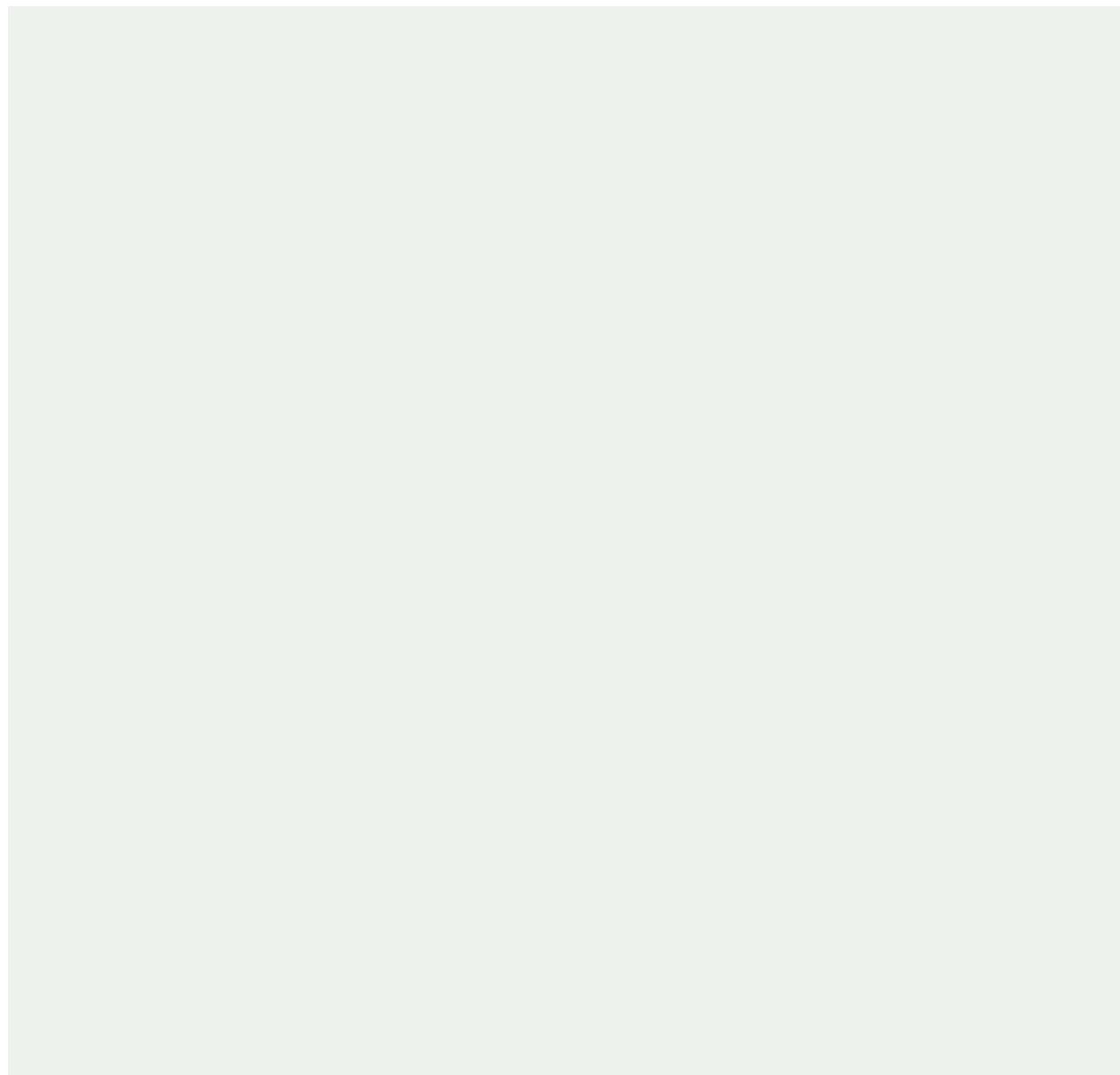


THE GARDEN CLUB
OF
MADISON

1924 - 2024



This Booklet Is Dedicated to the Past, Present and Future
Members of the Garden Club of Madison



The Garden Club of Madison 1924 - 2024

The purpose of the Garden Club of Madison is to advance the fine art
of gardening, the study of horticulture, landscape design and artistic design.
Club members aid in the protection and conservation of natural resources
and participate in civic beautification projects.

Club Presidents, 2024 - 2025

Pam Gallagher
Philippa Mannino
2024

Sue Kelley
Marleen Pacelli
2025

Garden Club of Madison 1924 – 2024

Two Exhibits to Celebrate Our 100 Years

Opening Reception

October 17, 2024, 5–7 pm
Scranton Public Library
Madison, CT

Special Guest

Al Katz from Antiques
Roadshow

GCM 100th Anniversary
Historical Exhibit

Oct. 17 – Nov. 20

Palettes to Petals: Katz
Collection Reimagined

Oct. 17 – Oct. 19

www.gcmct.org

"Wild Flowers," Clarissa Badger, 1859.
Illustration used with permission of the Madison
Historical Society. Photo: Robert Gundersen

Join Us!



The Garden Club of Madison: 100 Years!

This booklet highlights 100 years of history for the Garden Club of Madison (est. 1924), its current projects and how it is educating a new generation in creating a healthy environment for the future. The following pages also capture some of the festivities our 114 members organized for this momentous anniversary.

