

MANCHESTER GARDEN CLUB

1926 – 2016

90 years of history

A recap of our 90 years – many things have changed, but our goals and enthusiasm have not!

1920s

1927 – Our first Flower Show was on June 7-8, 1927. It was so successful; we had another Flower Show September 13-14, 1927. There were 89 exhibits at this show and more than 600 people attended!

1928 – Our first spring flower show was held on June 15, 1928, at Center Church before its rebuilding. There were more than 50 participants.

May 19, 1928 – Our first annual Plant Sale is held.

Fall 1928 – Participated in CT Horticultural Society's Fall Flower Show – received Gold Medal

Spring 1929 – Participated in CT Horticultural Society's June Flower Show, received Silver Medal



Club Flower show – June, 1928

1930s

Planted American elm at the Porter School, now Highland Park School, to celebrate the Bicentennial of George Washington's birth.

1932 – Participated in National Flower and Garden Show in Hartford

1933 – Joined the Connecticut Horticultural Society

Club planted grounds at new YMCA and continued with annual donations

Held several Flower Shows throughout the decade

Supported school garden clubs with gifts of seeds

Provided arrangements for the dedication ceremony of Mary Cheney Library



Club member George Clarke hybridized a new Chrysanthemum, "Fire Engine Red" that was featured by Bristol Nurseries in 1963.

1940s



1940 – Members receive the first yearbook of the Club as a surprise gift after the September meeting.

First yearbook, 1940:

President: Mr. William E. Buckley

Vice President: Mr A.E. Howe

Secretary: Mrs Norman Ash

Treasurer: Mrs Marion R. Eddy

47 Active Members

1941 -Donated 2½ pounds of mixed flower and vegetable seeds to Finnish Relief Fund and "Seeds for Peace" campaign

1941 – Joined the Federated Garden Clubs of CT, Inc.

1940s, continued



1944 – Under the coordination of Mrs Philip Cheney, the Camp and Hospital Committee contributed to the planting – and maintenance – of gardens at the Bradley Field Station Hospital grounds (Connecticut’s only Base Hospital) and the Windsor Locks Air Base as well as at another facility in Avon. In addition to beautifying the grounds, these gardens were used for therapy for soldiers.

In an attempt to eradicate the Tent Caterpillar, the Club offered the Boy Scouts a \$5.00 prize for the troop that collected the most nests and a \$2.00 prize to the Boy Scout who collected the most nests.

The club endorsed a Federated Garden Clubs of CT Bill that was put before the State Legislature on roadside billboard control. Although many gardeners appeared at the Capital on the day the Bill was scheduled to be presented, it never was

1950s

1952 – Held first Greens sale in December

1954 – Club honors our first president by establishing the Mary Chapman Memorial Planting in Center Memorial Park

1958 - Supplied laurel and pachysandra for planting at the Lutz Children’s Museum

Co-sponsored (with the Community Y) the Home Decoration contest at Christmas

Participated in Center Memorial Park Improvement Project. Donated \$300, most of which was used to purchase long leaf evergreens

1959 – 1965 - Supervised and participated in a five-year Girl Scout Conservation Project at Camp Merriwood, creating a marked Nature Trail at the camp.

1960s

1960 - Club sponsored Scout leader to Conservation Workshop sponsored by University of Connecticut

1960-1961 - Purchased bird feeders, as well as wildflower and nature slides, for the Lutz Children’s Museum.

1963 – 1968 - Received \$50 Seed Money Grant from Sears Roebuck & Co. for Civic Beautification

1967 - Started an anti-litter campaign at the elementary school level

1968 – Dedicated the Margaret Trotter Memorial Garden across from the Post Office (Now known as Weiss Building)

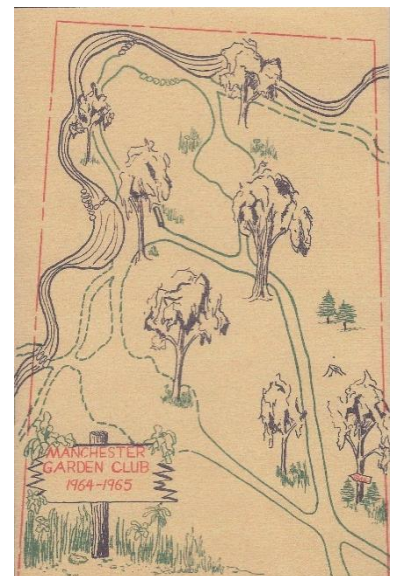
Established an annual scholarship for a student studying forestry, horticulture, and/or floriculture

Began Bird Sanctuary Project in Camp Merriwood

Participated, with the Chamber of Commerce, in establishing the Memorial Tree Program.



The greens sales continued many years, and included demonstrations, speakers, and a boutique of arrangements for sale.



The Girl Scout Conservation project included trail creation, tree planting, nature trail markers, and benches. In 1965 alone, the club planted 22 hemlocks, 175 laurels, and over 50 varieties of wildflowers.

1970s

1975 - Contributed towards purchase of flags for Downtown Manchester

October 1976 - Club's 50th Anniversary

1973 – Special plantings at Cheney Homestead and Manchester Center in observance of Manchester's Sesquicentennial

1976 – In honor of the USA Bicentennial, planted a "Liberty Tree" (Pin Oak) at the Cheney Homestead and entered a float in town's Bicentennial Parade.

