Mrs. William P. Wharton, a garden club was formed with the following members: Miss Boutwell, Mrs. E.B. Branigan, Miss Ann Cogswell, Mrs. R. E. Danielson, Mrs. Cortland C. Earle, Miss Nettie Flanagan, Miss L. L. Hetzer, Miss Margaret Jardine, Mrs. Chas. Keyes, Mrs. George Keyes, Mrs. John Lawrence, Mrs. Richard Lawrence, Mrs. Wm. Lawrence, Miss Nellie Richards, Mrs. Stephen Sabine, Mrs. Winthrop L. Sheedy, Mrs. John Storer, Mrs. Chas. E. Stratton, Mrs. Frank Torrey, Miss Y. G. Waters, Mrs. William P. Wharton, Mrs. Harry C. White.

Mrs. William P. Wharton was elected President, Mrs. Charles Keyes, Vice President, and Mrs. Winthrop L. Sheedy, Secretary-Treasurer.

It was agreed that the annual dues should be \$2.00 and that the meetings should be held monthly from March to October, or more often at the discretion of the president. Meetings whenever possible to be held in the gardens of the members. Miss Hetzer gave an interesting short talk on early seeds, and flowers adapted to our soil and climate. Mrs. Branigan invited the club to her home for the next meeting, April 16th at three o'clock in the afternoon. The meeting was then adjourned.

Louise M. Sheedy, Secretary

# The Second Meeting

The minutes of the meeting read as follows:

April 16, 1923

The Garden Club met at three o'clock at the home of Mrs. Edward B. Branigan. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. An appropriate name for the club was discussed and "Groton Garden Club" decided upon. The membership of the club was limited to twenty-five (25) for the present, the number to be changed at any time by a vote of the club.

The following committee was appointed for the arrangement of meetings and trips: Mrs. Chas. Keyes, Miss Cogswell, Miss Waters, Mrs. Wharton. The secretary was authorized to order printed cards for notice of meetings.

Whenever refreshments are served at club meetings it was made a rule to serve only two articles. An open discussion and questions then followed.

Adjourned, Louise M. Sheedy, Secretary



# GROTON GARDEN CLUB

## BY-LAWS

### ARTICLE I

#### NAME

This organization shall be called the Groton Garden Club.

### ARTICLE II

#### OBJECT

The object of this Club shall be the promoting of interest in and development of flowers, trees and shrubs throughout the town.

### ARTICLE III

#### OFFICERS

SECTION 1. The officers of the Club shall consist of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Auditor.

SECTION 2. The Executive Committee shall consist of the above named officers and chairmen of committees.

SECTION 3. The officers and a nominating committee of three shall be elected at the Annual Meeting which shall be held between September 15th and October 15th.

### ARTICLE IV

#### MEETINGS

SECTION 1. Time and subject of meetings shall be determined by the Program Committee consulting with the President.

SECTION 2. At least one meeting a month shall be held from January until July, and meetings for the remainder of the year (with the exception of the Annual Meeting) shall be left to the discretion of the Program Committee.

### ARTICLE V

#### QUORUM

Eight members of the Club shall constitute a quorum.

### ARTICLE VI

#### MEMBERSHIP

#### A ACTIVE

SECTION 1. The membership shall be unlimited.

SECTION 2. The dues shall be \$2.00, payable at the Annual Meeting. A member failing to pay by January 1st shall cease to be a member.

#### B ASSOCIATE

SECTION 1. Associate membership shall be unlimited.

SECTION 2. Their dues shall be \$3.00, payable at the Annual Meeting. They shall be exempt from active work; shall not be eligible to office, but shall be entitled to vote and shall share all other privileges of the Club.

#### C HONORARY

SECTION 1. Honorary members may be appointed at the discretion of the Club.

### ARTICLE VII

#### ELECTION OF MEMBERS

Names proposed for membership shall be given to the Secretary and shall be voted on at the following meeting of the Club.

### ARTICLE VIII

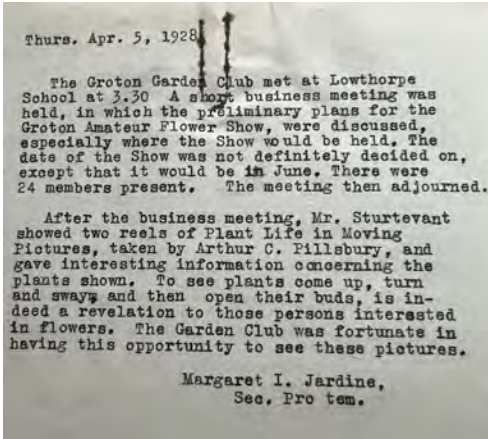
#### AMENDMENT

These By-Laws may be amended by a majority vote of the members present and voting, at any meeting of the Club, provided that notice of the amendment is given at a previous meeting.



# History Synopsis By Decade

## 1920s:



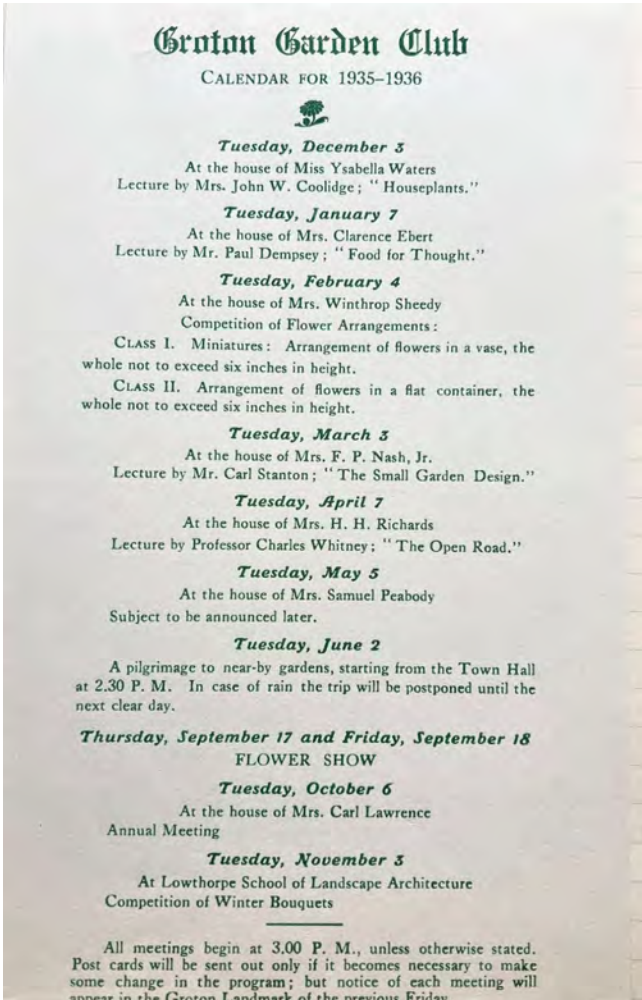
After the Club's founding in 1923, the members went to work planting at the Town Hall and at Prescott School on Main Street. Members pruned the town bandstand shrubs and maintained the Railroad Station plantings and lawn. They joined the Garden Club Federation of

Massachusetts (GCFM), and contributed funds to the Arnold Arboretum, The Harvard Botanical Garden, and scholarships to Lowthorpe School. A weekly basket or hamper composed of fruits and flowers from members' gardens was sent to the Benevolent Fruit and Flower Mission in Boston. A Junior Gardeners program began. Not content with only exhibitions in the Boston Flower Shows, the Club organized their own flower show at the Oddfellows Hall on Station Avenue in Groton. They held seed and plant exchanges with members and encouraged dooryard plantings. Members also took time out from their town beautification projects to visit each other's gardens.

## 1930s:

The 1930s saw the Club's first plant sale and Christmas greens sale. Continuing with projects begun in the last decade, members maintained the Railroad Station shrubs and lawn, cleaned up the Historical Society grounds and sent Mission Baskets to Boston.

They joined the New England Wildflower Society (NEWFS) and continued to support the Lowthorpe School Scholarship Fund. Flower shows were held. A wildflower sanctuary was planted and maintained in the Town Forest at the edge of the Dead River section of the Nashua River. The Club arranged for the planting of twenty-six trees on Main Street to replace those lost to the Hurricane of 1938.



## 1940s:

World War II affected the Club profoundly. Regular meetings were suspended from 1942-1945. Victory Gardens were created and flowers were sent to Lovell Hospital at Fort Devens in Ayer. Teas were held to benefit the Red Cross, and seeds were sent to England. Mission Baskets were sent to Boston, Lowthorpe School scholarships were funded, and the Club continued to support NEWFS. The Club was reconstituted in 1946, and members entered the Boston Flower Show and held local flower shows. Trees and bulbs were planted locally, gardens were tended at the old Ayer Hospital. Children's gardens were designed and installed.



*Groton High School (now Prescott School) - 1940*

## 1950s:

GROTON GARDEN CLUB PROGRAM 1951-1952		
Nov. 6	Mrs. Arthur Comey	General Garden Design
Mrs. W. Bestinck - Smith		
Dec. 4	Films: Yours is the Land. The Forest Grows. Our Soil Resources.	
Mrs. G. H. Timmins		
Jan. 8	Mr. Carol Fulkerson Rhode Island School of Design	Texture of Material Land Forms
Mrs. S. Sabine		
Feb. 5	Mr. Stephen Hamlin Rhode Island School of Design	Annuals and Perennials
Mrs. F. P. Nash		
March 4	Mr. Andre Snow	European and New England Gardens
Mrs. L. Parks Mrs. G. Skinner		
April 1	Mr. M. G. Fultz Middlesex County Extension Service	Preparation of Garden Soil and Compost
Mrs. H. O. Wood		
May 13	Trip to Waltham Field Station	Lecture on Bulbs
June 3	Open	
Mrs. K. W. Marriner		

In the 1950s, the Club was busy with community projects. Members continued to send Mission Baskets to Boston, hold plant sales, greens sales, and teas. Flowers were sent to Fort Devens, and a bench was donated to the Unitarian Church. In addition to local flower shows and the Boston Flower Show, members sponsored a special flower show for the Groton

Tercentenary Celebration in 1955. Funds were allocated for Lowthorpe Scholarships, a hurricane tree fund, and plants at Sawyer Common. Members planted trees on Main Street, held a local house and garden tour, maintained the town Watering Troughs, and planted gardens for children.

## 1960s:

By the 1960s, the GGC began to look the way it does today. The Club rejoined the GCFM and worked with the town to set up the Conservation Commission. It supported the Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA) and NEWFS. A Garden Therapy program began at the Hale Nursing Home. With a blueprint of Main Street trees and a planting plan, GGC members arranged for the planting of linden and sycamore trees on Main Street. The ever popular Mission Baskets continued to be sent to Boston. Plant,

bulb, and greens sales were held, and entries were made to flower shows, both locally and in Boston. Teas were held, and house and garden tours continued. Members spearheaded a town wide anti-litter campaign.



*Main Street 1964*

## **1970s:**

The Club celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1973 and the nation's Bicentennial in 1976. The celebration included plantings on the Town Commons, at the Post Office, Town Hall, and entry of a float in the Bicentennial parade. Several clean-up projects were initiated including Groton Recycles Its Trash (GRIT) and anti-litter campaigns. Members helped plant shrubs at the new landfill entrance on Cow Pond Brook Road. The town was beautified by the Club's plantings and maintenance of Prescott Common and Hollis Street Traffic Island. The new Nashoba Hospital and Mental Health Building in Ayer were enhanced by a major

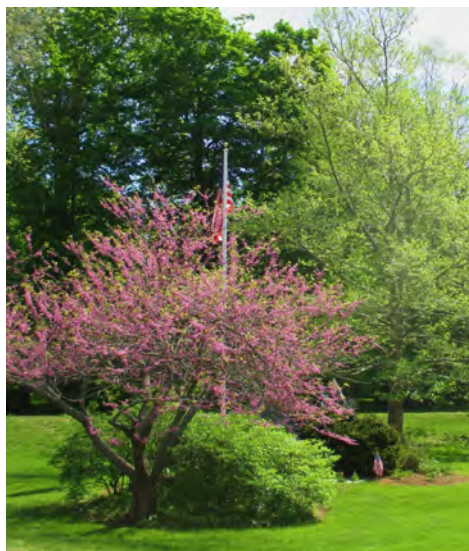
landscaping project. Perennials and shrubs were added to the Knop's Pond picnic and beach areas. Members planted trees on Arbor Day, and the town Watering Troughs were planted and maintained. Fundraisers included the usual flower shows, garden tours, plant and bulb sales, and two boutiques. GGC members attended landscape school, created displays at the Groton Center for the Arts Festival, arranged flowers for the Historical Society, and held Garden Therapy programs at the Hale Nursing Home. In addition to supporting NRWA and NEWFS, the Club reconstituted the Junior Gardeners Club and formed a Dirt Gardeners Group.

### **1980s:**

The Marion Nash Memorial Garden at Nashoba Community Hospital in Ayer was a major Club project. The Club also formed two new groups: Birds and Wildflowers as a Club committee and Friends of the Trees as an independent organization. Members continued to maintain the Knop's Pond / Sargisson Beach plantings, Prescott Common, Hollis Street Traffic Island, and the Watering Troughs. Projects included an Arbor Day tree planting and landscaping at Petapawag Canoe Launch. Plant sales, flower shows, home and garden tours, bulb plantings, and wrapping paper sales continued throughout the decade. There was even a fashion show. GGC members supported NRWA, NEWFS, and awarded high school scholarships. Garden Therapy continued at the Hale Nursing Home. The Club's 60th anniversary was celebrated with a cake outside of Town Hall.

### **1990s:**

The Club continued planting and maintaining the Marion Nash Memorial Garden at Nashoba Community Hospital. Entries were submitted to flower shows both local, in Boston, and at the



Topsfield Fair. Sales of greens, bulbs, wrapping paper, and plants kept members busy, along with maintaining the Watering Troughs, Prescott Common, Petapawag Canoe Launch, and digging up and replanting Hollis Street Traffic Island. Plantings were made at the new Police Station. Town Hall gardens were planted and maintained. The Groton Public Library was

decorated at Christmas, and an Earth Day clean-up was held. Members continued to support NRWA, NEWFS, and award high school scholarships. Some new activities included support of the New England Botanical Garden at Tower Hill, a sale of bluebird houses, a bluebird survey, a bald eagle rescue stamp drive, Commissioners of Trust Funds Lecture programs, daffodil sales, plantings at NRWA, Legion Common, and Town Hall.

## **2000s:**

The new millennium ushered in new Club projects. The Constance Wharton Smith garden at Town Hall was designed, planted, and dedicated. The Boutwell House (now called the Groton History Center) historic gardens were restored, and the house was decorated for Christmas. Members provided plants, maintenance, and support for the Virginia Thurston Healing Garden in Harvard, MA. A website was created, decorative boxwood trees were made and donated to Loaves and Fishes, and a new committee was

formed to deliver flower arrangements to the Town Library twice a month. In honor of Groton's 350th celebration, Club members designed planters to be placed on Main Street. Ongoing projects included maintenance of the gardens at Town Hall, Prescott Common, Hollis Street Traffic Island, Watering Troughs, and Petapawag Canoe Launch. Members participated in Earth Day litter clean-ups and Arbor Day tree plantings with Friends of the Tree Warden. The Garden Therapy committee relocated to Rivercourt in West Groton. There were daffodil and plant sales, and members toured each other's gardens. The Club reached out to local youth with Junior Gardening projects and high school scholarships. The Club joined the NRWA Loosestrife Eradication Project and continued support of NRWA and NEWFS. Passes to Tower Hill and NEWFS were donated to the Groton Library for townspeople to use. Lectures sponsored by the Commissioners of Trust Funds continued to be held, and the Marion Nash Memorial Garden was maintained at Nashoba Valley Medical Center.

## **2010s:**

The Blue Star Memorial at Sawyer Common was designed, planted, and dedicated. There were plantings installed at Prescott Common, Watering Troughs, Groton Country Club, and Town Hall. The Club continued support of NRWA and NEWFS, Tower Hill, and Virginia Thurston Healing Garden. Boxwood Trees were made and donated to Loaves and Fishes. The Hanson Memorials were redesigned and planted. Funds were granted to the Friends of the Tree Warden for replacement of trees lost in the October 2011 snowstorm, to GCFM to help repair tornado damage in central Massachusetts, and the National Garden Clubs for disaster relief. The Club continued to sponsor Arbor Day plantings. A booth was set up at Grotonfest and information was shared on invasive species. Planters were installed and maintained at the Police and



Center Fire Stations. A new 9/11 garden was installed at the Fire Station and shrubs and groundcovers were planted at the Police Station. A garden was designed and planted at the Four Corners Traffic Island. The blueprints for the original 1960's Main Street Project were framed and presented to the town. A new garden was installed at the side entrance of the Groton History Center. The Club celebrated its 90th Anniversary. The garden at the Carol Wheeler Memorial in West Groton was enlarged and refurbished. The Firemen's Common garden was restored and new benches installed. Plant Sales became bigger and better.

## **2020s:**



A new Native Plant Test Garden was installed at Town Hall to showcase native plant species. Over ten municipal gardens and planters were maintained. The Club continued its community service work during the Covid-19 pandemic and kept its members engaged, with meetings occurring via an online meeting platform or outdoors. The doorway gardens at the Fire Station were refurbished. In 2023, the GGC celebrated its 100th year.