Our Club is proudly part of the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut (est. 1929), which boasts more than 6,500 members in 113 clubs across the state; also part of the National Garden Clubs, Inc., comprised of 140,000 members from 5,000 member clubs. All to say, a lot of us dig gardening!

In so many colorful ways, large and small, we cherish beautifying and serving the Madison community.



Still Growing Strong: At the Garden Club of Madison's Centennial reception held at Scranton Library, October 17, 2025 (left to right): Library Director Allison Murphy; Dotty Budnick and Nan Sutherland (organizers of Palettes to Petals exhibit); Allan and Penny Katz (donors of the Katz art collection); 2025 Co-President Sue Kelley; 2024 Co-President Pam Gallagher; 2025 Co-President Marleen Pacelli; Elinor Griffith (organizer/editor of GCM's historic exhibit) and 2024 Co-President Philippa Mannino. Photo: Amy Etra Photography.



Explore Our Past

WELCOME to our 100th
Anniversary Celebration.

Did you know...

Our founder's daughter was a princess.

What grew out of the Hurricane of 1938.

Wartime projects raised money for Seeds for Britain and parties for servicemen at the Hammonasset Army Base.

In 1976, we planted a Charter Oak Scion, a descendent of Connecticut's state tree (which when it fell in 1856 was 1000 years old).

Also, the extraordinary Johnson Bequest in the 1990s funded 3 decades of town-wide beautification.

We hope you'll dig our PAST, all those fascinating historical happenings since our first meeting in 1924.

*For a century, women
(and a few good men) digging in to
beautify and care for Madison!*

1924 – The Beginning

On September 23, 1924, in her garden on Island Avenue, Mrs. George A. Wilcox founded the Garden Club of Madison; 23 ladies joined, each paying \$1.00, and soon the club became affiliated with the Garden Club of America.

Founder Mary Grenelle Wilcox was described as a “native [plant] enthusiast, women’s suffrage advocate and patron of the arts.”

In May 1925, the Garden Club invited men to join, the first being John K. Beech.



Mary Grenelle Wilcox, club founder.
(Source: CLEMA)

Garden Club Minutes, Sept 23, 1924.
(Source: CLEMA)

And in 1926, the club teamed up with Madison youth to create flower gardens at the train station, Madison Green and the Allis-Bushnell House... of daffodils, iris, peonies, and phlox.

What a triumph to count among our members three generations of strong Wilcox women: Daughter Constance married Prince Guido Pignatelli of Naples, Italy, thus becoming a princess and their daughter, Maria Elena, was a poet, author and singer.

—Elinor Griffith



Mary Grenelle Wilcox, club founder. A real power couple with her husband George; in 1917, he started the Madison Historical Society with only one bi-law... no talk of “war, work and worries.” (Source: CLEMA)



For a glimpse of how Mary Grenelle's husband founded the Madison Historical Society and secured the Allis-Bushnell House to “celebrate the lively history of Madison,” go to www.madisonhistory.org/about/history

Hurricane of 1938



"Madison will never be the same," wrote Helen Marsh after seeing half of the spruce trees destroyed on the Green. (Courtesy of CLEMA)

"A major catastrophe occurred on September 21st which eliminated all thought of everything, except how to carry on."



In the Garden Club minutes, only one stark sentence. (Courtesy of CLEMA)

So began the Garden Club of Madison's 1939 annual report. But despite the hurricane—with sustained winds over 100 mph that felled 56 trees on the Madison Green, as well as hundreds more throughout town—our club did carry on.

To combat what was considered the "most calamitous day in the state's history" (*Hartford Courant*), we joined up with the Committee for the Restoration of the Green and helped fund the addition of 30 new trees. Donated \$500 for that effort—a sum matching what the selectmen asked the town to make.

The New Haven Register (Nov. 29, 1938) reported: "An attempt will be made to keep the green simple, dignified, true to the traditional type of a traditional New England green." —Elinor Griffith

Hurricane of 1938 (Source: C.T.Chave)



In New England, damage was immense: 682 people killed; 700 injured; and 4,500 homes, 2,600 boats, and 26,000 automobiles destroyed. For more, go to connecticuthistory.org (Hurricane of 1938).

1940s – The War Years

"Thunderbolt" P-47s trained at the Hammonasset Army Base. (Source: Clinton Historical Society)



“I don’t know of anything that has drawn the people of the two countries closer than the sending of these seeds.”

—Eleanor Roosevelt

When the United States entered the war in 1941, food, fuel and labor shortages were a major concern. The Garden Club joined in to do our part.

American Seeds for British Soil

Before the war, Britain imported about two-thirds of its food. By 1941, with U-boat's routinely sinking ships, 728,000 tons of food had been sunk. To aid in relief, Mrs. Alfred Watt of Ottawa started American Seeds for British Soil.

The Garden Club surpassed many others in raising funds—a whopping \$450 from our June 1941 house and garden tour. This helped secure two tons of vegetable seeds in the first shipment to England.



GCM president Dorothy Neff (left) organizing a house and garden tour to benefit American Seeds for British Soil. (Courtesy of CLEMA)



Soldiers in front of Scranton Library (Courtesy of CLEMA)

Parties for U.S. Soldiers

From 1941 to 1944, Hammonasset Park became an army reservation and aircraft firing range. We hosted annual parties, plays and events for servicemen.