1979 – voted to memorialize deceased club members by planting a tree through Manchester's Memorial Tree Program

Joined the East Central Council of Garden Clubs, established by Club Member Millicent Jones for garden clubs east of the river

Donation of "Juniper Sargentii" bushes planted in Center Park

Charter Member of Manchester Land Trust and contribution made to Case Mountain Open Space Project



To commemorate the bicentennial, the club planted a 'Liberty Tree' at the Cheney Homestead, for which they received an award.

1980s



Decorating the Cheney Homestead has become an annual tradition. Two recent chairs, Patty Roggi and JoAnn La Torre are shown here.

1980 – Formed the Horticultural Study Group, which met in the evenings

1981 - Supported Pitkin Glassworks Site Restoration

1985 – Memorial Day – Dedicated new Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park Garden

Contributions to Connecticut Arboretum and Statue of Liberty – Ellis Island Restoration Fund, and to the Manchester Police Department to replace shrubs at the station

Club members served on the Chamber of Commerce Environment and Beautification Committee

East Central Council of Garden Clubs is dissolved

Began annual custom of decorating the Cheney Homestead for the Holiday Open House

Participated annually in Festival of Trees and Traditions at Wadsworth Athenaeum

1990s

Club members participated on committees to enlarge gardens and plantings at Bennet Middle School and to design the memorial garden at Martin School

Donated daffodil bulbs for planting at entrance of Verplanck School Nature Trail

1998 – Dedicated the planting at Manchester Green in honor of Dr. William and Ellen Buckley, Charter Members of our Club



"Memories in Silk," Festival of Trees & Traditions, 1985.

2000s



Planting Firefighters' Memorial Garden

2002 - Manchester Garden Club Committee helped create a red, white, and blue garden for the Manchester Firefighters' Memorial Garden in honor of the brave and selfless firefighters who died on September 11, 2001.

2007 - **Celebration of Manchester Garden Club's 80th Anniversary**

2008 - Three Club members give a Garden Talk for a Brown Bag Seminar for employees of JC Penney

Created National Award winning picture calendar of members' gardens for fundraiser three consecutive years

2000 - Scholarship given to club member to attend National Symposium on Gardening with Kids held at Disney World in Orlando.

2003 - Creation of the Children's Butterfly Garden in Northwest Park. This garden was created as a direct result of this symposium. Our Club members created and, along with children from the community, help plant annuals every spring at this magical garden space.



Children's Butterfly Garden

2010s

2010 - Donated a beautiful bench at the entrance of the new Sensory Garden in Wickham Park in Manchester. Together with Perennial Planters Garden Club, placed new plantings on the East Coast Greenway.

Donated a planter to support the Manchester Downtown Special Services' efforts in beautifying Main Street. The Club also makes annual donations to the fund to support the planting of these containers.

2011 - Created the Gateway Garden as part of "Plant It Pink" campaign by Federated Garden Clubs of CT., Inc. in support of people with breast cancer. This garden is located at the center of town in front of the Downtown Manchester stone wall.

Club members planted daffodils, donated by the Rotary, at the Hartford Distributors' Memorial.

2015 – In observance of the visit of The Wall that Heals, the club arranged chrysanthemums and other plants around the exhibit, and distributed memorial packets of Forget Me Not seeds, each printed with the names of those from Manchester who had lost their lives in the Vietnam War.

Native Oak Tree planting:

October 2015: Planted first native White Oak at Robertson Park

Arbor Day 2016: planted a second White Oak on the Great Lawn to commemorate the club's 90th anniversary

2016 – In cooperation with the Hockanum River Linear Park, began a Foster Tree program where club members grow native trees for replanting in the park after invasive weeds, especially Japanese Knotweed, are removed.



Memorials at the Wall that Heals

2010s, continued

Created a Monarch Waystation in Center Springs Park, by clearing an area at the edge of the park and planting it with butterfly friendly plants such as milkweed.

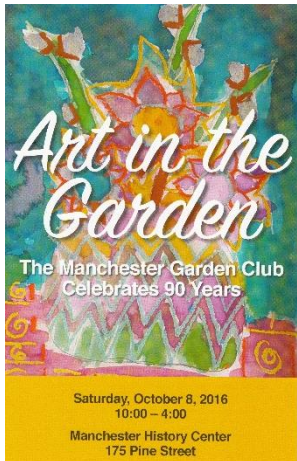


Plants filling in after a season of growing

Engaging Children in Gardening: Began a children’s program in cooperation with the Lutz Children’s Museum. In November 2015, the club held a workshop where children made holiday decorations. The children then joined the club at the Cheney Homestead in December to view the tree adorned with their creations. Future programs are planned on Oak trees and other aspects of gardening.



Children creating ornaments at the Lutz Children’s Museum.



[Celebrated Club’s 90th Anniversary](#): Donated a carved bench to Wickham Park’s newly dedicated Irish Garden, planted a White Oak on Cheney Lawn, placed engraved bricks in the Sensory Garden in Wickham Park, and placed a permanent stone marker at the Margaret Trotter Memorial Garden. In addition, the club held a day-long event, [“Art in the Garden: 90th Anniversary Celebration”](#)



-- Joan Kelsey, Club Historian