# Projects



The Groton Garden Club has been involved in many projects over the decades. Some projects were started, and then turned over to other organizations, and some were discontinued. Others were completed in a year or less, while some continued for decades. Many projects are ongoing. The following section provides an alphabetical listing and description of all 100 years of Club projects.

## **Bicentennial Celebration (1975 - 1976)**



The Town of Groton planned a celebration of the nation's Bicentennial in 1976, and the GGC participated in many ways. Club members served on the town Bicentennial Committee, and the

Club engaged in many beautification and decorative projects for the Bicentennial year.



A flower show was held on October 4th and 5th of 1975 (see Flower Shows). A circle of red geraniums and white alyssum was planted at Hollis Street Traffic Island. Six white baskets filled with red geraniums and vinca were

placed at the Post Office, the Town Hall, and at the Nod Road / North Main Street intersection. A Victorian container was placed and planted at the Groton History Center (Boutwell House). Special red, white, and blue plantings were installed at Prescott Common and in the Watering Troughs. Window boxes were planted and placed at the Groton Drug Store on Main Street.



The Club organized a town-wide Bicentennial beautification project, with residents and businesses asked to decorate their homes and buildings with a red, white, and blue theme, and prizes were awarded. The Club took first prize for decorating St. James Church in West Groton. The GGC sponsored a vegetables and flowers exhibit at the high school during Labor Day weekend. Many Club members won prizes at this event.

The GGC entered a float in the Bicentennial Parade and won first prize for originality. An elm tree was donated by the Club and planted in front of the Groton History Center as part of the nation-wide Liberty Tree plantings, and a tulip tree was planted at

Legion Hall. A brief history of the Club was prepared and placed in the town time capsule on Sawyer Common.

## **Birds and Wildflowers (1990 - 1997)**

In May of 1990, the Club formed the Birds and Wildflowers committee under the direction of Club member Suzanne Goehringer. The committee organized many activities over the years. The first was to plan and develop a project that introduced bluebird houses around town. The idea of having a bluebird trail had been discussed since 1982. The purpose was to conserve and encourage propagation of these lovely and once-plentiful feathered residents. Nashoba Valley Technical High School supplied bird houses made in their carpentry class. In the fall of 1990, seventy bluebird houses were sold to Club members and to the public. During 1991 and 1992, many more houses were built and sold. The Club also distributed siting instructions for the houses and planned a follow-up study on the success of housing bluebirds. A survey of those who purchased houses was conducted in spring of 1993. Almost one third of the purchasers reported success in attracting bluebirds, and the results were published in several newspapers. The Club also created and distributed purple martin houses made from gourds that had been grown by Club members.



Another committee initiative was participation in the National Audubon Society stamp collection project (1992-1994). This project raised money for a raptor rehabilitation program in Florida. Club members were asked to save envelopes with stamps and post-marked dates, that were then collected and sent to Audubon. This came to be known as the Bald Eagle Stamp Program, and it continued into 1995.



In 1993, the committee investigated the possibility of planting native plants at the Bates Conservation Area in Groton. They prepared an extensive list of existing species at Bates and gave the list to the Groton Conservation Trust. Many native wildflowers were transplanted into the area, and a spring wildflower walk was held. On April 17, 1997, the Bird and Wildflower committee organized the removal and



relocation of wild lupine along the new Nashua River Rail Trail. The native *Lupinus perennis* is an endangered plant in Massachusetts. Approximately 150 plants were moved from the area to be paved and relocated to another area along the trail. The relocation was organized by the Natural Heritage Program and carried out by Club members. The wild

lupines can still be seen along the trail in the spring, and there is a small sign in the area recognizing this rescue work.

## Blue Star Memorial (2011 - Present)



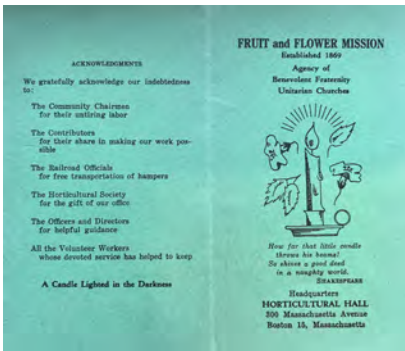
The Blue Star Memorial is located on Sawyer Common at Hollis Street and Martins Pond Road. This is a highway and byway marker program sponsored by National Garden Clubs, Inc. It began in 1945 as a program

to honor men and women serving in the Armed Forces during WWII. It now serves as a memorial to all who have served or will serve. In October of 2010, Club President Penny Hommeyer brought forth a proposal for the GGC to participate in this program and create a memorial in Groton. A committee was formed, members met with the town to approve the location of the garden, and a plan was drawn up by Club member Lorayne Black. A rock was chosen for the memorial, and the plaque was ordered from the National Garden Clubs. The town assisted by digging up the ground for the garden site, and GGC members amended the soil and planted the shrubs. A late October snowstorm threatened to stall the project, but GGC members persevered and finished the project on time. The memorial garden was dedicated in a ceremony on Veterans Day - November 11th, 2011, at 11:00 a.m. In addition to maintaining the garden year round, the GGC places wreaths on ten stone markers at Sawyer Common in December. These stones commemorate the Groton citizens who fought in all wars since the American Revolution.



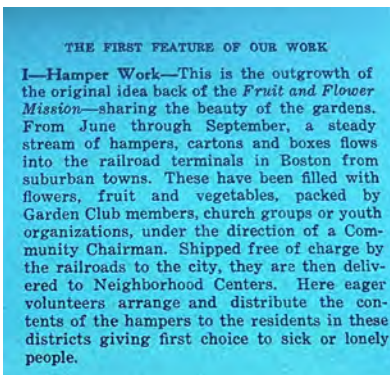
## **Boston Benevolent Fruit and Flower Mission Baskets (1926 - 1968)**

The Boston Benevolent Fruit and Flower Mission is a charitable organization that began in 1869. A group of women collected and distributed flowers, fruit, and vegetables to residents in Boston such as shut-ins, elderly, and sick people who had no access to these things. The program was first organized by the Boston Hollis Street Church, later at Parker Memorial and the Bulfinch Place Church in Boston. The Massachusetts Horticulture Society became involved with the program, and donations were collected from many towns in Massachusetts.



In the fall of 1926, the Club formed the Flower Mission committee, and one of the Club's longest-standing projects began. Three shipments of fruits, vegetables, and flower arrangements from Club members' gardens were sent to Boston that fall. A letter of thanks was received from the

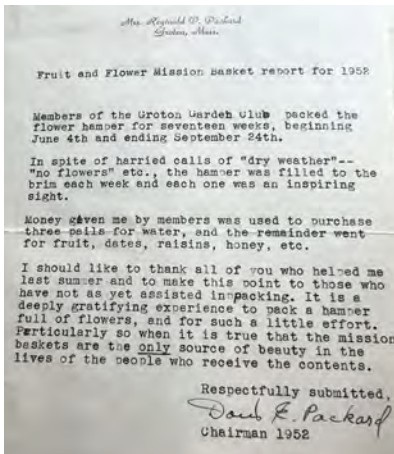
Mission for the contributions, which were especially appreciated at Thanksgiving and Christmas times. As the project continued, there were difficulties in transportation – at first the hampers went by train, then by express bus and train, and finally by energetic private drivers. In June of 1927, the Club began sending a hamper to the North End Mission each week during the growing season. It was noted by the chair of the committee that *“the Club should not lose interest in this work as that particular mission gets no donation if Groton fails.”* Five volunteers were needed each week, and although there were difficulties in filling the hampers in 1928, the Club voted to continue the project.



In 1930, a different Club member took charge each week, and a basket was filled and sent to Boston for 14 weeks. It was noted that flowers, vegetables, and fruit were sent weekly over the summer - always on time and well done. In 1932, Groton's hampers went to the Haymarket



Relief Hospital every Wednesday for seventeen weeks and were much appreciated. At the Club's 1933-34 October Annual Meeting, the Fruit and Flower Mission committee reported that seventeen hampers were sent from June to September. There were some transportation issues getting the baskets to Boston due to train service being discontinued. Members drove or bused the baskets to Nashua, then they were put on the train to Boston. There were many types of vegetables, fruits, and sometimes eggs. A variety of flower arrangements were also sent. From 1933 to 1938, baskets were sent every week in the summer, often filled to overflowing. Letters of thanks were received. An anonymous club member paid the costs to transport the baskets weekly.



In 1938, weekly Mission baskets were packed at Lowthorpe School and sent to Boston. The baskets were sent on schedule in spite of the Hurricane of '38 that disrupted so many things. The project continued throughout the 1940s and 1950s, and baskets were even sent during the war years. In November of 1958, a special Club meeting was held to vote on the continuation of Mission Baskets,

and the project was approved. Christmas Mission Baskets were delivered in 1960 and other baskets during the summer months. In 1966, the Mission Director suggested that the baskets be delivered to Horticultural Hall for distribution, twice a month in the summer, instead of weekly. Requests were also made for canned goods and monetary donations.

In 1967, members were reminded to “*tag and tie the basket so that the knot can be undone and not cut and to please pack very carefully so material will arrive in good condition.*” In October of 1967, concerns were raised about continuation of the program, and in March of 1968, the Club voted to discontinue the project. It had become increasingly difficult to find members who would commit themselves months ahead or who could transport the baskets to Boston. The Club continued to support the mission with a monetary donation, but ceased delivery of baskets in May of 1968.

### **Boxwood Trees (2006 - Present)**



This project began as a workshop in 2006. Since then, each December, GGC members participate in a one-day workshop to create Boxwood Trees. The finished trees are donated to organizations including Loaves and

Fishes, and the Council on Aging, which distributes the trees to those citizens receiving Meals on Wheels. Trees are also given to the Police and Fire Departments, the Groton Public Library, and GGC members who are ill or unable to attend meetings. Members may make a tree for themselves as well.



## **Carol Wheeler Memorial Park (2019 - Present)**

The Carol Wheeler Memorial Park, next to the Squannacook River in West Groton Village, was created in 2001. This was due in part to a substantial donation from a local business owner who had a dream of a West Groton Park. Groton Garden Club members served on the original town committee that developed the park. After its completion, residents of West Groton requested that it be re-named Carol Wheeler Memorial Park, in recognition of a local soldier who died in combat in 1952 during the Korean War. The park was dedicated in 2004, and a plaque and memorial stone were installed in 2006. Over the years, the park became neglected and overgrown. In 2019, the Groton Garden Club received permission from the Park Commission to maintain the front section of the park near the memorial stone and along West Main Street. A major effort was undertaken to clean out and replant the sections along Townsend Road and in front of the planter, to create a pollinator garden. A path across the garden was installed in 2022. This beautiful park, the only one in West Groton, provides respite for residents and those who work near the village center.





## Children's Gardens

(See Junior Gardeners)

## Daffodil plantings (1932 - 2009)



The GGC has had a keen interest in planting bulbs in Groton for many years. In 1932, bulbs were ordered from Holland for the benefit of the Household Nursing Association in Boston. Members were urged to

patronize this service. Over the years, bulbs were planted at various sites around town. The Club began a more serious planting

schedule in the 1980s, and a bulb workshop was held in 1987. Bulbs were planted in front of Town Hall in November of that year, and 300 crocus bulbs were planted in the myrtle under the linden trees, in front of the First National Store on Main Street. The Club sold daffodil bulbs to its members in the fall of 1990. A committee was created in 1994 to plant daffodil bulbs in community settings, and \$500.00 was appropriated to purchase bulbs. They were planted in a natural area in town, and the area was marked in order to call attention to the plantings. The public's response was positive when the bulbs flowered in the spring. In October of 1994, the project moved forward, and 1,500 daffodil bulbs were planted in Minuteman Common on Main Street. Some tulip bulbs were planted as well.



In 1995, the Daffodil Committee decided to expand the project and sell daffodil bulbs to the community; eighty-five orders were received - 10,500 bulbs in all. In the fall, the committee packaged and distributed the bulbs to the people who had ordered them. In addition, 1,900 of the bulbs were planted at Legion Common, 150 at the Nashua River Watershed Association, 100 at Town Hall, 125 at the Library, 50 at Prescott Common, and 300 added to the plantings on Minuteman Common. In 1996, there were seventy-six orders for bulbs. The Club donated a book titled *Daffodils for American Gardens* to the Groton Public Library.

In 1998, 7,400 daffodil bulbs were distributed in the fall. Of these, 185 bulbs were planted at NRWA, 200 were donated to the schools, and 200 more were planted at Minuteman Common. In June 1999, 11,000 daffodil bulbs were sold, and \$400.00 worth were given to the town to plant.



In 2000, 14,000 daffodil bulbs were sold, and 400 were donated to Florence Roche School for the children to plant. Another 500 were planted by the Club on the Station Avenue side of Town Hall. In 2001, the Daffodil Committee ordered 11,000 bulbs. These were bagged and distributed in October under the direction of Club member Lee Burton.



The bulbs that had been planted next to the Town Hall were relocated to the Library, where they could flourish. More bulbs were planted at the Middle School, Hollis Street Traffic Island, Prescott Common, and at the stone marker across the street from Prescott Common. In April of 2002, the Daffodil Committee was dissolved. It

was reactivated in February 2006, but the focus was on the sale of bulbs to Groton residents and not plantings by Club members. In 2009, the Daffodil Committee project ended. In 2016, small bags of daffodils were given away at the Club's Grotonfest booth. While there is no longer a Club daffodil project, the bulbs planted throughout the town can still be seen and admired every spring.

## **Firemen's Common (2016 - Present)**



Firemen's Common is located on Main Street at the junction with Pleasant Street. The common has had a variety of names and configurations over the years. Originally,

the common was larger and included a bandstand and large shade trees. The watering trough for horses still exists at the tip of the common (see Watering Troughs). The blue spruce tree on the common is the town's Christmas Tree. The area was first known as Flagpole Common, since the American flag flown there is the main town flag. The common was later named Charles Gordon Square, in honor of Charles Gordon, who died serving in WWII, and a plaque was installed in his honor. In 1982, a memorial stone with a plaque honoring Groton's firefighters was placed on the common as part of an Eagle Scout project.

The Common was in need of redesign, and in 1985, Friends of the Tree Warden chair, Linda Matisse, spearheaded an effort to refurbish the area. She planned a garden that included a small island planting bed, a brick walkway, and two benches. Groton School donated \$13,000.00 to cover the cost of rebuilding the

Common and donated two benches as a gift in honor of the school's 100th Anniversary. The Highway Department reset the curbs and planted trees contributed by Friends of the Tree Warden.



A plaque was set in the walkway in front of the benches, and the refurbished common was dedicated in 1985. In 2016, the GGC took on the care and maintenance of the common, and the garden beds were enlarged and refurbished with new plantings and a barrel planter. New benches were donated by Groton School in 2019, and a new plaque honoring Charles Gordon was installed by the Groton Conservation Commission. Over the years, many memorial trees have been planted here on Arbor Day.





## **Fort Devens (1941 - 1959)**

The Groton Garden Club has a long history of service to Fort Devens in Ayer. In 1941, flowers and containers were sent to Lovell Hospital at Devens, and the Club decorated the hospital at Christmas. In 1942, funds were donated for plantings around the Army camps, and flower arrangements were made for the veterans at Lovell General Hospital. Three car loads of flowers were sent to the hospital that July. Donations of flowers continued throughout the 1940s. In 1949, plantings were made at the hospital and funds were allocated for bulbs and trees at the Red Cross recreation building. The project continued into the 1950s, with flowers brought to the hospital every few weeks. Crabapple trees were planted in front of the Red Cross building. In 1959, service to the hospital was discontinued, except for decorating at Christmas that year.

## **Four Corners Traffic Island (2014 - Present)**

This project is located at the intersection of Route 119 and Route 225. In February of 2014, Club member Barbara Seeber-Wagner brought forward the idea of planting a garden in the Four Corners Traffic Island. This was an overgrown site and not an attractive entryway to Groton. The space is on state-owned land so work was coordinated with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and there were many hurdles to overcome. In May of 2014, GGC members approved the project and work began. The Groton Highway Department assisted by covering the grass with twelve inches of soil, and the plot was laid out. On September 29, 2014, the plot was planted with bulbs, daylilies, cone flowers, junipers, grasses, iris, and sedums. More plants and bulbs have been added over the years as needed. The town sewer system was routed through the area in 2017, but there was no damage to the

plants. Mowing the grass around the plot and plant destruction by voles, have been continuing challenges. The GGC is mentioned on a sign marking the area as an Adopt-A-Visibility Site.



## Garden Therapy (1968 - 2011)

In 1968, the GGC developed a Garden Therapy program under the direction of Club member Mitzi Belitsky. The goal was to help the less fortunate and elderly residents of the town bring joy into their lives. In February of 1969, the program began at the Hale Nursing Home in West Groton on a six-month trial basis. Club members made monthly visits to the nursing home, and activities included making terrariums, seed starting, holiday decor, craft projects, and bulb forcing. Club members took residents on field trips to visit Lexington Gardens, Cathedral of the Pines, and on drives to see the fall foliage. At the end of the six-month trial, the Club voted to continue with the Garden Therapy program as a permanent project. The program was a rousing success, and in spring of 1974, the Club received a Garden Therapy Citation from the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts. In 1979, the Club received an award of appreciation from the GCFM and a silver bowl for recognition. The Club also received the State Garden Therapy Award for over ten years of Garden Therapy at the Hale Nursing Home.