Connecticut Victory Gardens

With men at war, women left their homes to work on farms. In 1942, Corinne Alsop with the aid of UConn created a Connecticut Land Army, with “farmerettes.”

Under USDA instruction, New Haven Agricultural Extension hosted lectures. The Garden Club attended many on seed germination, food canning, etc. We shared this knowledge with our neighbors. By 1944, Victory Gardens produced 40% of the nation’s produce.

—Brenda Wiley



Farmerettes of the U.S. Women's Land Army. (Source: Smithsonian Magazine, May 28, 2002, Corbis)

1944 - 1962 Dutch Elm Disease



Iconic old elm on Boston Post Road/Rt. 1
(Courtesy of CLEMA)

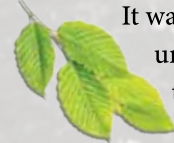
Cherished since colonists planted them in the 1750s, the fast-growing elm lined many New England streets. And, in fact, one of our club's first initiatives in 1924 was forming a civic committee to "cooperate with Town and take care of elms."

The fungus causing Dutch elm disease was likely brought into the U.S. on elm logs shipped from France to Cleveland, Ohio, in 1931. Certainly it was in New England by 1938. As the hurricane barreled through New Haven, Hartford and other areas, it downed millions of trees.

In 1944, with the war in full swing, the Garden Club paid for the spraying of elms on the Madison Green.

Unfortunately, spraying was not a successful remedy. The rest is history: nearly 80 million U.S. elms destroyed.

As a club, this was our longest running initiative.



It was devastating that we were unsuccessful in saving the stately elm trees of Madison. —Brenda Wiley



GCM held a Dutch elm disease benefit, 1947. Two years later, the National Council of State Garden Clubs presented GCM with its conservation award for "preservation of trees and our fight on Dutch elm disease." (Courtesy of CLEMA)



The lingering of elm blowdowns after the '38 hurricane allowed the beetle to spread the fungus to feed and multiply for years. (Source: New England Historical Society)

1962 – Rachel Carson + Environmentalism



From the 1993 documentary Rachel Carson's Silent Spring, produced for PBS's The American Experience.

A storm hit in 1962... Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. Her book originated from concerns over the federal 1957 gypsy moth eradication program, with indiscriminate aerial spraying of DDT. Carson's work—2 million of her books sold—raised awareness about pesticides.



Rachel Carson (Source: Rachelcarson.org)

If we are living so intimately with chemicals—eating and drinking them, taking them into the very marrow of our bones—we had better know something about their power. —Rachel Carson



(Courtesy of CLEMA)

"Beware! Sprays Are Poison!" a Garden Club member proclaimed in her 1963 letter to the *Shoreline Times*. "With all the publicity given Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, it seems strange indeed that the sale of



Book jacket from 50th anniversary edition. This book altered the course of history.

insecticides and fungicides has increased... and much more important just what each of us is deeding to future generations."

Carson ignited the modern environmental movement. And in 1972, the banning of DDT.

—Brenda Wiley



Who Joins A Garden Club?



Frontispiece from *Wild Flowers Drawn and Colored from Nature* by Mrs. C. M. Badger used with permission of the Madison Historical Society. (Photo by Bob Gundersen)

In 1859, Charles Scribner published Clarissa Munger Badger's *Wild Flowers Drawn and Colored from Nature*, illustrated with twenty-two plates of her charming paintings. Born in East Guilford (now Madison), Clarissa was considered one of America's foremost botanical artists. The poet Emily Dickinson owned a copy of this book. That inscribed volume, now in the collection of Harvard University, was featured in a 2017 exhibition at the famed Morgan Library in New York.

To learn more about Clarissa Munger Badger, visit <https://www.madisonhistory.org/key-people/clarissa-munger-badger/>

Activists and Organizers



Only after it went into effect in 36 other states did Connecticut finally ratify the 19th Amendment. (Source: connecticuthistory.org)

Roots of Gardening Clubs

After nearly a century of struggle, on August 18, 1920 women celebrated a **momentous victory**, with the ratification of the 19th Amendment. **Women could finally vote.**

The Suffrage Movement helped shape the formation of gardening clubs.

Saving native plants

Community beautification programs

Protecting natural resources

Supporting the National Park System (est. 1916)

The National Garden Clubs, founded in 1929, continues to foster knowledge-sharing and advocating for green spaces, education and community well being.

Cultivating Knowledge

Once they finished their tea, our founding 23 members organized the Garden Club. Officers were nominated, by-laws established, committees (Library, Civic, and Flowers) assigned, dues set, and a constitution drafted.

Members prioritized a Library Committee. Given many

gardeners are self-taught, books were a priority.

Recommendations from 1924 remain relevant today—such as *The Joyous Art of Gardening*.



The Joyous Art of Gardening (1917)



Party for GCM's 25th (1949). With the end of WWII and before digging into the fight against Dutch Elm Disease, we took a break with some cake to celebrate our anniversary. (Courtesy of CLEMA)

Preserving Properties: Beyond environmental stewardship and community engagement, we donated \$25 for the upkeep of a historic garden in Madison.

Civic Activities: In 1949, billboards were slated to litter

Rte. 1 near Hammonasset.

With pressure from the Federated Garden Clubs of CT, these billboards were restricted in 1960.

