



THE GARDENS AT ELM BANK
MASSACHUSETTS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

FY15 Year in Review

October 1, 2014- September 30, 2015



The Gardens at Elm Bank: In May 2015, Mass Hort opened a new visitors center and its first garden tourism season, open from May to October, collecting admission of \$8, and free to members, and welcoming over 4,000 visitors.

Mass Hort maintained 36 acres of grounds including 16 acres of gardens and 3 green houses. We grew over 30,000 plants for the property. Director John Forti, Director of Horticulture led the horticultural staff, which included David Fiske, Gardens Curator, and Thibaut Collins, Seasonal Horticulturalist.

Philanthropy: In March, Elaine Lawrence, Director of Development, joined the team to help build relationships with our donors and advance philanthropy. In 2015 Mass Hort received more than \$500,000 in restricted gifts, including capital projects in 2015.

Flower Show: The 2015 Flower Show attracted thousands of people and Mass Hort managed the amateur competitions for horticulture, floral design, and photography with the help of many dedicated committees and volunteers. Mass Hort uses the flower show to introduce new people to Mass Hort and

it is a major membership drive for the Society. Mass Hort's garden at the show, "An Enchanted New England Walk," delighted children and adults, alike, and won 6 awards.

Agriculture: The Garden to Table garden under the leadership of program educator, Hannah Traggis, and volunteer garden keeper, Susan Hammond, harvested over 4,000 pounds of produce, which was donated to 2 local food pantries. A wonderful volunteer crew and garden intern, Bryce Hawes, planted, tended, and harvested the vegetable garden. Bryce's position was sponsored by a generous grant from the Fund for Wellesley. Most seeds for the garden were donated by Johnny's Selected Seeds. Additionally, we received several sponsorships for the garden.

Three Goddesses Pale Ale:Katie Folts, Hannah Traggis, and Kathy Macdonald, 3 goddesses, harvested hops (cascade variety) from the Garden to Table garden, and made six cases of pale ale for our harvest dinner.

Capital Improvements: A generous \$95,000 grant was received to renovate Weezie's Garden for Children. The project was completed in July under the direction of John Forti. New features delight families and children and include a New England waterways, fairy garden, and outside classroom.

Manor House: The manor house continues to spur interest in saving this historical building and finding a use that would serve Mass Hort and the community. A volunteer group has been meeting to discuss potential uses and funding models.

Education: Education coordinator, Katie Folts, reported that education programs grew by 84 percent over 2014. During the 2015 Garden Season, Mass Hort's Daily Children's Program reached 1,747 people (801 children and 946 adults). Our Plantmobile visited 34 schools and outreach events. A School Garden Conference brought 150 educators, volunteers, and administrators to Mass Hort in February and in October a teacher returned with 280 students for an environmental program. Great job by Katie Folts our education coordinator and Hannah Traggis, Garden to Table educator! Interesting lectures brought members and new guests to Mass Hort and they included Princess Corsini, Sir Peter Crane, as well as the PPA Symposium.

Function Business: Director of Events, Kayleigh Dowden, grew the function business 3 percent over 2014 and welcomed over 10,000 guest to The Gardens at Elm Bank through weddings, bar and bat mitzvahs, corporate outings, social functions, and meetings.

Volunteers: Volunteers continue to be our greatest resource, with master gardeners helping in the gardens, volunteers in the office, Visitors Center, flower show, and events such as the Festival of Trees. A partnership with Community Service provided over 5,000 man hours to help care for the grounds.

Library: Under the direction of Maureen Horn, our librarian, the Mass Hort Library, the oldest horticultural library in America, partnered with the Digital Commonwealth to digitize over 1,000 botanical prints which were made available to the public online by clicking here to see them:

<https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/collections/commonwealth:k930hm897>

Additionally, Mass Hort has opened an online SHOP BOTANICAL PRINTS store and made available seven reproduction prints for sale for the holidays to help support the library: <http://www.masshort.org/masshort-shop>

Legislative Action: Working with our legislators and DCR for over a year, the State Legislature amended Section 5 of Chapter 624 of the Acts of 1986 in its 2015 Session Law, Chapter 10, Section 53, thereby removing the restrictions on Turtle Lane. The result is that school and tour buses can now enter the property.

Community Outreach: Events revenue grew by 12 percent over FY14. Our 2014 Festival of Trees grew with the addition of “Snow Village” and doubled attendance from 3,000 to 6,000. Thanks to the hardworking volunteer committee (Chair, Gretel Anspach, Penni Jenkins, and Holly Perry), many volunteers, and a wonderful donation from Bill and Ellen Meagher of trains and holiday villages that enhanced the Christmas tree display and festival. The Festival of Trees runs November 27 through December 13 and the expanded exhibit of trees, trains, and villages, as well as beautifully decorated trees (that can be bid on), horse-drawn wagon rides, and much more.

The Honorary Medals dinner, 2014, honoring William Dirr at the George Robert White Medal of Honor awardee, drew 108 people for his keynote address.

At the Gardeners Fair, Mass Hort partnered with Allendale Farm as our tomato provider, and the Herb Society to combine plant sales as we helped people get their gardens ready for spring.

Three outreach events, sponsored by Wellesley Bank connected the public with The Gardens at Elm Bank: Jazz Concert, Art in the Gardens, and the Pomona Festival welcomed in over 1,500 people to Mass Hort. In September, special reception lectures by the Princess Corsini, attendance 130, and Sir Peter Crane, attended by 80 people, introduced new people to Mass Hort. At the Fall Harvest Dinner, a long-table local foods event, 86 people shared a dinner with new friends and enjoyed a moonlit night in the Maple Grove.

Partnerships grew to include Slow Foods, Wellesley Bank, First Republic Bank, Bartlett Tree Experts, Johnny’s Seeds, the Herb Society, NEHLDA, and the Wellesley Fund.