GROTON — Mrs. Mitzi Belitsky, chairman, Mrs. Kay Wood and Mrs. Lucy Keyes hold the State Garden Therapy Award recently awarded to the Groton Garden Club. [D. Belitsky]

In 1988, the Garden Therapy committee celebrated twenty years of service. The Club expanded the program to Apple Valley Continuing Care in 1991. Children with learning disabilities enjoyed some of the therapy programs as did the elderly. Club members continued to provide monthly programs at

Apple Valley, and in 1992, the GGC received a letter of recognition from the GCFM for their efforts. The project was discontinued in 2004, but it was reinstated in 2006 at Rivercourt in West Groton under the guidance of Club member Theresa Harris, and continued on until 2011.



## **Groton History Center - Boutwell House (1936 - 37, 1969, 1999 - 2018)**

The GGC has a long and varied association with the Groton History Center (formerly the Groton Historical Society), which is housed in the Governor Boutwell House on Main Street. In December of 1936, the History Center asked the GGC to help clean the grounds at Boutwell. They voted to allow the Club to use the grounds for plant sales, although it's unclear whether the Club ever did so. In 1937, the Club cleaned up the grounds as a civic project, and also planted some shrubs. New shrubs and crabapple trees were planted in front of the building in 1969. Wreaths were donated for the front door at Christmas throughout the 1980s. In September of 1988, a letter was received from the President of the History Center asking the Club to consult on a landscaping project, and the Club agreed. A consulting group was organized, but there is no evidence that anything came of it at that time.



*Boutwell House 1969 - before landscaping*



*Boutwell House 1969 - after landscaping*

In December of 1999, GGC members joined volunteers from the Groton Women's Club and the Historical Society to create an event on December 18th that featured a Victorian Stroll at the Boutwell House. GGC members decorated the inside of the house in the Victorian Christmas style. In 2000, the Club again contributed to the December Victorian Stroll by creating flower arrangements and other Christmas decorations for the Boutwell House.



*Decorating at Boutwell House - 1999*

In January of 2003, the History Center officially requested that the GGC consider installing an historical garden in front of the building. A committee was formed under the direction of Club member Faith Smith to explore the re-creation of an 1890s landscape at the front of the Boutwell House. The committee planned to install the garden as a gift to the town in conjunction with Groton's 350th celebration. The project was approved and in the spring of 2004, committees were organized to research photos and documents about the Boutwell House and the Boutwell family, in consultation with the History Center. A number of photos of the house and grounds from the 1890s were found, and it was decided that this would be the most appropriate period for the landscape design. The design of the front yard was known but the exact plants used could not be determined, so the plant selections would be interpretive rather than an exact restoration. Cindy Brockway, a noted period landscape expert, was consulted. The budget was \$7,000.00 for the project.

The project began with the removal and stump grinding of the two crabapple trees that had been planted in the 1960s. Once this work was complete, hundreds of scilla bulbs were planted in the lawn in the fall of 2004. Work on the new walkway began.



*2005*

In January of 2005, a contractor was hired to construct trellises that would look like those seen in the old photos. The trellises were installed in April of that year. GGC members dug the holes and planted clematis and climbing roses in front of the trellises. The project was completed in time for Groton's 350th celebration, and the garden was opened May 21, 2005 on Founder's Day. A notebook on care and maintenance of the Boutwell front garden was made by Club member Camilla Blackman in 2006, and submitted to the History Center. The Club decided to continue GGC maintenance for an additional year, since ongoing maintenance of gardens is always a concern. The Club's responsibility for maintaining the garden was then turned over to the History Center the following year.



In February of 2014, the History Center asked the GGC to design, plant and fund a garden on the side of the building to complement the new hardscape and walkway that was being installed. Club member Lorayne Black designed the garden. The Friends of the

Tree Warden contributed trees, the Groton Women's Club contributed yellow rose bushes and a bench, and the GGC funded the remaining plants and did the planting. An amount of \$2,000.00 was appropriated for the project. As there was not an historical garden on that site, this garden did not need to be historic in nature, but it did need to blend with the other gardens and be easy to maintain.



*Before ramp and garden - 2014*



*Garden and ramp*





In late May of 2014, barren strawberry, anemones, vinca, ferns, and Solomon's seal were planted. Shrubs and small trees including dogwood, mock orange, and arborvitae were installed along with winterberry, sweetspire, hydrangea, and yellow roses. The garden was dedicated on June

11th. In June of 2015, the Club received national and state awards for the garden from the National Council of Garden Clubs and the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts. The Club continued to maintain the gardens for a few more years, and then turned over maintenance to the History Center. A maintenance notebook was developed by Club member Penny Hommeyer to ensure that the History Center had proper information to care for the gardens. In addition, the Club decorated the building for Christmas open houses during this period.



## Groton Public Library (1953 - 1990s)

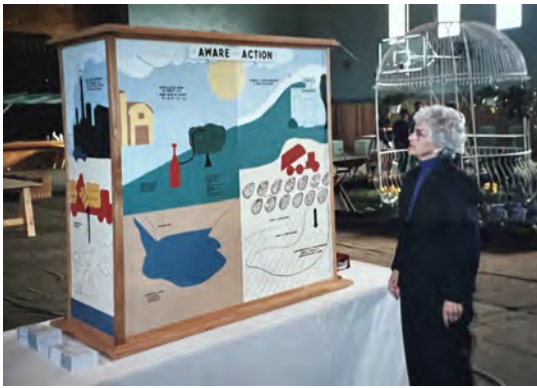
In 1953, a committee was appointed to install plantings at the Groton Public Library. The library also asked for help in planting shrubs near the new parking lot behind the building. On December 7th, 1990, the GGC decorated the library with the theme of “A Christmas Carol.” The Club hosted an evening reception for GGC members, their spouses, Library Trustees, and friends entitled “An Evening with Mr. Dickens.” In 1993, the Club decorated the library with the theme “A Victorian Christmas,” and a reception was held on December 3rd. Daffodils were planted at the library in the 1990s as part of the GGC townwide planting of daffodils. In 2006, a project began to donate flower arrangements to the library (see Library Flowers).





## **Groundwater Protection and James Brook Awareness (1987 - 1988)**

There was national interest in groundwater protection in the 1980s. GGC member and GCFM Energy Awareness Chair Zelda Moore attended a conference on Groundwater Protection in Washington, DC in September of 1987. Regional water protection groups were being formed in Massachusetts, and Groton was no exception. Educational materials were developed by Club member Zelda Moore, and a display about groundwater protection was created. This exhibit was set up at flower shows in Massachusetts, and the Club received a \$100.00 award for the exhibit.



An offshoot of this activity was the James Brook Awareness Project. It was formed by the GGC to educate the residents of Groton about the importance of protecting groundwater from pollution. James Brook runs through town, but is hidden in some areas due to culverts. It is not well known, and was often referred to as “the secret brook.” In May of 1988, a group of GGC members walked along the brook to discern its course through the town. A speaker from NRWA was selected for an outdoor lecture to the town as part of the Club-sponsored annual spring clean-up in 1989, and James Brook was emphasized.

The Club continued its educational outreach by purchasing books entitled *People and Their Environment* by Matthew J. Brennan. The books were donated to all grade 1-6 classrooms to further the students’ environmental education.

## **Hanson Memorials (2011 - Present)**

The Hanson Family Memorial Garden is located next to the Smith Pavilion on Playground Road behind the Library. The garden is a memorial to Groton residents Peter, Sue, and 2½ year old Christine Hanson, who lost their lives in the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on September 11th, 2001. The original memorial

garden was created by the residents of Groton and the Hanson's neighbors. It included a copper beech tree, three *Miss Kim* lilacs, a flagpole, and a memorial stone with a plaque on it. The garden was dedicated in October 2001.



Also in 2001, Peter's parents, Eunice and Lee Hanson, donated the funds for a new playground in memory of their granddaughter. A small garden surrounding a stone with a plaque commemorating Christine Hanson was installed at the entrance to the playground on Playground Road, and was dedicated in 2005. The Club maintains the garden space around the stone.



In 2011, the GGC voted to take on the planting and maintenance of the remaining space in the memorial garden. Club member Lorayne Black designed the garden. A sum of \$500.00 was allocated for the purchase of plants that would have fall interest. *Rudbeckia* (black-eyed Susan), *Sedum* ‘Autumn Joy’, *Geranium macrorrhizum*, *Echinacea*, and *Ilex* (winterberry) shrubs were chosen. In May of 2011, GGC members Celia Silinonte and Lorayne Black organized a group of students from Groton School, Lawrence Academy, and GDRHS to assist GGC members with the planting of 150 plants.





The Groton Garden Club continues to maintain these areas as a tribute to the Hanson Family and to those thousands of Americans who lost their lives on 9/11 - we will never forget.

### **Hollis Street Traffic Island (1970s - Present)**

The Hollis Street Traffic Island is located at the intersection of Hollis and Main Streets in Groton Center. The area was the site of the old town well.



*Hollis Street and Main Street Intersection - 1950*



*1977*

In 1975, the traffic island was planted with red geraniums and white alyssum as part of the town-wide beautification for the national Bicentennial celebration.

In September of 1986, a fungus killed the plantings and the Club replanted the area with geraniums. The Groton Highway Department replaced the soil.





1989

In December of 1986, traffic improvements at Hollis Street Circle were being discussed, and the Town Traffic Study Committee asked for input from the GGC. Some ideas included a walkway and a bench.

Plans were discussed, and in 1989 Hollis Street Circle was planted and mulched, but a bench and walkway were not included.



1990

The traffic study was completed in 1990, and a donation of \$825.00 from the Emmon family was made in honor of Mrs. Clifford Pinkham, a former Club member. The funds were used to purchase plants for the new Hollis Street Traffic Island. All of the existing plants were removed and stored in Club member Lee Burton's garden. The Highway Department reconstructed the circle to form a triangular shape. In the spring of 1991, plants, bulbs, and shrubs were planted. Sod was donated for the grassy

area along the edge. In 1992, it was decided that a focal point was needed, and the Highway Department assisted with the placing of a large rock on the traffic island. More plants were added the following year. In autumn of 1994, the rock was upended by a reckless driver, but by November of 1995 the area was restored.



1991



1991 - replanting



The plantings in the traffic island continued to evolve over the years with different annuals, perennials, and bulbs. In 1999, the underground pump originally installed at the traffic island failed, and the town offered to install a new above-ground pump if the Club would pay for a structure to house it. However, given the high possibility that such a structure could be damaged by a car, GGC board members voted not to pursue a new pump, and instead recommended the use of drought-tolerant plants in this area. A car accident occurred at the Hollis Street Traffic Island in 2000 and caused significant damage to the plantings, and in 2001, a redesign

was discussed again. Overgrown shrubs were removed, and new perennials and bulbs were added. The traffic island continues to be a beautiful floral centerpiece in downtown Groton, with the addition of reblooming irises and colorful annuals. Christmas wreaths are placed on the traffic island in December.



## **Junior Gardeners / Children's Gardens (1926 - 1942, 1977 - 78, 2002 - 05)**

The GGC has endeavored to involve children in gardening since the Club's founding. Junior Gardeners began as a project in January 1926. Mrs. Norman, Mrs. Sabine, and Mrs. Wharton served on the committee, and Mr. Cyrus Merrill (principal of Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture) and Miss L.L. Hetzer (a teacher at Lowthorpe) were advisors. By May of 1926, there was an active Junior Garden Club with seven children enrolled. They ordered seeds, were given instructive talks on planning vegetable and flower gardens, and \$20.00 was budgeted. Committee members inspected the gardens in the fall. The number of gardens and quality of work increased, which required more supervision and visits to assist the children. The following spring, \$10.00 was appropriated for the purchase of seeds, and seven children were ready to begin planting.

A 1927 newspaper article on the Junior Gardeners project described a summer contest. Twenty-one children from grades 4-12 participated, and judging was for the greatest variety of plants, most original design, and best bloom. Club members visited the gardens, noting where the children's gardens differed and excelled, and prizes were awarded to Girl Scouts and school students. The article mentioned one young boy, aged 8, who walked a mile to tend to his garden and had success despite the rainy season. Parents were asked to encourage their children to plant gardens. The next year, students in all schools participated in a School Gardens Project, and GGC members were asked to donate plants to the children when thinning their own gardens.

From 1928 through 1932, more than thirty children from grades 4-12 participated in Children's Garden Projects. They planted gardens during the summer, which were visited by the Committee. Contests were held, and prizes from \$10.00–\$20.00 were awarded for the efforts made. Flower arrangements and miniature gardens designed by the children were entered in the Groton Flower Shows during those years. A lecture on wildflower preservation was given to high school students as well.

In 1933, there was a discussion about creating a Junior Garden Club. It was noted that the practicality of a formally organized club would be difficult with children scattered around town with no means of transportation. Children were encouraged to improve their existing gardens and to form a group to visit each other's gardens. In May of 1934, the Garden Club asked the 4-H Club to organize the Children's Garden Competition, with criteria and prizes offered by the GGC. The 4-H Club enthusiastically accepted the suggestion, as this would combine vegetables and flowers. However, in October, the Club determined that the Children's Gardens collaboration with the 4-H Club was not

particularly satisfactory, and members were asked to suggest a better method of running the gardens. The group disbanded in 1936 due to lack of interest, but was renewed again the following year, with competitions and prizes.

Between 1938 and 1941, a Junior Garden Club was formed at the high school with twenty-five members. Herb gardens were planted, and a summer garden contest was held with prizes of \$2.25 being awarded. During these years, thirty-five Junior Gardeners enjoyed trips to the Boston Flower Show, which were funded by the GGC. They learned about terrariums, bulbs, cuttings, houseplants, Christmas greens, and combination flower and vegetable gardens. There was a GGC Fair at Lowthorpe School as well (see Fairs). Other activities the Junior Gardeners participated in were visiting gardens in town, making flower albums, and planting a garden at the high school. They occasionally exhibited at GGC flower shows. The Club also funded a high school teacher's trip to Lost River Nature Camp for two weeks. After this, interest waned and there was a long hiatus.



*Junior Gardeners Scarecrow Exhibit at the  
GGC 1947 Flower Show*

In 1973, a Junior Gardeners group (ages 8-12) was restarted but only lasted several months due to lack of interest. There was another brief reinvigoration of

the group in spring of 1977 when Arbor Day was held with the Club's Conservation Committee and Junior Gardeners. The student body at the Elementary School (later named Florence Roche) attended the planting of a lilac tree at the school. In May,

the children planted a corner rock garden inside the school entrance and a garden of marigolds around the rock by the school flagpole. In early June, the children attended a joint meeting with the Garden Therapy group at the Hale Nursing home and made flower arrangements.



*1977 - Corner Rock Garden*

children planted them, and cared for the plants over the summer. Those that survived were brought back in the fall for a Flower Show, and the children were given ribbons. The group was very active that year: making terrariums, planting bulbs around school grounds, participating in an ecology workshop, and holding a Christmas Garden Therapy program at Hale Nursing Home. In the spring, the children learned to propagate plants, discussed types of bird feeders, and forced forsythia cuttings. Students at Country



*Planting daffodils at Florence Roche School - 1998*

A new Junior Gardeners program for 3rd and 4th graders was active in 1997 and 1998. Each child at Florence Roche Elementary School and Tarbell School was given seedlings of coleus and marigolds donated by a local greenhouse. The

Day and Tarbell Schools entered posters in the State Federation's Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl contest. The Junior Gardener's program was very popular, but unfortunately, it was discontinued due to a lack of GGC members to staff it.

In 2001, a new Junior Gardening project called “Ready Set Grow” was initiated. Hands-on activity bags were made by GGC members and distributed by the Groton Public Library in order to encourage families to garden together. Summer workshops were held in 2002, and third and fourth graders grew “Sensational Summer Sunflowers.” In 2003, the project expanded its mission to stimulate interest, develop, and provide gardening and environmental activities for children through schools, conservation organizations, and other local establishments. The committee prepared and staffed a booth at “Family Day at Fruitlands” in Harvard, MA.



*Three Sisters Project - 2003*

In November 2003, the Three Sisters Garden Project was designed by Club member Valerie DeNatale as an educational program for third graders to enhance the Native American Social Studies unit and encourage gardening. It was implemented in spring of 2004. The “Three Sisters” are beans, squash, and corn, which are planted together. Classroom programs were written and provided to the schools, and seed kits were distributed to second graders in the spring. The students were to plant the seeds and watch them grow over the summer in anticipation of the 3rd grade program. In October, four hands-on activities were presented to the students by GGC members. This was a one-year project and ended in the fall of 2004. In March of 2005, the GGC again participated in the Family Festival at Fruitlands and created a project for children on earthworm composting.

## Library Flowers (2006 - 2023)

In 2006, GGC member Hester Newbury designed a project to deliver floral arrangements and/or decorative plants bimonthly to the Groton Public Library's Circulation Desk and Children's Room. Small signs identifying the plants and the GGC as donors were included.