—Brenda Wiley



Billboard for a 1937 ad campaign run by the National Association of Manufacturers (Source: Library of Congress)

In 1910, Katherine Houghton Hepburn, Kate's Mom, was elected president of the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association. "She was a significant reformer who agitated and educated...and that's how the vote was won." — connecticuthistory.org

Cartographers

Alva Marsh created a map documenting 46 different types of trees on the Green: from Copper Beech, Norway Spruce to a Sequoia Giant. —Brenda Wiley

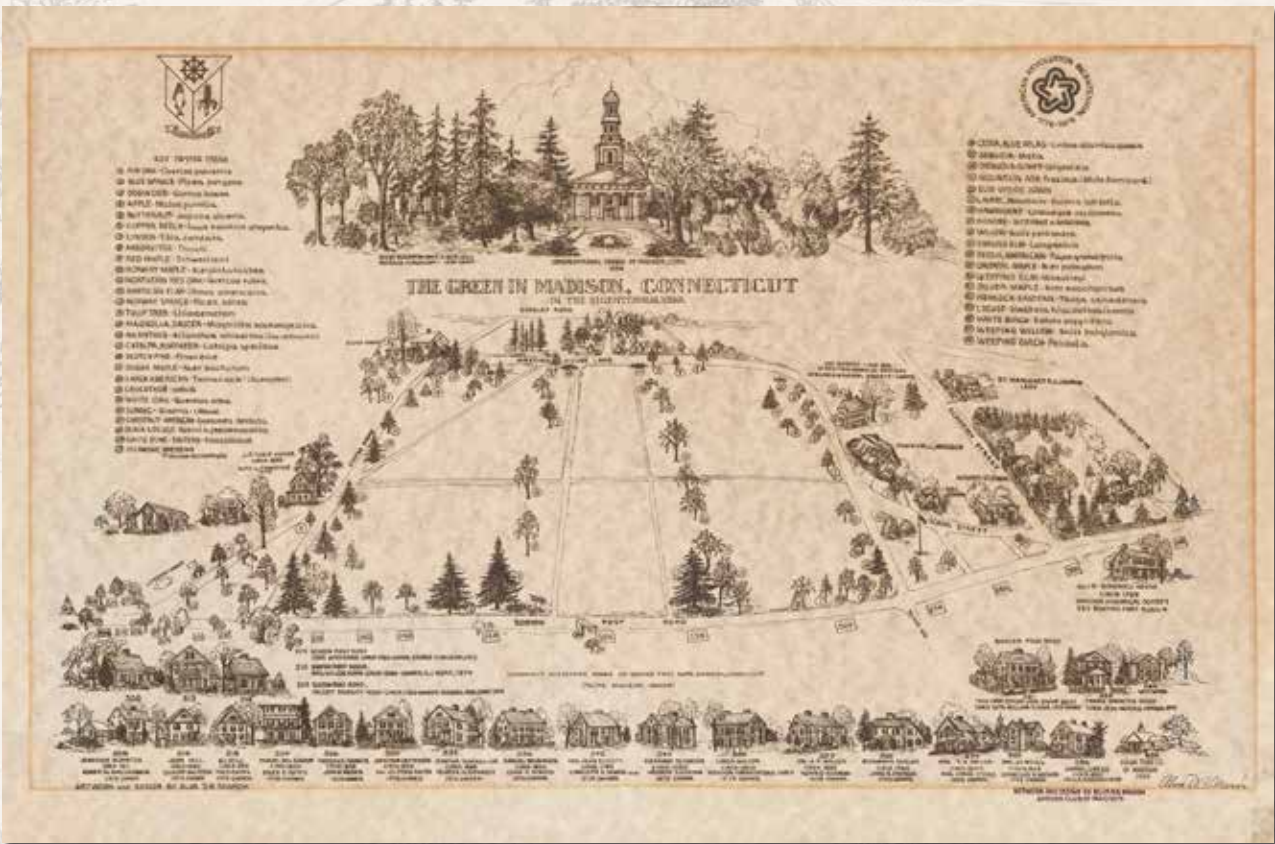


Alva Marsh Curtis



Terrill Belknap Marsh (center), Mrs. Herbert J. Clough (left), Mrs. Donald Holmes, president (right)
(Source: The New Haven Register, 1974)

"The Green in Madison": For the US Bicentennial in 1976, professional artist and Garden Club member Alva Marsh Curtis created "Mapping of the Trees." Curtis' paintings and sculptures were displayed at the National Gallery, the Smithsonian, and Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford.



Tree Treasure Hunt (1975 - 1976)



HUG A TREE — Jennifer and Christopher Weaver bag their choice for the biggest ash tree in Madison as they participate in the Tree Treasure Hunt sponsored by the Garden Club of Madison.

Madison tree huggers unite for the "Tree Treasure Hunt." (Courtesy of CLEMA)

For the US Bicentennial, the Garden Club sponsored a "Tree Treasure Hunt."

Students from all nine Madison schools entered artwork, photography, and writing inspired by trees.

Over 350 students and 24 club members participated in this contest. The winner,

middle schooler Paul Kraft located an oak with a 187-inch circumference on Scotland Avenue.

—Brenda Wiley



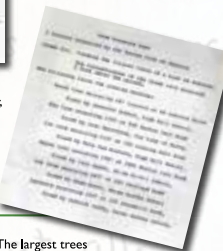
First prize for poetry went to Scott Sweitzer, a third grader at Academy School. (Courtesy of CLEMA)



First prize for poetry at the secondary level was Theodore Heller, The Grove School. (Courtesy of CLEMA)

Do you know these Tree Hunters?

