

The Boylston Garden Club

By Inga Milbauer

Ever wondered who has planted the beautiful flowers on the Boylston Common, in front of the library, near the municipal buildings, and several other public locations around Boylston? The answer is the Boylston Garden Club!

The active members of the Boylston Garden Club raise funds and use this money to beautify the town by planting flowers and shrubs, and to maintain gardens at multiple sites in town. The Boylston Garden Club started on January 23, 1979. At that time, Mr. David Bottom had written letters to gardeners in town to find out if anyone would be interested in starting a club. Since then, the club has grown to more than forty members.

Beginning in June 1982, the club has planted and maintained plots around Boylston. After 25 years, ten different sites throughout Boylston were maintained by the club members. By 2019, this had grown to thirteen sites, all of which are still being cared for today. The sites include planters and (small) gardens at the public library, the flag pole and bandstand on the Boylston Common, the various memorials in town, the Powder House triangle, the Town House and fire department, the municipal buildings, the planters in front of the Historic Town Hall, and the water trough on the corner of Scar Hill Road and Main Street. The members divide the work, and a small group is responsible for a specific plot.



Garden at the Powder House



Bandstand on the Boylston Common



War Memorial on the Boylston Common



Garden in front of the Boylston Public Library

Members of the Boylston Garden Club meet every month during the months of September through June at the Town House, with a year-end party in June. In April, the club participates in the tri-garden club event with the garden clubs of Northborough and Shrewsbury. The three local garden clubs take turns to host the event. Traditionally, November is the month the club organizes a food drive for the Boylston Food Pantry. Members have also participated in flower show competitions, such as the Central Massachusetts Flower Show in Worcester, winning prizes and blue ribbons.



***Boylston Garden Club Float
Bicentennial Parade – September 28, 1986
Photo by Charlie Draper – BHSM archives***



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During the Town of Boylston's bicentennial celebration on September 28, 1986 the garden club organized a tour of eight notable residential gardens in town. It also participated in the bicentennial parade with a float which won first prize for most beautiful float.

Two main fundraising events take place every year, the Memorial Day plant sale and the wreath sale in December. Gardeners in the club bring their plants to sell at the Memorial Day celebrations on the Boylston Common. In early December, the annual holiday wreath making day takes place. In the beginning, wreaths were made from scratch. Nowadays, basic green wreaths are purchased from Bigelow's Nurseries and decorated by the members of the club. Wreaths are donated to adorn locations throughout the town for the holiday season. The uniquely decorated wreaths by the members are sold at the annual wreath sale held at the Town House.



Boylston Garden Club Bench - Boylston Common

The proceeds from the fundraising activities and membership fees are used for club events with speakers, to purchase the plantings throughout town and flags for poles for Memorial Day, and to give small awards to organizations in town. The Boylston Elementary School, for instance, has been awarded money to teach students about gardening.

In 2010, with proceeds from the club and a grant awarded by the town's local access station WBAC, a bench was purchased and installed on the Boylston Common.

This year, at the annual Memorial Day plant sale, the garden club distributed packets of a dozen mixed sunflower seeds to the community. It was a way to show support for Ukraine as the sunflower is the National Flower of Ukraine and has become a symbol of hope for peace.

Several members have been part of this club for decades. Six members who were members from the very start were honored in 2019 for their forty years of service: Kathy Grimley, Dee LaRose, Carol Leach, Carla Peterson, Carol Podolski, and Maria Taylor. At that event, Town Administrator April Steward also presented a proclamation to the co-presidents Mary Groleau and Carla Krasinskas for service to the town.

Apart from town beautification, the club hopes to bring together anyone who is interested in gardening and to bring the joy of gardening to both young and old. Anyone who would like more information, please check out the club's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/people/The-Boylston-MA-Garden-Club/100067990143339/?sk=about> . New members are always welcome!

Acknowledgements:

A sit-down affair - Garden club installs bench on the common by Michael Kane, Banner editor, September 2, 2010

Beauty the Subject of Garden Club Tour by Richard Duckett of the Telegram Staff, The Telegram, September 1986

Boylston Garden Club marks 40 years of growing by Ken Cleveland, Item Correspondent, June 14, 2019

Boylston Garden Club will give out sunflower seeds to show support for peace in Ukraine, Telegram & Gazette, May 9, 2022

Garden club really digs this year's silver anniversary, Banner, January 22, 2004

Wreath making tradition continues through the years, Banner, December 2006

<https://www.telegram.com/story/news/local/the-item/2019/06/16/boylston-garden-club-marks-40-years-of-growing/4899556007/>

<https://www.telegram.com/story/news/local/the-item/2022/05/09/boylston-garden-club-give-out-sunflower-seeds-show-support-ukraine/9614354002/>

Editor, Nancy A. Filgate, Director, Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc., Boylston, Massachusetts

Interviews with members of the Boylston Garden Club Mary Groleau and Carla Peterson

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