## Main Street Landscaping (1965 - 1967)



1965

In December of 1965, GGC members were concerned about the trees on Main Street. Many of the elm trees that lined Main Street had been lost to Dutch Elm disease, leaving holes in the canopy

that arched the street. Club members accompanied the Tree Warden and landscape architects on a walking tour to determine a course of action. The diseased elms were cut down, and the town installed new curbing creating an island in front of the First National Shopping Center. The Civic Beautification committee



sent an appeal to local organizations and Main Street merchants asking for their help in the planting project. Mrs. Helen E. Pleasants, President of the GGC at the time said, *“In the last 20 years, pestilence and progress have conspired to deprive Groton of its tree shaded Main Street which has been a source of pride to the town. Many elms have died and few have been replaced. Street widening to accommodate the increased business activity of a growing population has caused severe root damage to other trees of all kinds, many of them already old and vulnerable to the elements. Aware of these undesirable factors, the town tree warden recently consulted with the GGC on what could be done. He asked for other groups and organizations to contribute funds to provide more trees. The Club responded by having at its own expense, the well-known landscape architects Moriece and Gary, make an overall survey of the problem and a copy of their recommendations is enclosed.”*



*Planting linden trees 1965*

The detailed plan itself includes photographs of Main Street from Elm Street to Old Ayer Road (see Main Street Landscape Design Plans). The species and locations of existing trees along with the recommended planting of appropriate trees were included in the plan. The Club won \$200.00 from a

Sears Roebuck contest to be used for tree planting. In October of 1965, the first planting of five linden trees was organized by the GGC at a cost of \$325.00. The trees were planted in the strip of land in front of the First National Shopping Center across from the

Groton Inn. The next planting was carried out by the Tree Warden who planted four honey locust trees between the sidewalk and the curb in front of Prescott School. Club members planted vinca below the trees the following spring. Contributions were solicited from various organizations in town to help finance the plantings, and the GGC held a tour of local homes and gardens in 1967 to raise additional funds (see Tours).

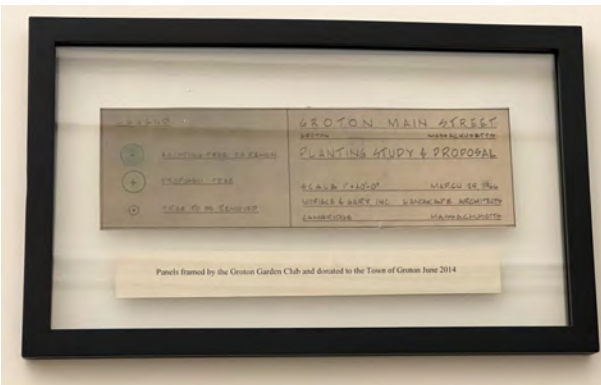


1965



1970

## Main Street Landscape Design Plans - Archival Framing (2014)



The original plans from the Main Street Landscaping project had been languishing in various member's homes for almost fifty years. The plans

consist of four large landscape design panels with accompanying photographs which detail the area of Main Street from Elm Street to Old Ayer Road. The Club voted to frame the panels to preserve

them and then present them to the town as a gift. The panels were archivally framed in May of 2014 and were hung on the second floor of Town Hall outside the Land Use offices. They were dedicated to the town on November 10th, 2014, and a proclamation was issued by the Groton Selectmen declaring the date as Groton Garden Club Day. The panels serve as a reference and a model for anyone planning to develop a business or residence in the center of town and are also a pictorial history of Main Street in the 1960s.





## **Main Street Planters for Groton's 350th Celebration (2004 - 2005)**

In 2003, the Club began to discuss its participation in town beautification for the 350th celebration of the founding of the Town of Groton. The GGC was asked by the Town 350th Committee to submit a proposal to place window boxes on town buildings and to put together a list of flowers the Club would like to see planted on Main Street. The GGC board did not approve this request. Instead, a committee was formed to plan, place, and

plant large containers along Main Street during the growing season of 2005. Twelve large barrels were obtained, painted brown, and placed in various locations along Main Street. Burgundy, white, purple, and silver flowers were planted in the barrels in May of 2005, as a gift to the town, just in time for the 350th celebration. Once plantings were complete, watering, weeding, and deadheading was done by volunteers from the businesses and residences along Main Street.

## **Marion Nash Memorial Garden at Nashoba Hospital (1982 - 1997)**

In May 1981, the GGC discussed the creation of a memorial garden honoring Club member Marion Nash at the Nashoba Hospital in Ayer. Mrs. Nash was a devoted member of the GGC for over fifty years and past President of the Club. She also organized the landscaping project at the hospital. The Marion Nash Memorial Garden was located at the Nashoba Community Hospital in Ayer to the right of the main entrance. Plans were designed in 1982, and the garden was planted in the autumn of 1983. A plaque was located next to a birdbath from Marion's own garden. The dedication took place on May 30, 1984. A committee was organized to weed the garden over the summer, and the hospital watered the garden three times a week. More bulbs were planted and some shrubs replaced in 1986. New construction began at the hospital in 1988-89. The bird bath and plaque were removed for safekeeping during the construction and reinstalled at a later date. From 1989 to 1994, more shrubs, bulbs, and annuals were planted, and Club members weeded and watered. Apple Valley Continuing Care patients were able to enjoy the garden from their windows. On June 3rd, 1997, the Marion Nash Memorial Garden committee was dissolved, and maintenance of the garden was taken over by the hospital.



*Garden Dedication - 1984*

## **Nashoba Hospital Greens sales (1937- 41, 1949 - 58)**



The GGC had a long history of involvement with greens sales at Nashoba Hospital in Ayer. Work first began in the mid-1930's with a greens sale in December. The proceeds went to benefit the hospital (named Ayer Memorial at the time). These sales were held

annually from 1937-1941, then from 1949-1958. Beginning in 1954, the Club held workshops and made wreaths and swags for the sale which was then run by the hospital auxiliary. The Club also contributed funds to the auxiliary, along with the greens and continued to hold workshops until 2001.

## Nashoba Hospital Landscaping (1971 - 1981)



The Club donated funds to the Ayer Community Hospital landscaping project in 1949 (\$10.00), and again in 1952 (\$50.00). However, it was not until the 1970s

that the GGC contributed a major investment of time and funds to the hospital landscaping project. When the new Nashoba Hospital was completed in 1971 in Ayer, it was very stark and plain looking and located in an open field. The GGC made landscaping the hospital its Civic Beautification project and invited neighboring garden clubs to join in the effort. Harvard and Littleton responded positively. Organizations and private citizens were contacted for financial contributions. An area nursery was employed to put some basic trees in the ground, and the land in front of the building was seeded by a local business man. The GGC took over the project at that point. The committee worked closely with the hospital administration, and donations were put into a special account. Another plant nursery was contracted to supply trees, and some local businesses supplied plants.



In 1972, the project was delayed due to construction of a new building at the complex. In 1973, the GGC planted daffodil bulbs and worked with Weston Nurseries to draw up a new plan. The planting was done in stages. First,

Katsura dogwood and crabapple trees were installed. In May of

1974, pine, birch, junipers, sumac and other shrubs were planted at the entrance signs to the hospital. In the fall of 1974, eight barberry bushes were added along with hundreds of daffodil bulbs. In 1975, spreading junipers and potentillas were added, and some birch trees were relocated. Railroad ties were placed around the plantings for protection from traffic. In May of 1976, the Civic Beautification Committee supervised the mulching and clean-up of the grounds and plantings, and in the fall more bulbs were added. In November of 1976, letters were sent to other clubs and organizations requesting funds for more plantings at the hospital to be done in the spring. In 1981, the Club donated the remaining funds in its Nashoba Hospital Beautification Fund to the hospital to be used for new plantings, and the project ended.





## Native Plant Test Garden (2022 - Present)



In April of 2022, the GGC planted a new garden at the Town Hall consisting of native plants found in the eastern United States. According to Club members Linda Loren and Cindy Smith, the purpose of this garden was to install native plants and determine how they perform in Groton gardens. Some of these plants were familiar to Club members and others were not as common in their gardens. Many members added native plants to their landscapes in an effort to create a habitat that is beautiful, provides year-round interest, supports local wildlife, and absorbs and filters rainwater. The GGC will maintain and monitor the garden seasonally, and



assess the project after three years. Signage has been created to label the plants and inform the public about the garden.

## **Petapawag / Harvey Sargisson Canoe Launch (1980s - 2001)**



In 1984, the GGC discussed installing plantings at the Petapawag Canoe Launch on Nod Road along the Nashua River. Funds were donated to the GGC by the family of Winston Blake to be used for plantings. On Arbor Day of 1987, a birch tree was planted in memory of Helen Leeming and daylily plantings were planned for the spring. The birch did not survive, and a new tree was planted. In 1989, impatiens, bulbs, and vines were planted. In 1991, the site was named the Harvey Sargisson Canoe Launch. This lovely public canoe launch was dedicated to the memory of the man loved by Groton who helped establish the launch site. The GGC planted annual flowers and perennials including shrubs, daylilies, hostas and a tree. The Club continued to plant, monitor, and maintain the area until 2001.

# Police and Center Fire Station Gardens and Planters (1991, 2015 - Present)



Police Station: In the fall of 1991, the town finished its new Police, Civil Defense, and EMT Station on Pleasant Street. The GGC Landscape Design and Civic Development committees worked together to plant over three hundred daylilies donated by Club member Anna Lenos.

The lilies were planted along the edge of the building's foundation. The Club recommended the purchase of forty flowering shrubs for the landscape, designed their placement, and then planted them on either side of the driveway. Shrubs included viburnum, witch hazel, hardy azalea, juniper, and rhododendrons.

In April of 2015, two barrel planters were installed on either side of the front entrance to the Police Station. In the summer months, the containers are filled with plants in a red, white, and blue color scheme as requested by the Police Department. The barrels are planted with seasonally appropriate flowers and greens the rest of the year.



In 2017, the Club membership approved a two phase plan to refurbish the garden and install shrubs beneath the new sign on the front of the Police Station building. In phase one, ivy was removed from the hill on the side of the building, with assistance from the Police Department, and barren strawberry was planted in its place. Phase two of the project was completed in October of 2018 when five shrubs were planted in front of the new sign, greatly enhancing the area.



Fire Station: In 2015, two barrel planters were installed at the front entrance to the Center Fire Station on Farmers Row. Four small planters were placed in front of the fire engine bays. All containers are filled with a red, white, and blue color scheme in the summer months in accordance with the wishes of the Fire Department. Seasonally appropriate flowers and greens are planted in the barrels throughout the remainder of the year.

In June of 2017, the GGC installed a 9/11 Memorial Garden at the Center Fire Station. The focal point is a piece of steel from the collapse of the World Trade Center that is a memorial to those firemen who perished on September 11th, 2001. A plaque at the site commemorates the event.



The garden was designed by Club member Priscilla Williams using plants that could survive at the very dry site. The planting area was so compacted that pick axes were required to loosen the soil. A large crew of Club members installed over 150 plants

including sedums, ajuga, amsonia, euphorbia, nepeta, yarrow, bearberry, and a spreading juniper. The garden was fertilized and mulched, and the Fire Department agreed to water and weed the garden over the summer. In May of 2018, a maintenance guidebook for the Memorial Garden was presented to the Fire

Department. It contained a list of plants, and a monthly garden planner. However, it was difficult for the firemen to care for the garden, so the GGC added maintenance of the garden to its municipal plantings. The Police and Fire Station Planters and Gardens committees were combined in 2020.





In the fall of 2021, the committee determined that the junipers at the front door entrance to the Center Fire Station were failing, and decided they needed to be removed. The firemen assisted by digging out the shrubs, and in the spring of 2022, the GGC planted an entirely new garden in that area. The new garden featured sedums, daylilies, Siberian iris, junipers, and blueberry bushes.



## Prescott Common (1969 - Present)

Prescott Common is located at the intersection of Main Street and Old Ayer Road. The common is a focal point of the drive into historic Groton Center. Due to the combined efforts of the GGC, Groton Highway Department, and the Groton Park Commission, the common remains a beautiful gateway to Groton. There is a Memorial Stone with an inscription honoring Colonel William Prescott, three garden beds, and a commemorative plaque on a pole honoring veteran Byron H. Wilson.



In March of 1969, the Club discussed whether the GGC should add plantings at the Prescott Common monument area. Sod had to be removed, and the ground was deeply dug. The 1976 GGC Bicentennial Committee planted a bed of white and red tulips and grape hyacinths in the shape of a tricorn.



After the bulb foliage died, red salvia, and white alyssum were planted by the committee. The installation was quite striking. Traffic improvements to Prescott Common were discussed



by the town in December of 1986, and after a delay, Prescott Common was back on the drawing board in 1988. In 1989, the committee determined that Prescott Common needed a new start and existing plant material should be removed. Pruning of the junipers occurred in the spring of 1990.



In 1991, the common was torn up by sewer line construction and changes to traffic routes. It needed attention and was in an unattractive state. The Landscape Design committee removed the overgrown junipers that were blocking the stone monument and designed a long term plan to re-landscape the common. The Club purchased flowering trees and shrubs and installed granite stones in front of the memorial marker.



Club members planted 250 bulbs in the fall. Beautiful redbud trees, shrubs, perennials, and groundcovers were chosen based on hardiness, color progression, suitability for a country town common and ease of maintenance. In 1994-95, some shrubs were removed and bulbs planted. Three azaleas "*Pioneer-Silvery Pink*" were planted and many hosta, astilbe, and daylilies were added.





In 2008, *Ilex* (winterberry) was planted behind the monument in memory of GGC Life member Lucy Keyes. Prescott Common continues to be maintained with new plantings, pruning, and mulching. In 2022, the town installed a sidewalk across the top section of the common.



## **Purple Loosestrife Eradication (2006 - 2011)**

In February of 2006, the GGC was approached by the NRWA and the Area of Critical Environmental Concern Program (ACEC) to assist in funding a program to minimize the invasive species purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and raise awareness of its impact on wet areas and marshlands in Groton. In 2007, the Groton Conservation Commission sponsored a Galerucella beetle farm project to control purple loosestrife naturally. NWRA managed the project. Some members of the GGC raised the beetles in their yards and then transferred them to the Conservation Commission and NRWA for release. Beetles were collected and released onto four Groton properties (2 public, 2 private) to see if they would eat the loosestrife. In April of 2010, the loosestrife project entered its third year and \$400.00 was approved under a condition that a native wetland plant plan be created for the future. A five-year plan was needed. In April of 2011, another \$400.00 was approved to help fund the project for the fourth year. In May of 2011, a motion to continue the loosestrife project for an additional two years was defeated, but one year was funded. The GGC then discontinued involvement with the project.

## **Railroad Station Plantings (1927 - 1932)**

On May 17, 1927, the GGC Civic committee reported “*cooperation on the part of the Boston and Maine Railroad to improve the station grounds on Station Avenue, work beginning soon.*” Station Avenue was widened, and trees and shrubs near the station were trimmed. The bench was repaired and repainted, and the road was smoothed. In February of 1928, the Club voted to appropriate \$35.00 for the work at the Railroad Station grounds. In May, the GGC Civic committee asked to continue the project, and \$4.26 was appropriated for additional expenses. It was also

suggested that the Woman's Club be approached about contributing to the work at the Railroad Station and on Main Street. A GGC member was asked to present the matter to the Woman's Club at their next meeting, but the outcome is unknown.

On April 12, 1929, the Civic committee discussed asking the Boston and Maine Railroad to take over work on the station grounds. In 1930, the GGC had the lawn mowed at the Railroad Station, and in 1932, a vote was taken to continue maintenance of the lawn and shrubs. Considerably more work was needed than anticipated, and the Club voted for \$6.00 to be appropriated for this work. The station burned down in 1932, and the Club discontinued the project.



### **Sargisson Beach - Knops Pond (1984 - 1988)**

In 1984, the GGC provided plantings to enhance the engraved stone honoring Harvey Sargisson at the town beach on Knops Pond. Mr. Sargisson was the town's Conservation Commissioner and worked with the GGC on the Club's conservation efforts. In

1988, the Club donated \$300.00 to the Knops Pond Memorial Fund in Mr. Sargisson's memory. Plantings were made in the area, and Club members did a spring clean-up for a few years before turning the project over to the town.



## **Town Hall (1980 - 2017)**



The GGC was involved in many beautification projects at Town Hall over the years. In September of 1980, plans were presented by the GGC Civic Development committee to install plantings and new landscaping at Town Hall. The plan was approved and \$385.00 was appropriated for the purchase of three types of compact juniper

shrubs. In May of 1981, the Club discussed a Town Hall planting plan that would relocate the Constance Wharton Smith fountain from the front of Town Hall to the side of the building, making it decorative only. Granite benches were to be installed as well. Constance Wharton Smith was a well known local landscape

architect and graduate of the Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture in Groton. She was the sister of Groton conservationist William Wharton and the sister-in-law of GGC founder Elizabeth Wiggin Wharton. GGC member Carol Canner designed the plan for the benches. In 1982, granite slabs were found on Chapman Street, and at the Club's suggestion, these were moved to the Town Hall location and installed as benches. A large blue spruce tree, overgrown shrubs, and vegetation were removed from the front and sides of the building.