Let us know.



The largest trees by circumference in Madison. (Courtesy of CLEMA)

Ecologists

As part of our **100-year** interest in **ecology** (or the interaction between organisms and the environment), the Garden Club has planted over **150 trees**. White **oaks** included.

But that's nothing compared to a blue jay. "A single blue jay can bury **4,500** acorns during a mast year," writes Doug Tallamy in *The Nature of Oaks*. "But blue jays only remember where they buried one in four **acorns**. That means they **plant** 3,300 new trees."



Centennial Charter Oak planted, 1976. (Source: Shoreline Times)

One of our proudest tree-planting moments was for America's **Bicentennial**. On the Madison Green in 1976, members **dug** in a small native **white oak**, a descendant of our state's historic Charter Oak (1856).

Now, for our 100th **anniversary**, we've **planted** another white oak, one day ready to unleash an entire new **ecology**.

—Brenda Wiley

Horticulturists

If horticulture is the art and science of growing flowers, ornamental plants, fruits and vegetables, both indoors and out, then aren't we all horticulturists?

Since our first flower show in June 1925—held at Stonycroft, then home of Marie Oakes Hotchkiss and now Mercy by the Sea—the Garden Club has educated members and the public through exhibits, hands-on workshops, bulletins and speakers.



Flower Shows remain a club mainstay. At "Our Heritage," GCM's 19th Flower Show in June 1958 at the Allis-Bushnell House, the \$1.50 admission included "tea which will be served across the road in Miss Florence Smith's home." And in her garage, Miss Smith also hosted horticulture classes on flowers... like spiky purple digitalis (foxglove) cultivated before 1800.

Best summed up, horticulture matters!

SPOTLIGHT on Sue Kelley



"Gardens, as part of horticulture, bring joy and tranquility, and have a transformative effect,"

says Sue Kelley, GCM co-president and chair of the Landscape Design School for the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut (a National Garden Clubs program).

At her retirement party, she was asked, "What are you planning to do?" Sue replied reflexively, "gardening." She attended Federated's Design

School and completed her Master Gardener program in 2017.

"Flowers always delight," adds Sue.

"Holiday Tidings": The Junior Garden Club of Madison joins up with us to hold its first Flower Show, 1975. (Courtesy of CLEMA)

At Daniel Hand High School horticulture class in 1976, students planted and prepared the grounds around the school and along a nature walk at Bauer Park. (Courtesy of CLEMA)



Want to dig in more? Consider attending the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut's gardening school (ctgardencubs.org/education/) or becoming a Master Gardener (<https://mastergardener.uconn.edu/>).

Floral Artists

In the late 19th century, women sought educational opportunities through “study clubs.” Garden clubs, encouraging the study of horticulture, showcased home-grown flowers and vegetables, and quickly gained popularity even during the Depression. Major shows such as the Philadelphia Flower Show attracted tens of thousands of visitors. Influenced by such preeminent shows, people realized floral design was a true art form.

And then in the 1950s, the National Garden Clubs introduced the Creative Design style reflecting influences from contemporary art movements like Impressionism, Expressionism and Cubism. Creative Design broke away from the Traditional style to create striking, three-dimensional effects between form and space.

By 2023, the National Garden Clubs had certified nearly 50 distinct design types for competitive flower shows.

GCM Flower Shows Over the Years *Lois Nichols’ Top 5 Picks*



1930 Flower Show: “GCM flower shows were often held in private homes,” Lois says. “While very traditional in feel, this symmetrical design provides simplicity and balance.” (Courtesy of CLEMA)

1933 Italian Flower Show: “This setting effectively creates an image of the show’s theme: Italy,” says Lois. “It provides a creative use of space in the staging of floral exhibits.” (Courtesy of CLEMA)



1929 Flower Show: “This shows a diversity of styles that are typical of the time,” says Lois Nichols. “Just 5 years old, GCM is already demonstrating a strong commitment to floral design with substantial participation by members.” (Courtesy of CLEMA)



1985 Flower Show. “This floral arrangement represents a Traditional Design,” says Lois. It was exhibited at Ronald McDonald House in New Haven. Good Deed Citation from the Federated Garden Clubs of CT. (Courtesy of CLEMA)

Lois Nichols



SPOTLIGHT on *Lois Nichols*

A Garden Club member since 2000, Lois is a Master Flower Show Judge—the highest level of certification from the National Garden Clubs. She is also Chair of our Design Committee and an award-winning designer.

A molecular biologist by training, Lois awakened her passion for floral design after retiring from Pfizer and attending a week-long floral design seminar at the National Cathedral. She has been making floral designs for St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church since then.

—Dotty Budnick, Nan Sutherland, Lois Nichols and Brenda Wiley

Garden Therapists



Christmastime Surprise! For sick children at Seaside, GCM decorated stockings. (Source: CLEMA)

One of our earliest garden therapy outreaches was to Seaside Sanatorium in Waterford, Ct. Here dozens of two-to-nine-year-old children in the 1950s were recovering from TB and all alone for the holidays.

“The spirit of Christmas was the theme, and over 50 stockings were hung by the staircase with care,” reported the *New Haven Register* (1954). Months later, members helped the children prepare scrapbooks and exhibited their artistry at a Flower Show.

December Tradition. Girl Scouts joined in arranging holiday greens for Watrous residents.



In the 1960s, the Garden Club rooted begonias for veterans at the West Haven VA Hospital. Closer by, at the Watrous Nursing Center, we worked with 12 - 15 residents on garden projects for 50 years.

Providing joy. Relieving isolation and fear... that’s the magical, healing power of flowers!

Delivering Fresh Flowers

In 2020, when Watrous closed, our members delivered floral bouquets to two new care homes: Madison House and Apple Care. The result: for 4 years now, 24 members have brightened the days of 180 residents!



Sensory Simulation Program

In 2022, Garden Therapy developed a program for care-home residents using sensory props to simulate a happy experience with nature or flowers. Props engaged all 5 senses. Programs included a farmers’ market, and walk with winter evergreens.



Meals on Wheels

In 2023, with the Madison Senior Center we provided arrangements for Meals on Wheels recipients. This program was our response to another epidemic... loneliness, as described in a recent US Surgeon General Advisory. On average 60 MOW families now enjoy “Petals with Plates.”

—Nan Sutherland



Roses are red... it's Valentine's!

Benefactors... The Johnson Legacy

In 1994, the Garden Club received a gift with a profound effect on our future. News that Dr. Harry Johnson and his wife Tee—who'd already contributed generously to the club—had set up a \$2 million charitable trust for five local non-profits.

Approximately \$10,000 annually for our Club... And over time: \$200,000. An amount that continues to grow and benefit Madison.



Dr. Harry and Tee Johnson, with son Mike

Our benefactors lived in New York with sons, Michael and Keith. Dr. Johnson was the medical director of the Life Extension Institute, in Rockefeller Center. A lifelong believer in the health benefits of

sensible habits, he crusaded, according to *The New York Times*, "against negative thoughts, heavy drinking, overeating and sloth."

Undeterred by the 1938 hurricane, the Johnsons bought a cottage on Summer Hill Road. Produce from their farm provided them and others with food, especially during WWII. In 1957, Mike founded Summer Hill Nursery. Operated today by Mike and his daughter Holly, the nursery specializes in container-grown plants.

—Karin Peterson and Barbara Delmhorst



The Johnson family at Tee's 100th birthday.



Projects Funded by the Johnson Bequest 1994 - 2024

ABC House
Academy School
Allis-Bushnell House
Bauer Park
Chittenden Memorial
Concord Meadow
Daffodil planting town-wide —
now up to 20,000 flowers!
Deacon John Grave House
East Wharf
GreenUp CleanUp
Hammonasset Park
Jeffrey School
Madison: trail development at Town Campus
Madison: window boxes downtown

Madison Post Office
Madison Town Green
Memorial Gardens
Mercy Center
North Madison Circle
Old Madison Train Depot
Salt Meadow Park
Scranton Library
Surf Club
Tuxis Brook
Tuxis Pond
Visiting Nurse Association
Walkway Planting Behind CVS
West Cemetery

Maybe the Garden Club of Madison Is Right for You!



At Madison's July 4 Parade, bursting with blooms.



If you dig what we're doing and itching to know more, perhaps even to join, please go to our website: <https://gcnct.org>



Garden Club of Madison presents

PALETTES to PETALS

KATZ COLLECTION REIMAGINED

OCTOBER 17-19, 2024

E.C. SCRANTON MEMORIAL LIBRARY



Palettes to Petals: Katz Collection Reimagined.

Photo credits: Amy Etra Photography.

To celebrate the Garden Club of Madison’s 100th anniversary, Club members created floral designs to match selected artworks in the Scranton Library Art Collection. This art was donated by Madison residents Penny and Allan Katz, both art and antique dealers. Penny is a trustee of the American Folk Art Museum and for more than 20 years, Allan has been a featured appraiser on the PBS show “Antiques Roadshow.”



Katz Family with Artwork: "Quiet Night."



"Passage." Floral design by Barbara Rosenblum.



"Patrick's Porch." Floral design by Jacinta Rafferty.



"Signification Colorée." Floral design by Marleen Pacelli.



"Spruce." Floral design by Dotty Budnick and Nan Sutherland.



Untitled. Floral design by Lois Nichols.



“Starspace Nightlight Sun Center by Earth.” Floral design by Carolyn Bernard.



“Pear.” Floral design by Donna Lenkeit.



“Quiet Night.” Floral design by Colleen Cummings, Michele Moran and Denise Rose.



“Tom-Tom.” Floral design by Barbara Rosenblum.



“Maine Pond Reflection.” Floral design by Lois Nichols.



“Cumulus.” Floral design by Carolyn Bernard.

MADISON'S GOING DAFFODILS

*Few plants trumpet “welcome spring” as joyfully as daffodils!
For Madison residents that sight
has become synonymous with the Garden Club of Madison.*

When did Madison first “Go Daffodils?”

The Club has planted daffodils sporadically throughout its 100-year history, and then in 2018, with the help of Girl Scouts, we added daffodils to the new Salt Meadow Park and East Wharf Seaside Garden. This spurred residents to plant daffodils—a symbol of hope and new beginnings, of joy—around their mailboxes and streets.