New plantings were installed in front of the building, and the area was maintained during the mid 1980s. A cleanup of the area was done in 1985, and bulbs were planted in 1987. In 1995, the Club held a program on pruning, using the shrubs at Town Hall for demonstration. A new handicap ramp was installed by the town, and in 1996, the GGC planted a garden around it. In 2000, the town asked the Club for funds and suggestions regarding the refurbishment of the Wharton fountain area. GGC members Lynne Kavanagh and Lee Burton represented the Club on the town's Wharton Fountain Committee in 2001. The Club membership voted to donate \$3,500.00 to support the project as long as the Club remained in an advisory role. The fountain was to be relocated to the Station Avenue side of Town Hall, and a small



park was planned. The design by Club member Lorayne Black called for the town to excavate an area for a new bluestone patio, install five granite benches, relocate the

Constance Wharton Smith fountain, move the Lawrence Memorial to a new location, remove the magnolia tree, and replant the area. The Club oversaw the plantings, and in 2002, the Constance Wharton Smith garden and fountain area was dedicated.



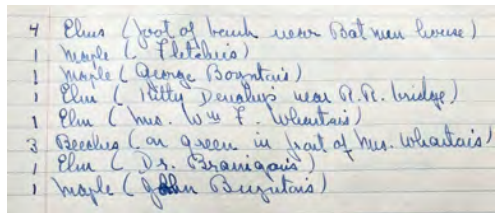
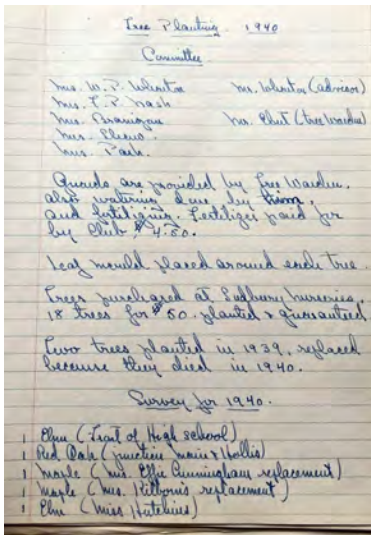
In 2010, the Club determined that the front of Town Hall needed new landscaping. The GGC donated \$900.00, then selected and installed the plants under the direction of Club member Sue Bisceglia. The Department of Public Works installed the shrubs, and more plants were added in May of 2011. In the summer of 2017, the town contacted the Club

and asked for help with pruning the shrubs in front of Town Hall. A cleanup of the overgrown gardens on the Station Avenue side of the building was needed as well. The GGC had been holding plant sales there for many years and agreed to provide two clean-ups as a thank you for using the space. In 2022, a native plant test garden was installed near the parking lot (see Native Plant Test Garden).





## Tree plantings (1939 - 1975)



The Club has been involved in planting trees in Groton for many decades. In 1939, the Club's Committee on Town Tree Planting arranged for the planting of twenty-six trees on Main Street and asked the Tree Warden to look after them. These street trees replaced

those lost in the Hurricane of '38. In 1940, eighteen more street trees were planted. In 1949, funds were donated to the town to help combat Dutch Elm disease and in 1950, eight trees were planted. Dutch Elm disease was the primary concern of the Citizens Conservation Committee, and many trees needed to be cut down. Street trees were planted in front of the First National Store on Main Street in 1965. In 1974, the Elm Tree Project was started as awareness was being raised about Dutch Elm disease in the Club and in the community (see also Arbor Day and Main Street Landscaping).

## Virginia Thurston Healing Garden (2004 - Present)



The Virginia Thurston Healing Garden is located on Bolton Road in the town of Harvard. It was created in 2000 in memory of Virginia Thurston, an avid gardener, who served two terms as President of the Garden Club of Harvard, President of the GCFM in 1977-1979, and a trustee of the New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill. She was

diagnosed with breast cancer in 1993 and passed away in 1999. Her garden was originally a healing space for her and other women who had breast cancer. Today, the garden and support center is an educational non-profit facility dedicated to providing integrated cancer care through therapeutic services, educational programs, and a healing environment for all people with a cancer diagnosis. Many garden clubs in the area have been involved with renovating and maintaining this garden.



The GGC first became involved in 2004 when Club member Tucker Smith visited the garden. GGC members volunteered their time and organized clean-ups in spring and fall. In 2007, the GCFM created a

Board position for a Healing Garden Liaison, and GGC member Tucker Smith was the first to hold the position. The garden and cottage underwent a major renovation in 2007, and the GCFM

adopted the garden as a project and encouraged clubs in the Central North District to participate. GGC member Lorayne Black offered assistance by designing the circular entry garden in 2009 and the sensory garden in 2010.



In addition to hands-on gardening, Club members have participated over the years in raising volunteer awareness, fund-raising walks, special events, and decorating the outdoor planters in the winter. The Groton Garden Club has also donated significant funds, in-kind materials, and plants to the garden.

*“I find you, Beauty, here, as I look outside on this beautiful day. I see two gardeners thoughtfully and lovingly tending to this most healing spot. They do this because they believe in us... that we will be here to watch these plants grow.”*

**-Marjorie, a Healing Garden client**

## Watering Troughs (1954 - Present)



1925

There are two watering troughs in Groton: one located on Firemen's Common on Main Street and one in West Groton Center. These troughs were originally used for townspeople and travelers to water their horses. The Main Street trough and fountain was installed in 1899 as a memorial to James and Elizabeth Prescott Lawrence. The West Groton trough and fountain was gifted to the town in 1918 by Joseph T. Shepley in memory of his brother, Granville T. Shepley. When the troughs were no longer needed, they remained as local historical artifacts. The GGC began planting them with flowers in 1954. In 1962, the watering troughs were planted by the GGC but maintained by the

Girl Scouts. The troughs were filled with greens in the winter for added interest. During the summer of 1981, the West Groton Watering Trough was regularly vandalized within a week of flowers being planted. Residents noticed that there were often no plants, but the Club decided not to replace them due to theft.



1970

However, by 1989, both watering troughs were being planted annually. GGC members continued to plant the troughs throughout the year with seasonal plantings. The small stone table planter at Carol Wheeler Memorial Park is maintained as well (see Carol Wheeler Memorial Park).



## Wildflower Sanctuary (1929 - 1939)



In June of 1929, a new project was discussed which would create a Bird and Flower Sanctuary in the Town Forest. In 1930, the Wildflower committee stated that there was no suitable place for wildflower plantings in the Town Forest. They began looking at an adjoining area if arrangements could be made with the owner. GGC members organized a wildflower preservation booth at

the 1930 Groton Fair. Wildflower sanctuary planning began in 1931, and the Wildflower Preservation committee suggested a planting in Groton Town Forest. In 1932, the committee reported that the town received a parcel of land as a gift from Groton School Trustees. The Club voted to sponsor and support a Wildflower Preservation Garden on Town Forest Land, and the area to be planted was in the Dead River section of the Nashua River. The Club hosted a picnic in the fall in order to become acquainted with the area. Groton conservationist Mr. William P. Wharton led a tour through the forest, gave an account of the history of the forest, pointed out the various plantings, and outlined future plans. His wife, GGC member and former President, Mrs. Elizabeth W. Wharton, suggested that the Club plan to go ahead with this project even though slowly, and she asked members to report any land which is to be cut over so that the committee may be able to get the roots of flowers from it. Both Mr. and Mrs. Wharton were very active on this project.

The committee met and decided to arrange for a sign to mark the area (now the Dead River area). In order to get help from the Boy and Girl Scouts, a picnic inviting the Scouts was suggested. The committee requested donations of plants from members for this effort, and volunteers were asked to grow seedlings of wildflowers to be planted the following year. It was suggested that a rustic seat be added near the river. Eleven mountain laurels were planted on the ridge near the river, and Girl Scouts planted yellow lady's slippers. The area needed to be cleared of dead trees, and an open space was considered for a picnic spot. It was suggested that a stone fireplace be added.



A picnic date of May 12th was chosen to see this area. Paths were cleared so the full beauty of the wild flowers could be appreciated. The Groton Woman's Club made a generous gift of \$10.00 for preservation work in the Town Forest, and a suggestion was made to use these funds for purchase and

planting of dogwood trees. A newspaper article was written that listed the plants and who had donated them. *"A great deal of interest and kindly cooperation has been shown not only by Garden Club members, but by other wild flower lovers in the town."* Plantings included fringed gentians, mountain laurel, columbine, cardinal flower, pink lady's slippers, yellow lady's slippers, walking fern, bloodroot, jack in the pulpit, red baneberry, barberry, yellow iris, arum, trailing arbutus, and violets. A sign was made for the sanctuary.



In the fall of 1932, the Wildflower Sanctuary committee report included a list of plants and donors. All members were encouraged to make an effort to give or plant something in the sanctuary area which would help stimulate more interest in the project. In 1933, \$20.00 was appropriated for purchase of wildflowers, and House Beautiful Magazine

named the Wildflower Sanctuary "*worthy of notice.*" Many plants were installed in the sanctuary in 1933, with 539 plants planted in the spring and 1,100 in the fall. New paths were created, and two signs were made saying "Lady's Slippers." More work and clearing was planned, and an appropriation of \$25.00 was approved for use in the sanctuary. It was noted that "*Mrs. Wharton, Miss Hetzer, and Miss Gerride worked steadily and untiringly during the autumn.*"

In 1934, the GGC joined the New England Wildflower Society (NEWFS), and the President of the organization asked to visit the Wildflower Sanctuary. All members were reminded to become acquainted with the Sanctuary before the visit, flower contributions were accepted, and four men were hired to clear paths. The May 17th visit from the NEWFS President was described as "*She went to our Wildflower Sanctuary. She also gave an interesting talk about current conservation problems and what other towns and garden clubs are doing to address these issues. Mrs. Crosby was most enthusiastic about our sanctuary.*" The Club appropriated



another \$50.00 for use on the project. In December of 1934, the sanctuary was named by NEWFS as one of three which has some rare wildflowers. By January of 1935, it was noted that there were problems raising funds for the sanctuary and a fashion show was suggested. In 1935, 501 plants were donated, 495 purchased, and 1,291 raised from seed. It was "*endless and difficult work,*" but there were many visitors to the sanctuary. In 1936, Mrs. Wharton reported to the Club that 4,280 plants were installed and also that the year had been spent studying the growth and care of the plants.



1936

During the spring of 1936, Nashua River flooding damaged the sanctuary. The whole area was flooded, and some plants were ten feet deep under water. Many plants were destroyed but a surprisingly large number survived. A costume party was held in June to benefit the sanctuary. Only \$93.00 was left in the sanctuary fund, and some was used to drain the pond. There was much to be done the following spring. Notes were posted at the library announcing when the wildflowers were in bloom so people could visit at the appropriate time. In 1937, fall leaves were sent

over to the sanctuary by the town. This mulch helped make plant care easier and eliminated much of the watering. There was more bloom than ever that spring despite a lot of deer and muskrat damage. Fewer contributors sent in new plants, and 600 of 680 plants were given by one person from Shirley. In 1938, there was serious damage to the sanctuary when the Hurricane of '38 destroyed the area.

In 1939, the timber damaged by the hurricane needed to be removed from the sanctuary. A tractor was required to do the work, and there was concern that it would damage the plants that remained. The sentiment was "*Nothing to be done but wish and hope,*" and volunteers were needed to help salvage the sanctuary. The 1939 October report to the Club stated "*2 floods and the Hurricane of '38 entirely destroyed the sanctuary setting and many of the plants. Lumbering all winter and a severe drought in the summer of '39 had completed the ruin, and Mrs. Wharton recommended that the sanctuary be abandoned.*" Some leaf mold and a few salvaged plants were offered for sale if people wanted them, but sadly, the project ended.



*Prescott Common - 1930*

# Community Activities

The Groton Garden Club has been active in many areas of town over the last century. Not all activities became projects. Some were one day clean-ups and some were annual participation in town events. These varied activities contributed to the beautification of our town and provided educational opportunities for members and Groton residents.

The Groton Garden Club has often been asked to support various initiatives. The Club has limited those to conservation and educational efforts regarding gardening, pests, and invasive species.

## **Annual Public Lecture (1992 - Present)**

The GGC has been holding educational lectures for the public since 1992. These lectures have covered a wide range of gardening related topics from natural control of invasive plants, to garden and landscape design, to the many ways insects interact as part of the biodiversity web. The Club chooses a speaker, determines the venue, and publicizes the program. The lecture is free and is funded by the Groton Commissioners of Trust Funds Lecture Fund. The attendance for this presentation has grown steadily. In 2021, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Club could not host an in-person lecture. Instead a virtual webinar was created and hosted, with over 600 registrants, bringing together people from across Massachusetts and many other states.

## Anti-litter campaign (1927 - 1987)

The Club became active in anti-litter campaigns beginning in 1927. The Civic committee met on March 22, 1927 and “*several lines of work were agreed upon, among which were the collection of papers on Main Street every Monday morning.*” A sum of five dollars was appropriated for street cleaning and picking up papers. Members debated the worthiness of this proposal, but it was approved. The Club engaged a local boy to pick up papers and then see if the endeavor made an improvement to Main Street. It is not known how long this activity continued.



In 1966, litter was once more a concern. An anti-litter “Clean Sweep Day” was held with local Scouts and students from Lawrence Academy and Groton School before Memorial Day. It was suggested that a “vigilance committee” be formed to check up on litter control in town and

have Scout leaders act as “vigilantes.” This idea did not pass. In 1967, the Club discussed the feasibility of placing litter containers on Main Street but did not pursue the idea. In 1981, the Club’s Conservation committee organized an anti-litter campaign. Club members created arrangements using litter and plant material to depict the theme “*Harvest of a Throwaway Society.*” The arrangements were on display at the Groton Public Library during the month of March.

In 1983, the GGC and Boy Scouts conducted a joint litter pick-up campaign week. This became an annual event with both Boy and Girl Scouts joining the GGC for town-wide clean-ups until the

spring of 1987. After that time, annual Earth Day clean-ups were sponsored by other organizations in Groton and many members participated, but the Club no longer organized the town-wide event.

## Arbor Day (1927 - Present)



1975



Tarbell School 1978

The Groton Garden Club has participated in Arbor Day plantings since 1927. In the spring of that year, members were encouraged to plant a tree or a shrub in observance of Arbor Day. In 1929, the State of Massachusetts encouraged towns to have Tree Wardens. The Club has worked closely with the Groton Tree Warden to plant trees in town ever since. The Friends of the Tree Warden was established in 1982 to replace trees lost to disease, accidents, animals, and weather related

incidents. Club members helped form the group, and many members joined. Students and Scouts attended Arbor Day in the 1970s. In 1983, two sycamore trees were planted across from “The Elms” on Farmer’s Row. A special planting of a copper beech tree in memory of GGC founder Elizabeth Wharton and her husband, conservationist William Wharton, occurred on Arbor Day, 1990. The tree was planted near the entrance to the Groton Cemetery on Hollis Street. The GGC has been a co-sponsor of

Arbor Day since 1989 and contributes funds annually to the Friends of the Tree Warden. The funds are used for the yearly Arbor Day Celebration and other tree plantings in town.



### **Bandstand Shrubs (1927)**



*1930*

In 1927, the Club spoke with the Park Commissioner about cutting dead wood from shrubs around the town bandstand and allowing for natural growth. It was deemed that this practice was better than

trimming into a round ball. The bandstand was located on Main Street in the area which is now Firemen's Common.

### **Cemetery Entrance (1976, '82, '83, '91)**



In 1976, the Landscape committee planted golden euonymus shrubs at the entrance to the cemetery on Chicopee Row. This activity was part of the townwide beautification project during the Bicentennial celebration. The shrubs did not

do well and were replanted in 1982, 1983, and again in 1991. The shrubs are no longer there.

### **Conservation Commission (1961)**

The GGC assisted in the organization of the Conservation Commission in Groton. In November of 1961, the Massachusetts Forest and Park Association requested that all towns set up Conservation Commissions. The GGC successfully advocated for adding a commission to the April 1962 Town Meeting warrant, and a Conservation Commission was established in 1963.

### **Dooryard Gardens (1930)**

In 1930, the Club sponsored a Dooryard Garden Competition after a program was presented to the Club on that subject. Following the lecture, a display was set up at the Groton Public Library with reference materials, catalogs, and books. A town-wide garden competition was held with a \$25.00 prize for the winner. GGC members could enter if they created a new garden. Lowthorpe



School students offered to help anyone entering the contest. Champney Street had a great showing.

## **Flower Shows (1926 - 1991)**

Flower shows have historically been a large activity for garden clubs, and the GGC was no exception. The Club participated in numerous flower shows in Boston and surrounding communities. It also held many flower shows locally. Club members over the years often won awards at the shows, and Club members Mitzi Belitsky and Zelda Moore completed a GCFM course and became Flower Show judges in 1982. Standard Flower Shows must conform to a strict set of rules. The show must be planned and staged by a National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC) member club or group of clubs. Fresh plant material must be emphasized throughout the show. The schedule must be written and mechanically reproduced with specific wording that includes all essential details of the show. The show must include a Horticulture Division and a Design Division. It must be judged by a panel or panels of NGC approved judges, and use the NGC Standard System of Awarding. Each division is composed of sections, each section made up of related classes, and each class consists of individual exhibits.