When Covid hit, our Club shifted into high gear, in part thanks to Brent & Becky’s Bulbs. Planting bulbs together was one of our few safe activities. And in 2022, the Garden Club created a *daffodil trail: 12 locations, 20,000 daffodils.*

Wordsworth expresses our sentiments perfectly:
*“And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.”*

—Philippa Mannino

THE GARDEN CLUB^{OF} MADISON 100 YEARS!

As you step into the *PRESENT*, spotlighting current activities, you may be surprised by the reach of our gardening footprints:

Madison’s *Going Daffodils! 20,000* sunny *daffodils* pop up each spring.

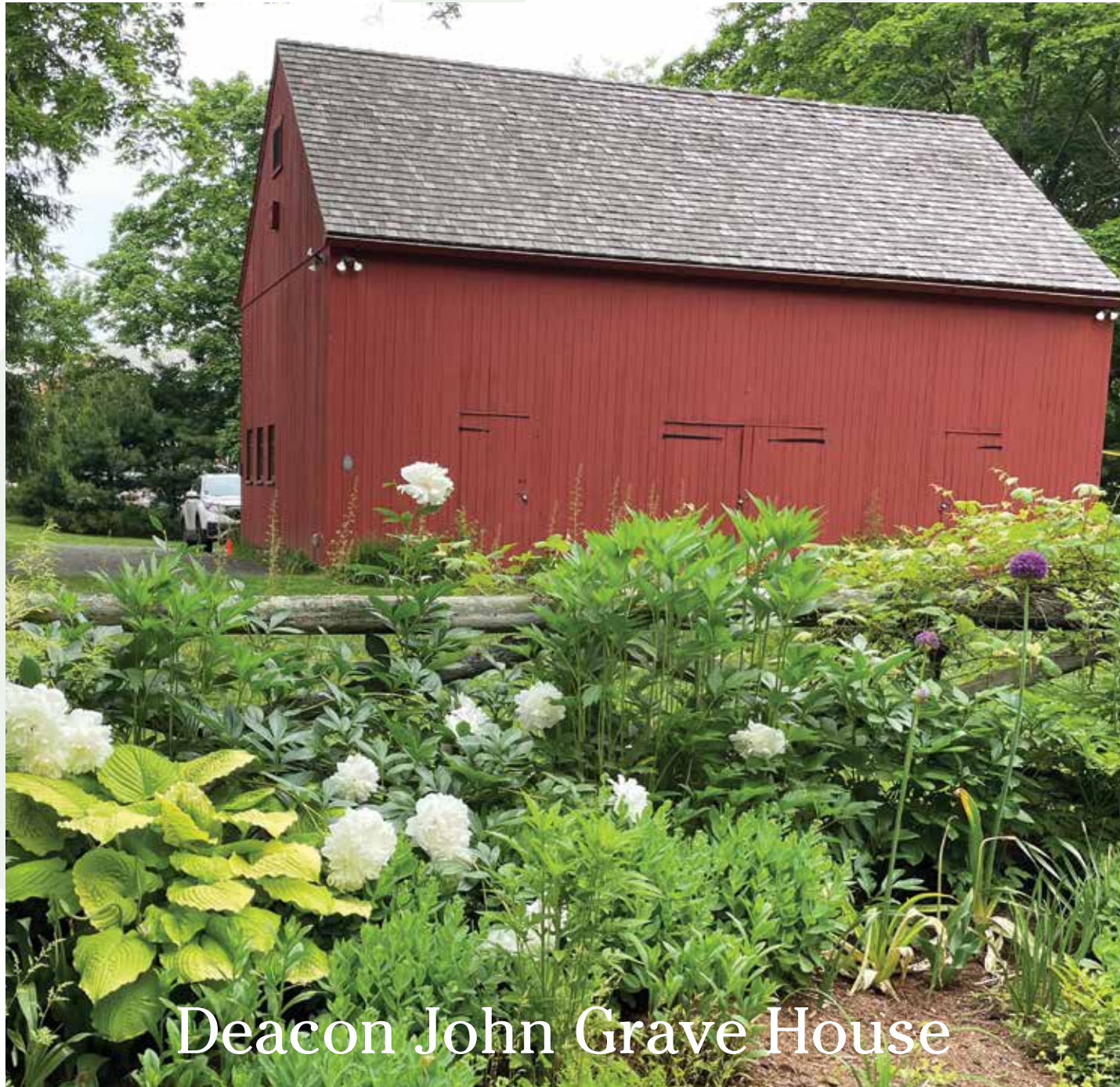
“Garden Gang” transforms the town...

From East Wharf Beach to the historic Deacon John Grave and the Veterans Memorial off the Green.

Our commitment to trees since the 1920s *continues today.* Our latest arrival: a *White Oak* planted on the Madison Green for our 100th.

We celebrate what beautifies Madison and pulls us together, in seen and unseen ways. Flower arrangements perking up deliveries for Meals on Wheels. A plant sale where favorites from our gardens are potted up for yours. Civic beautification, conservation, *serving community.*





Deacon John Grave House

Built in 1685, the Deacon John Grave House remained in the same family for 300 years and is one of the best preserved 17th century houses in Connecticut. In 1983, faced with destruction, a group of concerned citizens formed a foundation to “Save the Grave.” Flower gardens adorned the property.

One of GCM’s obligations is the “protection and conservation of Madison’s gardens, parks and public places.” In 1998, Garden Club member Lee Haines took on the project of restoring the Grave home’s perennial flower gardens, with input from Rudy J. Favretti, a UConn professor of landscape architecture.