## **Flower Shows in Groton (1926 - 1991)**

In April of 1926, a committee was formed to hold Flower Shows for members with prizes and honorable mentions to be awarded. A sum of \$15.00 was appropriated for use by the Flower Show committee. On June 10th, 1926, the first GGC Flower Show was held and all members were requested to assist in making it a success. The show was staged at the Oddfellows Hall on Station Avenue with 239 entries exhibited and 575 attendees over two

days. Prizes were awarded including bulbs, seeds, and two books on wildflowers. Local and Boston newspapers printed accounts of the Flower Show. The articles mentioned that the Club is a generous contributor to the Boston Flower Mission. *“A hearty vote of thanks was given to the Chair and her committee for their efficient and arduous work to make the show a success.”* After the show, the flowers were distributed as follows: two hampers to the Fruit and Flower mission, Groton Hospital, Ayer Hospital, the “old ladies’ home” in Ayer, and the rest were made up into attractive bouquets and taken to the sick or shut-ins around Groton.

#### **Groton's First Flower Show.**

Groton's first flower show, held under the auspices of the Garden club, June 10 and 11, went far beyond the hopes and expectations of the club. Oddfellows' hall was transformed into a beautiful flowering garden and Miss Margaret I. Jardine and her committee deserve the greatest praise for the attractive arrangement and the well carried out details of the show. A background of hemlock boughs made the large variety of flowers, with their delicate as well as brilliant hues, stand out in all their beauty, and produced a most attractive spot to linger in.

As one entered the hall, on either side of the door were tables with interesting collections of wild flowers gathered by children under sixteen. In the center of the hall was the display of shrubs and the mass of bloom caught the eye instantly and it was a feast long to be remembered. At the right of the door were the vases and baskets of mixed flowers. These had many skillful color combinations and unique groupings, and gave the judges an opportunity for serious consideration. On the left side of the hall were the flowers all of one kind and they vied with their neighbors across the way as to their brilliancy and beauty.

*First Flower Show - 1926*

On June 22nd and 23rd, 1927, an Amateur Flower Show was presented by the Club. Amateur categories included wildflowers, table decorations, mixed flowers, perennials, shrubs, potted plants, and single specimens. Attractive prizes were offered. Iced tea, punch, and wafers were sold to help defray expenses of the show. Proceeds of \$36.25 from the sale of refreshments reduced the amount of the expenses to about

\$4.00. On June 6th and 7th, 1928, the Third Annual Flower Show of the Groton Garden Club was held at Town Hall.

In 1929, it was suggested that members bring flower arrangements to meetings to practice judging for the Annual Flower Show coming up in June. On May 14th, 1929, Club members took part in a flower arranging contest with prizes awarded by Bay State Nurseries. The Fourth Annual Flower Show was held on June 5th and 6th, 1929 at Town Hall. There were nine classes for entry, but greenhouse flowers were barred from competition. School children were asked to submit posters for the show. Visitors came from many area towns - Ayer, Bedford, Cambridge, Chestnut Hill, Greenfield, Haverhill, Maynard, Newton, North Adams, Stoneham, Stow, Wakefield, and more.

In May of 1930, planning was underway for the Fifth Annual Flower Show with the following classes: Flower Arrangements, Shrub Arrangements, Specimens of Shrubs and Flowers, Table Arrangement, House Plants, Window Boxes, Miniature Gardens (by children age 16 and under), Flower Arrangements (children under 11), Unusual, Rare or Curious Things, Lowthorpe School Exhibit, and Non-competitive Exhibit by a member's gardener.

The Groton Town Hall was transformed *“into a scene of beauty, with its charming woodland scene, its pergola covered garden, its tables laden with the beautiful blossoms of the season, its daintily appointed breakfast tables and its cozy corner which was used for the tea room. The lovely woodland scene which was arranged on the stage, included a rippling brook coming down the waterfall and pursuing its winding way amid the tall grass and wildflowers of the lowlands with a background of evergreen trees.”*

A Flower Show was held in the spring of 1931 at the Town Hall. The show was quite large with exhibits of flower arranging as well

as a rock garden display by Lowthorpe School, table settings arranged on patio tables, and miniature gardens designed by children. In 1932, the Groton Flower Show was held May 19th and 20th. There were 175 exhibits and 87 exhibitors. A suggestion was made that the prizes should be ribbons instead of cash. An exception would be for the children's classes which could have money or books, and ten dollars was appropriated for the purchase of books and incidentals. A note in the Flower Show program stated: "*Because of present financial conditions, the Club has decided to award this year only ribbon prizes except in the children's class.*"

The 1933 Groton Flower Show was held June 13th and 14th. There was discussion on ways to vary the classes with a class of over 16 years of age to be offered if there were sufficient entrants. There were many entries in the Junior Gardeners contest, and prizes were awarded as in previous years. The 1934 Groton Flower Show was held at the Town Hall on May 24th and 25th. The *Pot Garden* which was created for the Boston Flower Show was set up again on the stage for this show. There were eleven exhibition classes. The Children's Class, *My Favorite Mother Goose Rhyme*, brought nearly thirty entries - the most the Club had ever had. These "*were extremely well done and showed skill and care.*" This was the Eighth Annual GGC Flower Show, and it was very well attended. According to a newspaper article "*The Club does not charge admission to the show, but depends on the patronage of the tea garden to defray expenses. The tables were well attended the entire afternoon. Patrons ordered tea, tiny sandwiches, or little cakes.*"



March 1958

The 1935 Flower Show was held at Town Hall on September 19th and 20th, and it was the first fall show. Supper was served both nights after the shows, and there was also a tea garden. There were ninety exhibitors, and people from thirty-one towns visited the show. The Club was recognized by the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts as having one of the best of the small local flower shows. In 1936, a Flower Show was held on September 17th and 18th at Town Hall, with 158 entries. Tea and supper were served. The Club decided not to have a show in 1937, but they did have one on May 26th and 27th, 1938 at Town Hall.

Flower shows resumed after WWII. On May 11th, 1947 a show was held in the Unitarian Church Vestry. Flower shows were held in the Town Hall in May of 1948, 1949, 1950, and 1951. In 1952, there was a show in the fall. Groton celebrated its Tercentenary in 1955, and on June 29th and 30th, the GGC held a special flower show and tea. In 1958, there was a flower show and tea at Town Hall on May 23rd and 24th, with a plant sale outdoors on the side lawn.

Another show, *A Christmas Carol*, was held December 16, 1958 in the Union Congregational Church Vestry. October 7th and 8th, 1960 featured a fall flower show, *Groton Garden Club Harvest Show*. On May 17th and 18th, 1963, a flower show and tea were held at Town Hall, with a plant sale and white elephant sale at the same time. The 1966 Standard Flower Show, *Autumn in the Country*, was held in the Vestry of the Congregational Church on September 30th and October 1st.

A Christmas flower show for members was held in the Union Congregational Church on December 6th, 1968. The theme was *A Christmas Carol* and featured Christmas trees, table arrangements for a Christmas Eve dinner, door decorations, table decorations, and terrariums.



FLOWER SHOW - Mrs. Neil H. Powell and Mrs. F.P. Nash stand beside a prize-winning arrangement.

1970

May 1970 featured a flower show, *The Merrie Month of May*, at the Union Congregational Church. A plant sale and gift sale were held at the same time. Junior Gardeners made May baskets for the show. Proceeds

went towards plantings on Main Street, Boutwell House, the Junior High School, Watering Troughs, the Knops Pond Development Project, and future gardens at Nashoba Hospital in Ayer. In May 1971, the Club held a spring flower show for members only. They brought forced branches and flowering bulbs to exhibit. The Club held annual shows in spring of 1972 and 1973. The 1974 show, *Our Town*, was held at Lawrence Academy. On October 4th, 1975, the GGC held a Standard Flower Show, *This Abundant Land*, at the



Groton Country Club. The show was a Bicentennial “Salute to Horticulture,” and a champagne reception preceded the show. Flowers, fruits, vegetables, bulbs, herbs, fall foliage, dried flowers, roses, and house plants were exhibited along with exhibitions by the Junior Gardeners.

On September 22nd and 23rd, 1979, the Club held a Standard Flower Show, *September in the Country*, at Lawrence Academy. This show celebrated fifty years of the National Council of State Garden Clubs - the theme color was gold. Marion Nash was honored at the event for her fifty year membership in the GGC. There was a Junior Gardeners exhibit for children ages 5-14. GGC members won individual awards at the show. In May 1980, the Club received a National Award from the National Council of State Garden Clubs and the Margaret E. Marsh Flower Show Achievement Award from the GCFM. This award is given to the club which receives the highest point scoring of all shows applying for either a national or state flower show award during the current year. In 1982, *Suddenly It's Spring*, was the theme of the spring Standard Flower Show held at the Groton Public Library.



In 1983, a Miniatures Standard Flower Show, *Weather or Not*, was held in the garden room at the Bull Run Restaurant. A miniature design is a reproduction of an average

sized arrangement. It conforms to all principles and elements of design except it is greatly reduced in scale and is five inches or less in all dimensions.



On December 10th, 1983, a Standard Flower Show in miniature, *It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas*, was held at the Groton Library. The show was dedicated to the children of Groton. Some GGC members won awards.

On February 3rd, 1987, the Club held a Standard Flower Show, *February Fancy*, at the home of Club member Margaret Rhoads during snowy weather. This was the first show held in a private home. On May 6th, 1989, a Standard Flower Show, *O Come All Ye Faithful*, was held in three historic Groton Churches: First Parish, Union Congregational, and Sacred Heart. The GGC provided hostesses in each location to hand out programs and copies of a walking tour of Groton. Tea was served at the Congregational Church. The show was divided into three divisions: Design, Horticulture, and Special Exhibits. The show received an Award of Distinction from the GCFM in June of 1990.





On September 20th and 21st, 1991, a Standard Flower Show, *Autumn Cornucopia*, was held with other garden clubs at Nashoba Technical High School.

### Flower Shows - Boston and other communities (1929 -1985)



1930

On March 20th, 1929, more than twenty members entered the Centennial Flower Show at Mechanics Hall in Boston. The Club was represented at the show in the *Mantle Decorating and Table Decoration* categories. In 1930,

Club members were urged to attend the Boston Flower Show. The GGC had an exhibit showing a perennial border and received an Honorable Mention certificate from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

In January of 1931, Club members grew flowers and plants for the Boston Flower Show to be held in March. The GGC exhibit, *Border Planting Against a Wall*, won an Honorable Mention certificate at the show. In 1932, the GGC exhibited at the Boston Spring Flower Show, and on March 13th -18th, 1933, the Club exhibited at the New England Spring Flower Show at Mechanics Hall in Boston. The Club received a purple ribbon from the National Federated Garden Clubs for the *Pot Garden* exhibit. It was “*the most meritorious and educational exhibit.*”



1931

The 1934 plan for the Boston Spring Flower Show was a converted hen yard. The President urged all members to enter the class, *Miniature Outdoor Sitting Rooms*. The Club held a tutorial which provided help in designing and executing

plans for the show. The next Club meeting was a competition on *Planning a Garden*. Club members worked on an exhibit for the show and suggested that members could lend good houseplants they might have. The GCFM requested two hostesses from Groton be provided for the show.

In 1935, '36 and '37, the Club had entries in the Boston Flower Show. The 1937 exhibit featured a terraced garden. In 1939, the GGC entered the Boston Flower Show at the last minute after a space opened up and received a "B" award. In 1940, the GGC had multiple entries in the show from individual members instead of as a Club. Two members received a first prize, one received second prize, and one a third prize.



1948

Flower show participation continued after WWII. In 1948, the GGC entry in the April Boston Flower show featured a display, *A Corner of a Fruit Garden*. A strawberry barrel with plants growing out of holes in the side and over the top caused a great deal of interest. The Nurserymen's Association asked permission to have a photograph taken of the barrel as they wished to write an article about it to use at

their next meeting. The exhibit received an "A" which was the highest rating given to any Garden Club, and also the Beacon Hill Cup which is given to "*the most charming garden.*"



The Club entered the Boston Flower Show in 1950, '51, and '52, with the 1952 entry winning first prize. The 1953 entry in the Boston Flower Show, *A Paved Terrace*, received a blue ribbon and an "A-." The 1954 and 1955 entries both received an "A" for the exhibit. Entries were more sporadic in the following years, but in May of 1967, the GGC entered the GCFM/Jordan Marsh

Flower Show in Boston and won a blue ribbon. An entry was made in 1968 at the New England Garden and Flower Show at Suffolk Downs. The show was entitled, *New England Holiday*.

In March of 1971, the GGC exhibited once again at the Boston Flower Show. The 1973 entry in the show received an honorable mention. The Club participated in the 1975 district flower show at the Natick Mall, won an award at the show, and exhibited in the GCFM Flower Show that year. In the spring of 1980, members participated in “Art in Bloom” and the Worcester Flower Show. Two GGC members entered the 1981 Boston “Art in Bloom”, and in 1982, Club members displayed flower arrangements at international and local shows and won awards. In 1985, Club members participated in “Art in Bloom” in Boston. Club members Mitzi Belitsky and Zelda Moore completed the Flower Show course exams and became State Flower Show Judges. The Club exhibited at the Topsfield Fair in 1990 and won a blue ribbon.

## **Fundraisers**

The GGC held many different kinds of fundraisers over the years in order to raise the funds necessary for projects and activities. Annual plant sales have been the most successful, but other efforts contributed to the treasury.

## **Aprons**

Aprons with Groton Garden Club printed on them were sold between 1985 - 1988.



## Boutiques



In 1974, a Tailgate Boutique was held as a successful fundraising event. Members gathered at the Elementary School (not yet named Florence Roche) on October 17th and lowered the tailgates of their cars. Different items were sold at each tailgate.

There was a large selection of dried materials, door and wall hangings, crafts, bulbs, plants, and some garden tools. Boutiques were held in the fall of 1975, 1976, and 1977 at the Unitarian Church. Dried flower arrangements, door swags, and wreaths were sold. Small boutiques were often added to Plant sales.

## Bulb Sales

(See Daffodils)

## Calendars

Groton Garden Club calendars were sold in 1982.

## Christmas Greens Sales (1930s - 1980s)



The GGC held Christmas Greens sales for many years. Sales in the 1930s were held at Town Hall and benefitted Club projects. Later sales benefitted the Nashoba Hospital Auxiliary. The Club participated in workshops, making

wreaths and swags throughout the 1980s for the auxiliary sale long after the Club ceased holding the sale themselves (see Nashoba Hospital Greens Sales).

## Fairs



In 1937, a garden fair was held on Minuteman Common in front of the Unitarian Church. Supper was served in the evening and a band played. There was a white elephant table, food and candy, a plant sale, garden gadgets, ice cream and soda, grab bags, raffles, pony rides, a fortune teller, balloons, and

games. There were \$539.00 in receipts, \$144.00 in expenses, with \$395.00 raised. On May 24th, 1940, a Lowthorpe Garden Fair was sponsored by the GGC on the Lowthorpe Green. Junior Gardeners had an exhibit and were responsible for children's gardens, pony rides, and games. Lowthorpe School was responsible for a plant sale, signs, tea and supper, flower arrangements, and two lectures on flower arranging and herb foliage in the perennial border. The

GGC managed the white elephant table, raffle, grab bags, garden gadgets, food and candy, ice cream and soda, a fortune teller, balloons, guessing of flowers, and miniature flower arrangements. The fair raised \$113.40.

### Fashion Show



The GGC held a fashion show entitled “Ireland with the Talbots“ on September 25th, 1985. A profit of over \$1,800.00 was realized.



### Food Sales

On November 24th, 1939, the GGC held a food sale at Town Hall. Members sold cider, cookies, and other donated food. Thanksgiving Day flower arrangements were also sold and \$33.25 was raised. Food sales were often held in conjunction with boutiques, plant sales, and flower shows.

### Plant Sales

Plant sales have been the Club’s largest fundraisers. The sales have been held annually since 1934 with the exception of the mid 1940s when the Club was on hiatus due to World War II. Plants

for the sale were dug or propagated from members' gardens and repotted. Some years, plants were started from seed and sold as well.

In the early years, members held plant swaps amongst themselves with the first plant exchange occurring on May 10th, 1926. In February of 1934, the idea of a plant sale instead of an exchange was discussed in order to raise funds for the Club. The vote was unanimous in favor. Suggestions were made to "*sell any vases not appropriate to members' own houses.*" The Club also sold annual seedlings and flower holders and asked that all plants be named. In March, a suggestion was made not only to have a plant sale for members, but that the Club open this sale to the public the day following the Club sale. Thus the first public Plant Sale was born. On May 2nd, 1934, members were asked to bring all plants to the Town Hall between 10:00 a.m. and noon. The member sale raised \$23.00, and the public sale raised \$12.00.

The sale on May 7th, 1935 was a very modest affair. A sale on May 9th, 1936 was held at "*Miss Boutwell's house.*" The 1939 sale raised \$106.00. Many sales in the 1930s were held at the Old Brick Store on Main Street. By the 1950s, the plant sales were often held near the front steps at Town Hall with tea served inside. Occasionally, there was a flower show at the same time. In 1959, the sale was held at the home of Mrs. Richard Lawrence and in 1961 at the home of Mrs. Edward Williams. The sale continued to grow. In 1963, the Plant Sale was a two day affair held at Town Hall on May 17th and 18th and included a tea, a white elephant sale, and a flower show all at the same time. The 1968 sale was a big event and included a tour of eight gardens (see Tours). The Bicentennial year of 1976 featured a May sale outside the Groton Town Library.





1976



1979



1980



1983

The 1983 Plant Sale in front of the library included fifty trees and shrubs purchased from the Middlesex District Commission and repotted by members. That year the sale included plants started from seed, perennials dug from members' gardens, and some plants donated by Groton residents.



1987



1989



1991



1993



1996



1996



2001



2012



2019



2010

The Plant Sale outgrew its earlier locations and became larger and more profitable. As the sale grew, the location moved from the Town Hall sidewalk, to the Library front lawn, the Town Hall side yard, and then the parking lot behind the building. Sales became more successful with profits in the \$6,000.00 to

\$8,000.00 range. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Club once again had to rely on its creativity and flexibility. A member's only sale was held in 2020.





In 2021, a successful town wide sale was held in the driveways of Club members Olga Box, Penny Hommeyer, Betty Irelan, Peg McWade, Becky Pine, Claire Wilson, and Lois Young. In 2022, the Club returned to its annual sale with a new location at Legion Field on Hollis Street. In addition to a wide variety of perennials, specialty plants, and member grown vegetables, gardening books and containers were offered for sale as well.



## Tours - House and/or Garden (1925 - 1973)

On May 22nd, 1925, the Club visited seven member's gardens, all competing for the best showing of tulips. Prizes were awarded. In the spring of 1928, a tour of six member's gardens was held.

According to a newspaper account, *"All the gardens were well worth seeing and full of interest, differing as they did, in plan and arrangement, and in the species of plants and shrubs grown."*

After the tour, *"tea was served and a social hour enjoyed."* On May 20th, 1930, a tour of nine member gardens was held. This event was repeated the following year. On May 14, 1953, there were open house/garden tours and a tea. In October of 1957 and again in 1958, there were open houses and tours for members.

GROTON GARDEN CLUB  
TOUR OF HOUSES  
and  
TEA AT GROTON INN

Five Houses  
with  
Flower Arrangements

Open to the Public

TUESDAY, MAY 18, 1965  
1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Proceeds will go to the Town of Groton  
for the planting and care of shade trees

Tickets will be on sale in each of the houses and at  
the Groton Inn on the day of the tour.

Donation (Tour and Tea) \$2.50.

Please note

Flower arrangements by Garden Club members will be on display in the various houses and will be judged for their suitability to the setting.

Tea, which is included with the tour, will be served at the Groton Inn from 3 to 5 p.m., and at the same time there will be a plant sale by members of the Garden Club.

Please do not wear shoes with sharp heels.

On May 18th, 1965, the GGC held a public "Tour of Houses and Tea at the Groton Inn." Proceeds went to the Town of Groton for the planting and care of shade trees on Main Street. There were five homes on the tour. Flower arrangements by GGC members were on display at the various houses and were judged for their

suitability to the setting. Tea was included in the tour and was served at the Groton Inn from 3:00-5:00 p.m. A plant sale was held at the same time and tour tickets were \$2.50. Mrs. Marion Nash, chairman of the tour mentioned in a newspaper article that *“the tour dispelled the idea that the Groton Garden Club is an exclusive club, that one never applied for membership but waited patiently until one was invited to join. This image of exclusiveness is one which an overwhelming majority of the club would like to see banished once and for all time. Membership, while limited to 75 members, is open to anyone interested in gardening and town beautification projects such as the one now occupying the Club's attention. One need only to apply and then wait for an opening in the membership.”* A membership cap of seventy-five at the time was due to the lack of meeting space for a larger group. The cap has since been removed, and there is no longer a wait to join.

On May 16th, 1968, a public “Tour of Groton Gardens” was held by the GGC to raise funds for civic beautification planting in Groton. Eight member gardens were open to the public. A plant sale was held at one of the gardens, and tea was served at the Headmaster’s house at Groton School after the event. One garden on the tour was designed by Frederick Olmstead, and two others were designed by Constance Wharton Smith. In 1973, an open gardens tour of six member’s gardens was held for Club members and their guests.



### **Wrapping Paper (1982 - 1989)**

In 1982, the plant sale did not raise as much money as was needed, and the Club decided to sell wrapping paper to help boost the treasury. Sales of the gift wrap continued until at least 1989.

## **GRIT - Groton Recycles its Trash (1971)**

In 1971, the Club supported Groton Recycles Its Trash (GRIT). This was a group that advocated for recycling to be set up at the new town “dump” (now the Transfer station).

## **Groton Country Club (2012)**



The GGC held its monthly Membership meetings at the Groton Country Club from 2010 to 2013. As a thank you for use of the space, the GGC installed a garden in the grotto area in the spring of 2012. This was a one time clean-up and planting event, and maintenance of the

garden was turned over to the Country Club.

## **Grotonfest (2001- Present)**

The GGC has participated in this town-wide September festival regularly since 2001. The Club’s booth showcases Club activities and displays educational materials about identification of invasive plants and other gardening related topics. Daffodils, daylilies, and native plant seeds were given away in some years. Club members staff and decorate the booth.





## Lawrence Academy (1993)

In 1993, the Club received a request to design a memorial garden in honor of the alumni of Lawrence Academy who were war veterans. The garden was to be designed on the site of an old arbor, and was to be a contemplative spot where small classes would gather if desired. A sense of enclosure was needed, while at the same time retaining the views overlooking Main Street and the fields beyond. The GGC completed the design, and the school implemented it. The Club contributed a Magnolia tree to the garden.

## Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture (1923 - 1945)

### Interesting Talk.

The Garden club met at Lowthorpe school on Tuesday, October 11, the Littleton Garden club coming over for the occasion. The speaker of the afternoon, Edward I. Farrington, secretary of the Massachusetts Horticultural society, gave a most interesting talk on "Flowers from frost to frost," illustrated with colored lantern slides. Mr. Farrington showed that it was possible to have continuous bloom throughout the season and that the color in the garden could be continued through the fall by using various berried shrubs and those plants having colored twigs, such as cornus alba with red-stemmed branches and cornus flaviramea with brilliant yellow branches, making a striking contrast against the snow. He mentioned a substitute for our flowering dogwood, cornus kousa, which blooms about two weeks later and therefore is not likely to be injured by late frost. In speaking of climbing roses, Mr. Farrington said that rosa excelsa was the best substitute for the old-fashioned crimson rambler, which is subject to mildew. He also spoke highly of a large-flowered pink variety.

Mr. Farrington showed a good number of slides, covering the blooming periods in the garden with particular mention of annuals and flowers for cutting and showing several of the flowering shrubs that no garden should be without.

Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture, located on Main Street, was established for young women in 1901. GGC founder Elizabeth W. Wharton was a graduate. The school was available for meetings with its faculty, and the Club made the most of this opportunity during the years the school operated (until 1945). In return for the use of its facilities, the Groton Garden Club sponsored fundraising benefits and contributed to scholarship funds at the school. In June of 1937, a street fair was held at Lowthorpe School, and

another fair was held at Lowthorpe in 1940 (see Fairs).



*Lowthorpe School - 1920s*

## **School Gardens (1968 - 2001)**

In 1968, the GGC purchased forty-two rhododendron bushes to be planted in front of the Junior High School. In 1992 and '93, the Club awarded \$200.00 to Groton-Dunstable Middle School for development of a student garden which then won the award of "A Most Beautiful School Garden." An additional \$200.00 was donated for development of new academic units at Groton-Dunstable Middle School to center around their new gardens. In 2001, the GGC assisted in funding and planting a new entrance garden in front of Florence Roche Elementary School to be maintained by the PTA.

## **School Scholarships**

The GGC donated scholarship funds in the 1930s and '40s for students to attend the Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture.

In the 1980s, the GGC gave scholarships to students graduating from Groton-Dunstable High School (GDRHS) or Nashoba Valley

Technical High School (NVTHS). A fund was set up in 1983 with a scholarship to be awarded to a GDRHS graduating senior who would be studying horticulture or agriculture or a related field. Club members agreed to start with \$100.00 and increase it in the future if so desired. A scholarship was awarded to a GDRHS senior in 1984 and in 1985, a scholarship of \$200.00 was awarded to a GDRHS senior going into forestry. In 1986, the GGC president presented a scholarship at GDRHS graduation. In 1988, a \$200.00 scholarship was offered to GDRHS and NVTHS students. In 1992, the Club offered scholarships to primary school teachers and undergraduate students to take credits in courses that would advance their studies in ecology, horticulture, or related subjects. It was an ongoing issue to find students who would apply for the scholarships, and promotion of these scholarships was discussed often. The Scholarship Fund was disbanded in September of 1989. Information on scholarships was given to the schools in 1990 and 1991, but there were no applicants.

In 2007, the Mitzi Belitsky Scholarship was established at GDRHS. This was to be awarded to any Groton resident attending either NVTHS or GDRHS who had plans to enroll in a horticultural program in college. The Club has revisited the idea of scholarships since then, but there have not been any applicants, so the Club discontinued contributions to the account.

## **Tercentenary Celebration in Groton (1955)**

In 1955, the Civic Development committee installed plantings of trees, flowering trees, and shrubs in front of Town Hall, the Groton Library, Minuteman Common, and other commons throughout the town. Members also held a flower show and tea in celebration of the town's 300th birthday (see Flower Shows).

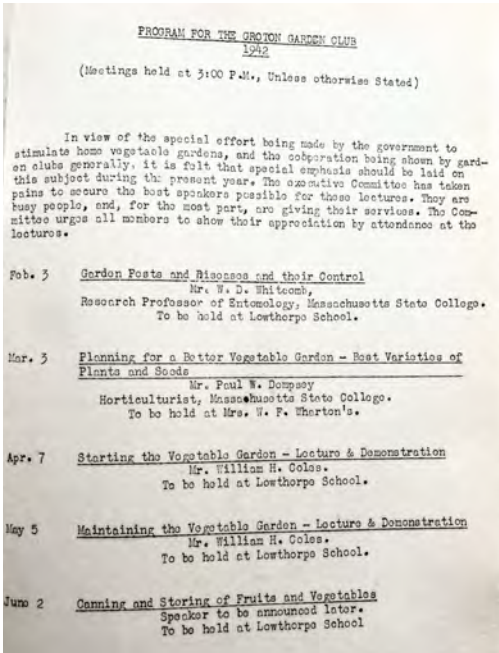
## Transfer Station



In 1976, the Landscape committee of the GGC suggested plantings for the entrance to the Transfer Station on Cow Pond Brook Road. Plants were donated by GGC members and planted as part of the Bicentennial beautification of Groton. Other plants have been added by members from time to time.

# WWII and Covid-19 Pandemic Years

## World War II



The Depression and World War II caused a major disruption in Garden Club activities locally and statewide. In 1940, the President of the GCFM urged all clubs to ask members to waste nothing. Everything from vegetable gardens should be given away or canned as there will be a *“fearful food shortage in many countries and homes this winter,”* she said.

Conservation stamps were sold, and the \$28.17 raised was sent to the Federal Government. In 1941, Club members were urged to send seeds to England and Finland. In 1942, the Club had programs on planning and care of vegetable gardens. British War relief asked for seeds, and funds were sent to England to buy seeds. A dollar provided enough seeds for a family of five for a year. Teas were held to benefit the Red Cross. Mr. Coles of Lowthorpe School was appointed War Gardening Chairman. The Nominating Committee could not find anyone to be President or Secretary, and the Club considered disbanding or meeting part time.

A governing board of three Club members was elected with power to transact Club business during the hiatus. At the October 6, 1942 Annual Meeting, the Club voted to formally suspend meetings and resign from the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts (the Club rejoined the Federation in 1964). From 1942 - 1945, the Club was on an inactive status. Bylaws were changed and articles dealing with membership, dues, and meetings were suspended until further notice.

There were no regular meetings during those three years (with the exception of annual meetings in October), however, members continued to carry out Club projects. They were also invited to lectures at Lowthorpe School. Mission baskets continued to be filled every week for four months in the summer. A letter sent to the Club from the GCFM during WWII urged the Club to plant Victory Gardens.



# THE GARDEN CLUB FEDERATION OF MASSACHUSETTS

February 9, 1942

Dear Mr. Richards.

After rather intensive study our place in the Defense Program is now clearly defined. In this we are working in accord with all Agricultural and Horticultural agencies and societies. We are asking all Non-Federated Clubs to join with us. The Garden Club of America has expressed itself in favor of this plan. This plan cannot be fully explained here, but Mr. William R. Cole, Chairman for the Federal Government, will speak on Feb. 16 at the Meeting for Horticultural Chairmen in Horticultural Hall. DO COME and get this first hand information.

The plan of the Dept. of Agriculture is a long range one on "Nutrition, Home Vegetable Gardens, and Food Preservation," which with the collaboration of representatives of the below mentioned agencies, the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts agreed to co-operate and further; the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, Regional Office of Civilian Defense, the Massachusetts State College, the State Commissioner of Agriculture, the State Commission of Public Safety, the State Grange, Farm Bureau, 4H Clubs, County Extension Service, Dept. of Economics, Dept. of Education, American Red Cross, Dept. of Division of Markets, and Nursery Men.

At a conference called by Mr. Willard A. Munson of the State College on Feb. 4th, at the Waltham Field Station, 40 representatives of these agencies agreed, by vote, on this policy;

1. Patriotism Does Not Demand Gardens.
2. Patriotism DOES DEMAND THAT ALL FOOD BE SAVED.
3. Gardens for Commercial Farms.
4. Gardens for Old Timers.
5. Gardens for Beginners, WHERE CAPABLE INSTRUCTION AND EFFICIENT SUPERVISION ARE AVAILABLE.

This program calls for Community Committees all over the State. Each Club is requested to appoint a representative to its Community Committee. These Community representatives will be a center of information for their local groups. They will be a link between their group and County and State workers. They will discover and propose new opportunities for assistance by County and State workers. They will be supplied with printed subject matter, information and help. They will bring clearly before their Communities the need for, and desirability of, full understanding and organized effort in the problems of Nutrition and the relationship of Home Gardens and Food Preservation to better family health and sound family economics.



This appointment should be made with careful consideration, inasmuch as the Dept. of Agriculture is counting on our co-operation in the success of this plan. It has been suggested that in many Clubs the Horticultural Chairman is the logical person to take on this responsibility, the requirements are these qualities, leadership, some understanding of nutrition, of gardening and canning.

Conferences will be held in each county for these representatives; you will be notified of the one to be held in your vicinity. As these conferences begin on the Cape Feb. 17 and 18 and move across the State you see the necessity of making your appointment without delay. As soon as this appointment is made will you please notify your Home Demonstration Agent, who is, Myrtle Swanson, Mass. Co. Concord, Tel. 846 - Please also notify me without delay, in order that your representative may be registered at main office at the State College.

Our second duty is: Inquire of your members and ANY IN YOUR TOWN OR COMMUNITY, this is for all interested people, and our chance to lend our organization to a great work, inquire if there are any interested in having instruction on "How to Grow Better Food." Finding such a group, of people seriously interested, get in touch with your County Agent, he will help you in planning your classes. It is suggested that these classes be held in the evening, it will make it easier for men who will be interested.

Third; Do not forget the Hospitals at the Camps. This, you see is just another reason why we need flowers this year more than ever before. Those unable to have vegetable gardens can do a grand work with their flowers, one that proved its worth last summer and at Christmas.

I cannot stress too strongly the part each Club, large or small, should play in this Victory Program.

Please re-read this, and appoint your representative without delay.

This is our GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO BE OF SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY.

*Your conference is either  
March 5-6 please contact  
Miss Swanson for particulars*

Sincerely yours,  
*Maryann J. Whipple*  
Mrs. Sherman E. Whipple, Jr.  
Defense Chairman.

*Please put this in local paper*

30 Clyde St.  
Chestnut Hill Station,  
Brookline, Mass.  
Lon. 5867

Three car loads of flowers were sent to Lovell Hospital in Devens. Though the Club remained on inactive status, it made financial contributions to the following: \$10.00 sent to British War Relief for seeds, \$25.00 to Lowthorpe, \$10.00 to the state to battle Dutch Elm disease, \$5.00 to NEWFS, and \$5.00 to decorate Lovell Hospital at Devens for Christmas. Plantings were made at the United Services Organizations (USO) building in Ayer and Mission Baskets were sent to Boston in the summer. At the October 1945 Annual Meeting, the Club voted to return to active status again. New officers were voted in, membership meetings began again in March 1946, and the Bylaws were revised.

## Covid-19 Pandemic (2019 - 2022)

The Groton Garden Club faced many challenges during the global Covid-19 pandemic. Plant sales were reconfigured (see Plant Sales). Membership, board, and committee meetings were held virtually or outside. Speakers made monthly presentations to the membership virtually. Municipal gardens were maintained throughout the period with members working alone or socially distant from others. Members spent time in their own gardens, many finding the work very therapeutic during lockdowns and upheaval. The Groton Garden Club persevered and returned to normal activities in the spring of 2022.



# Awards

All Awards received are from the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts (GCFM), unless otherwise noted.

- 1967.... Civic Beautification - for the island area in front of Lavender and Dunkin Donuts (no longer maintained by the Club), \$200 from Sears Roebuck
- 1970.... Citation for Beautification - \$15.00 from Sears Roebuck
- 1974.... Citation - Garden Therapy
- 1978.... Award of Appreciation - Garden Therapy
- 1978.... Yearbook Commendation Award
- 1978.... Citation Garden Therapy
- 1980.... National and State Awards - Flower Show - Silver Bowl and Certificate of Achievement
- 1984.... National Award - Garden Therapy
- 1984.... Club of Distinction Award
- 1984.... Distinguished Service for Garden Therapy
- 1988.... Club of Distinction Award
- 1989.... Club of Distinction Award
- 1989.... Distinguished Service Award
- 1990.... Bay State Award - Flower Show
- 1991.... Club of Distinction
- 1991.... Distinguished Service - Mitzi Belitsky Award for Garden Therapy
- 1991.... Distinguished Service - Bridging the Generations Award
- 1991.... State Award and President's Bowl for "Overall Excellence in Civic Development Projects"
- 1992.... Club of Distinction Award

- 1993....Club of Distinction Award
- 1993....National Award - Special Achievement
- 1994....Club of Distinction Award
- 1995....Club of Distinction Award
- 1995....Distinguished Service - Memorial Garden
- 1996....Club of Distinction Award
- 1999....Certificate of Achievement
- 1999....Certificate of Appreciation - Civic Beautification
- 2005....Conservation Award
- 2011....National Certificate of Appreciation - Blue Star Memorial
- 2015....National and State Awards - Civic Beautification -  
Boutwell House Gardens - certificate and silver plate
- 2015....Barbara May Website Award for a medium-sized club  
National Award - Website - First Place Award
- 2016....National Certificate of Merit - 90th Anniversary in GCFM
- 2018....Civic Development Award for Landscaping a Public  
Building and Certificate of Merit for planting Arbor Day  
trees, and the design and installation of new landscape at  
the Groton Center Fire Station
- 2022....Patricia Dennett Grant Award - for a community outreach  
program in ecology, conservation, or horticulture  
education, including a \$500 grant, for Annual Public  
Lecture on Natural Control of Pesky Invasive Plants
- 2022....Public Relations Award - for publicity and reaching a large  
segment of the community for Annual Public Lecture on  
Natural Control of Pesky Invasive Plants
- 2022....Barbara May Website Award for the Groton Garden Club  
website
- 2022....Yearbook Award
- 2022....Sandra M. Joyce Civic Development Grant (\$1000) for the  
100 Native Plantings for 100 Years Project



# Committees through the Years

Groton Garden Club members have explored many topics and covered a wide variety of interests through their committee work. Some committees held the members' interest for many years, others were short-lived, and some continue to the present. The following are some of the committees formed during our 100 years.

- |                                  |                     |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Awards                           | Membership          |
| Book Group                       | Newsletter          |
| Bylaws                           | Nominating          |
| Civic Development                | Project Development |
| Conservation                     | Programs            |
| Dirt Gardeners                   | Publicity           |
| Garden History                   | Sunshine            |
| Garden Rx                        | Teas                |
| Flower Design                    | Trips               |
| Historian                        | Ways and Means      |
| Horticulture Studies Hospitality | Website             |
| Landscape Design                 | Yearbook            |
| Lantern Slides                   |                     |



# Memberships

Over the years, the GGC has become a member of the following organizations: Friends of the Tree Warden, Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts, Nashua River Watershed Association, New England Botanical Garden at Tower Hill, New England Wildflower Society, and Native Plant Trust.



# Historical Highlights

- 1923.....Dues were \$2.00. Membership was twenty-two
- 1926.....The first Groton Garden Club Flower Show  
Meetings were usually held in member's homes in the afternoon with tea served following the meeting and a tour of the hostess's garden
- 1926.....Mr. Charles Ames was the first gentleman Club member
- 1927.....At a June 8th meeting, "*Mrs. W. P. Wharton told of attending a meeting for planning a Federation of Garden Clubs and said that the Club would receive a questionnaire soon as it is desired to find out what the Garden Clubs themselves desire*"
- 1928.....The Club voted to join the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts
- 1932.....At the October 11th Annual Meeting, the Club voted to hold meetings on the first Tuesday of the month and Committees for the following year were: Civic, Conservation, Lantern slides, Wildflowers, Exhibitions
- 1932.....At the December meeting, printed programs for the year were distributed to members, postcards would no longer be mailed for every meeting
- 1934.....First Plant Sale for townspeople of Groton
- 1940.....Mrs. Henry Richards was President of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts
- 1940.....Mrs William Norman, a charter member of the GGC, designed the GCFM seal, which was accepted by the Federation in 1940 at their annual meeting



1951.....Mrs. H. H. Richards was Chairman of the Boston Flower Show

1954.....Mrs. Constance Wharton Smith designed a plan for Sawyer Common at Martins Pond Road and Hollis Street for the placing of the War Memorial stones

1959.....Voted no smoking at meetings

1964.....GGC rejoined the GCFM

1966.....A “Tea Committee” was still in place

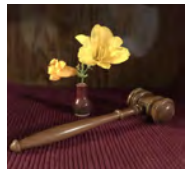
1972.....November 7th was the first membership meeting held in the morning

1983.....Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts created the “Mitzi Belitsky Award for Garden Therapy”

1984.....The first GGC logo was designed by GGC Past President Margaret Rhoads



1987.....A gavel given to the Club President was made by Harvey Sargisson



1988/89...The first annual budget was prepared and approved

1990.....The logo was updated, and the Lady’s Slipper was chosen for the center of the design



- 1990.....The telephone committee reports “*There will no longer be calls made to remind members of meetings. Read your book*”
- 1991.....The GGC opened its first P.O. Box (#413) in May
- 1997.....Annual meeting returned to June time frame
- 1998.....A webpage was launched in March
- 2001.....Email notifications for meetings began
- 2010.....Applied for 501(c)(3) status
- 2012-14...Club archives organized and preserved in notebooks
- 2015.....A new website was created
- 2017.....A members only Facebook page was launched
- 2020-21...Meetings often held virtually



# Anniversary Celebrations

1973: For the 50th Anniversary, the Club held a House and Garden Tour in June. The Club had hoped to hold a Flower Show at the History Center, but that did not occur. A historical synopsis of the past 50 years was printed in the yearbook.



1983: A 60th Anniversary party table was set up next to the benches outside Town Hall. A large cake and punch were served to passers-by. A tree was planted at the Petapawag Canoe Launch on Arbor

Day in honor of the Club's birthday.

April 1993: A 70th Anniversary celebration was held during the Annual Meeting with a cake and sharing of gardening stories.



1998: The Club's 75th Anniversary was celebrated with a luncheon and anniversary cake. Scented geraniums were given to members as gifts.

2003: The Club did not plan a celebration for the 80th Anniversary because members were very involved in beautification projects for Groton's 350th celebration.

2008: A group photo was taken at the Annual Meeting luncheon celebrating the 85th Anniversary.



2013: The Club held a 90th Anniversary party at the Groton Grange. A proclamation was read by the Town Manager and past Club members were invited. The Groton Grange was decorated in a floral theme, and a buffet dinner prepared by members was served.

Rosemary plants (for remembrance) were gifted to each attendee. Members brought antique vases to swap, a history of the Club was read, and members shared their Garden Club memories.



2018: A 95th Anniversary celebration was held at Groton School. Several Life Members were in attendance. A wonderful luncheon was served, a slide show of members was shown, and a group photo was taken. Members made flower arrangements for the tables.



2023: The GGC planned many activities for its Centennial Celebration. January was the kick-off event with a social meeting, a photo display from the archives, and a presentation of garden clippers as a commemorative gift to each Club member. February featured a plant swap, surprise drawing, and display of yearbooks. March was a busy month beginning with the Annual Public Lecture entitled “*Engaging Youth and Ourselves in the Spheres of Nature and Gardening*” by John Forti. The month also featured a collaboration with the Groton Public Library for its Community Reads program - “Groton Reads and Gardens.” Book selections were *Nature’s Best Hope* by Douglas Tallamy and *Gardening in Eden* by Arthur T. Vanderbilt II. Programs related to the books and to gardening were offered to townspeople throughout the month. An Art and Flowers program was planned, and GGC members read books about gardens to preschoolers. April’s Club membership meeting featured a proclamation from the Groton

Selectboard, a re-creation of the first meetings of the GGC from the 1920s and 30s, a birthday cake, and the release of this book: *One Hundred Years of the Groton Garden Club*.

May featured a Memorial Tree planting and the Club's annual Plant Sale. In June, the GGC Annual Meeting was planned with a special celebration luncheon, inviting current and past Club members. Pop-up tours of municipal and member gardens were planned for the summer months. A special exhibit was planned for the Club's Grotonfest booth in September, and a special yearbook edition was created. The celebratory year culminated in a wrap up of events at the October Club membership meeting.



*100th Anniversary Committee*

# Presidents of the Groton Garden Club

Mrs. William P. Wharton .....	1923-1927
Mrs. Frank Torrey .....	1927-1928
Mrs. Henry H. Richards .....	1928-1932
Mrs. Winthrop L. Sheedy .....	1932-1933
Mrs. Henry H. Richards .....	1933-1936
Mrs. F. P. Nash .....	1936-1940
Mrs. F. P. Nash, Mrs. H. H. Richards, and Mrs. W. Wharton, Directors .....	1941-1942
Mrs. Carlton Shaw, Mrs. Carl Lawrence, and Miss Pattee, Directors .....	1942-1945
Mrs. William P. Wharton .....	1945-1946
Mrs. Henry H. Richards .....	1946-1952
Mrs. George H. Timmins .....	1952-1954
Mrs. Arthur Havermeyer .....	1954-1956
Mrs. George T. Keyes .....	1956-1957
Mrs. William H. Kenney .....	1957-1959
Mrs. William H. Kenney and Mrs. F. P. Nash .....	1959-1962
Mrs. W. P. Graves .....	1962-1964
Mrs. John B. Andrews and Mrs. J.B. McLean .....	1964-1965
Mrs. John B. Andrews .....	1965-1966
Mrs. Richard Pleasants .....	1966-1968
Mrs. Peter D. Cole.....	1968-1970
Mrs. Neil Powell .....	1970-1972
Mrs. George V. Moore.....	1972-1974
Mrs. Frank C. Belitsky .....	1974-1977
Mrs. John Carty.....	1977-1977
Mrs. R. Thomas Delaney.....	1977-1979
Mrs. Richard Rhoads .....	1979-1981
Mrs. Edward A. Larter, Jr. ....	1981-1983



Mrs. Kenneth Janes.....	1983-1985
Mrs. Bartlett W. Paulding.....	1985-1987
Mrs. Thomas S. Bell.....	1987-1989
Mrs. Elizabeth Renner.....	1989-1990
Mrs. Frederic Landmann.....	1990-1992
Mrs. Thomas Osten.....	1992-1994
Christine Beckert Long.....	1994-1996
Mrs. Paul Gunderson.....	1996-1998
Lynne Kavanagh.....	1998-2000
Marilyn Robertson.....	2000-2002
Martha Oldham.....	2002-2004
Estelle James.....	2004-2006
Theresa Harris.....	2006-2010
Penny Hommeyer.....	2010-2012
Debra Martin.....	2012-2014
Laura Semple.....	2014-2018
Lisa Murray.....	2018-2022
Lisa Theall.....	2022-present





*Past Presidents - 1998*



*Past Presidents - 2013*

# Members on the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts Board

- 1930..... Miss Margaret I. Jardine, One year Director
- 1934..... Mrs. H.H. Richards, Secretary
- 1937-38..... Mrs. H.H. Richards, First Vice President
- 1939-40..... Mrs. H. H. Richards, President
- 1945-1964....Club was not federated
- 1970-73..... Chairman Birds Committee - Mrs. Peter D. Cole
- 1973-74..... People and Their Environment Curriculum Duties -  
Mrs. Peter Cole
- 1975-76..... Conservation Committee Chair - Mrs. Neil H. Powell;  
Landscape Design Critics Council Chair - Mrs.  
George V. Moore
- 1976-77..... Landscape Design Critics Council Chair -  
Mrs. George V. Moore (Zelda); First year of adding  
first names
- 1977-79.....Garden Therapy Chair - Mitzi Belitsky (Mrs. Frank);  
Landscape Design School Chair - Zelda Moore
- 1979-80.....Newsletter Editor - Mitzi Belitsky; Landscape Design  
School and Second Vice President - Zelda Moore
- 1980-81..... Second Vice President - Zelda Moore; Environmental  
Education - Mrs. Alan Larter; Newsletter Editor -  
Mitzi Belitsky
- 1981-82..... Board Director (Three-year term) and Civic  
Development Chair - Zelda Moore; Environmental

- Education - Mrs. Alan Larter; Newsletter Editor - Mitzi Belitsky
- 1982-83.....Central District Director - Mitzi Belitsky; Board Director (Two-year term) and Civic Development Chair - Zelda Moore; Newsletter Advertising - Mrs. Alan Larter
- 1983-84.....Nominating Chair and Central District Director - Mitzi Belitsky; Board Director (One-year term) - Zelda Moore; Environmental Education - Mrs. Nancy Powell; Newsletter Advertising - Mrs. Alan Larter
- 1984-85.....Nominating Chair and Central District Awards Chair - Mitzi Belitsky
- 1985-87.....Landscape Design School Chair and Central District Awards Chair - Mitzi Belitsky
- 1987-88.....Energy & Awareness Chair and Environmental Concerns Chair - Zelda Moore; Central District Conservation Chair - Connie Paulding
- 1988-89.....Energy & Awareness Chair and Environmental Concerns Chair - Zelda Moore; Garden Therapy - Mitzi Belitsky
- 1989-90.....Garden Therapy - Mitzi Belitsky
- 1990-91.....Board Director (Three-year term) and Garden Therapy - Mitzi Belitsky
- 1991-92.....Board Director (Two-year term) - Mitzi Belitsky
- 1992-93.....Board Director (One-year term) - Mitzi Belitsky
- 1993-94.....Central North District Director - Marilyn Robertson; Bylaws Chair and Central North District Flower Show Consultant - Mitzi Belitsky

- 1994-95.....Central North District Director - Marilyn Robertson;  
Bylaws Chair and Central North District Flower  
Show Consultant - Mitzi Belitsky
- 1995-96.....State Program Chair, Nominating Committee and  
Program Chair, Central North District - Marilyn  
Robertson; Indoor Gardening - Mitzi Belitsky
- 1996-97.....State Program Chair, Nominating Committee and  
Program Chair, Central North District - Marilyn  
Robertson; Indoor Gardening - Mitzi Belitsky
- 1997-99.....State Corresponding Secretary and Central North  
District Program Chair - Marilyn Robertson
- 2001-03.....Central North District Nominating Committee,  
Program Chair, and State Protocol - Marilyn  
Robertson
- 2007-09.....Garden Therapy and Virginia Thurston Healing  
Garden - Tucker Smith
- 2009-11.....Meetings and Raffle Committee - Marilyn Robertson;  
Garden Therapy and Virginia Thurston Healing  
Garden - Tucker Smith
- 2013-15.....Garden Therapy and Virginia Thurston Healing  
Garden - Tucker Smith
- 2015-17.....Environmental Workshop Chair and Smokey Bear &  
Woodsy Owl Poster Contest Chair - Laura Semple
- 2019-21.....President's Native Plant Challenge - Laura Semple
- 2021-22.....Awards Committee - Laura Semple
- 2022-23.....State Awards Chair - Lisa Murray



# Photos Through the Years



























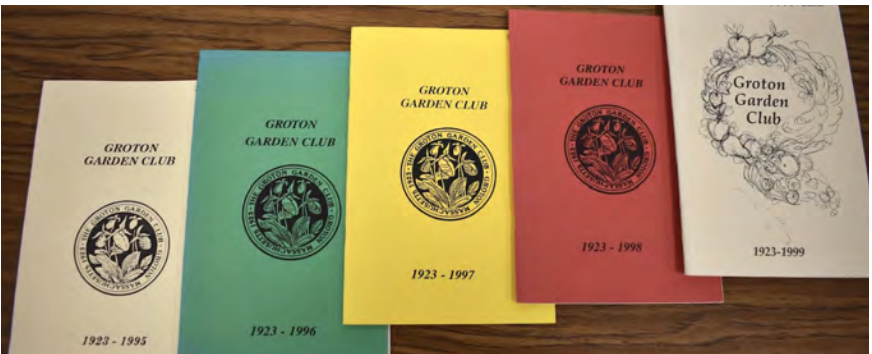








## Yearbooks





# Acknowledgements and Author's Note

This book was compiled and written by Penny Hommeyer over the course of two years. The Club archives were used, which consist of thirty-three binders of minutes, photos, award certificates, and notes. Three handwritten journal books from the first fifty years were also read.

The initial process began with a review of the archives and journals. Penny Hommeyer, Anna Eliot, Lisa Murray, Jean-Claire Shiely, and Claire Wilson were readers and note takers. Lisa Murray and Lisa Theall created a file for data entry. Penny transcribed the notes and organized them into a raw data file and wrote a first draft. Lisa Murray edited the draft, with assistance from Juliet Silveri and Jodi Valenta.

Penny selected, copied, labeled, and organized the photos from the archives and those contributed by members. Lisa Theall adjusted the layout and helped produce a final draft. Lisa Murray designed the cover.

Thank you to all of the members mentioned above for assisting in telling the story of the first 100 years of the Groton Garden Club.





The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies.

- Gertrude Jekyll