*“Using plants from my own garden and others,” says Lee,
“we had a better range of plants for a really good sequence of blooms.”*

—Lindyl Arno



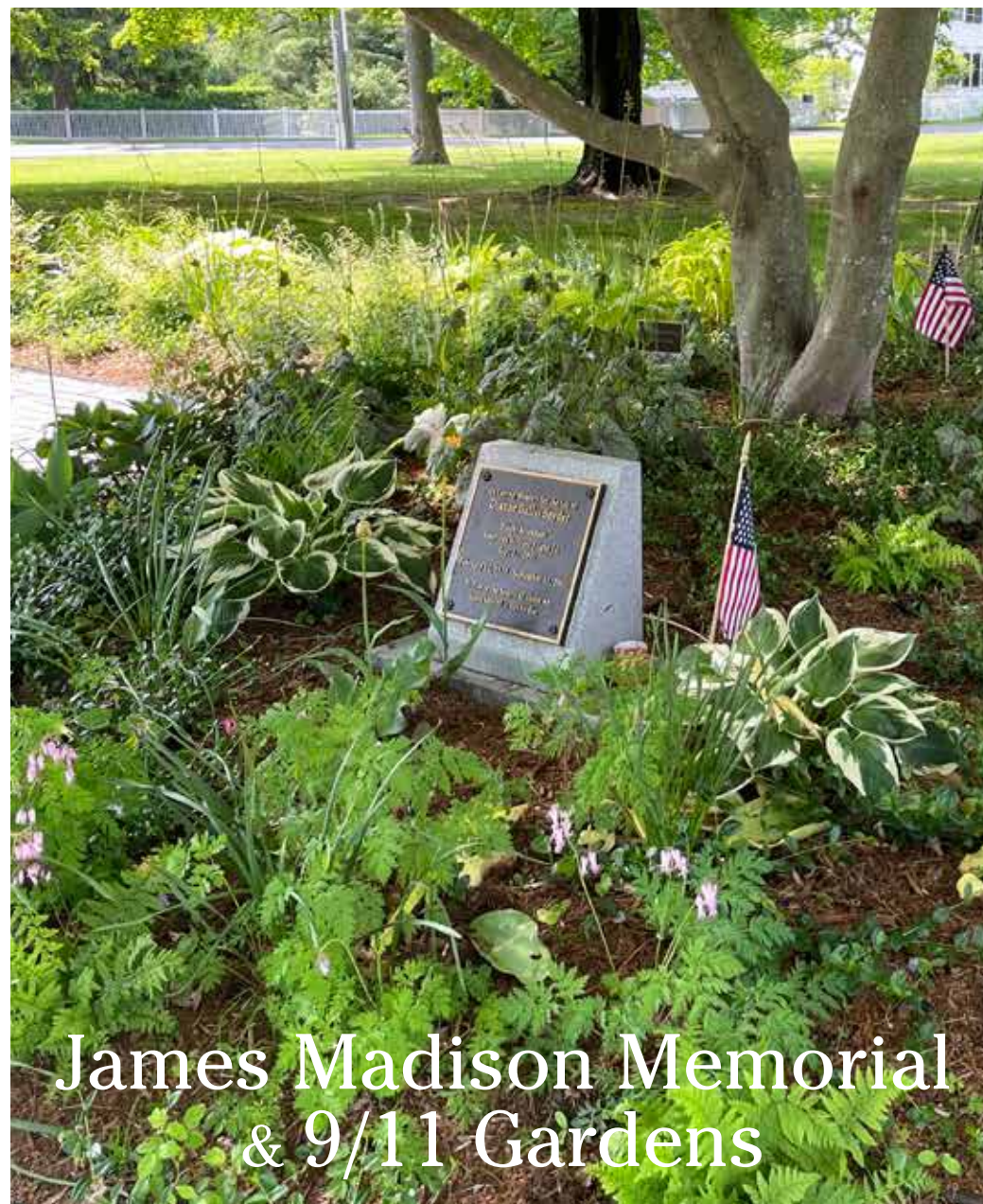
East Wharf Seaside Garden

The town of Madison, along with Yale, held a competition for students to build a pavilion at East Wharf beach. Students from Yale’s School of Art and Architecture won. 1982, donated designs and services. The Garden Club provided landscaping, including large boulders and sunny daffodils.

In 1994, the East Wharf Garden was artfully redesigned by club member Lee Haines, and was an early project supported by funds donated by Dr. Harry and Tee Johnson. Over the years, Lee has worked with landscaper Tom Donnelly of Nature’s Design, creating spectacular seaside displays, including Russian Sage, Montauk Daisies, Butterfly Weed and grasses.

*“The goal of the designs,” says Lee, “is to plant diverse shrubs
and flowering plants that could withstand salt spray and dry conditions.” —Lindyl Arno*





James Madison Memorial & 9/11 Gardens

The Garden Club lovingly maintains these gardens. Dutch Heilman, then President of the Madison USA Society, was planning a project honoring the 250th birthday of James Madison and the town's 175th anniversary.

Then came the terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001. Dutch ran into Marilyn Bullis, looking for a place to honor her flight attendant daughter, Dianne Bullis-Snyder.

"The idea to merge was embarked on immediately," Dutch said.

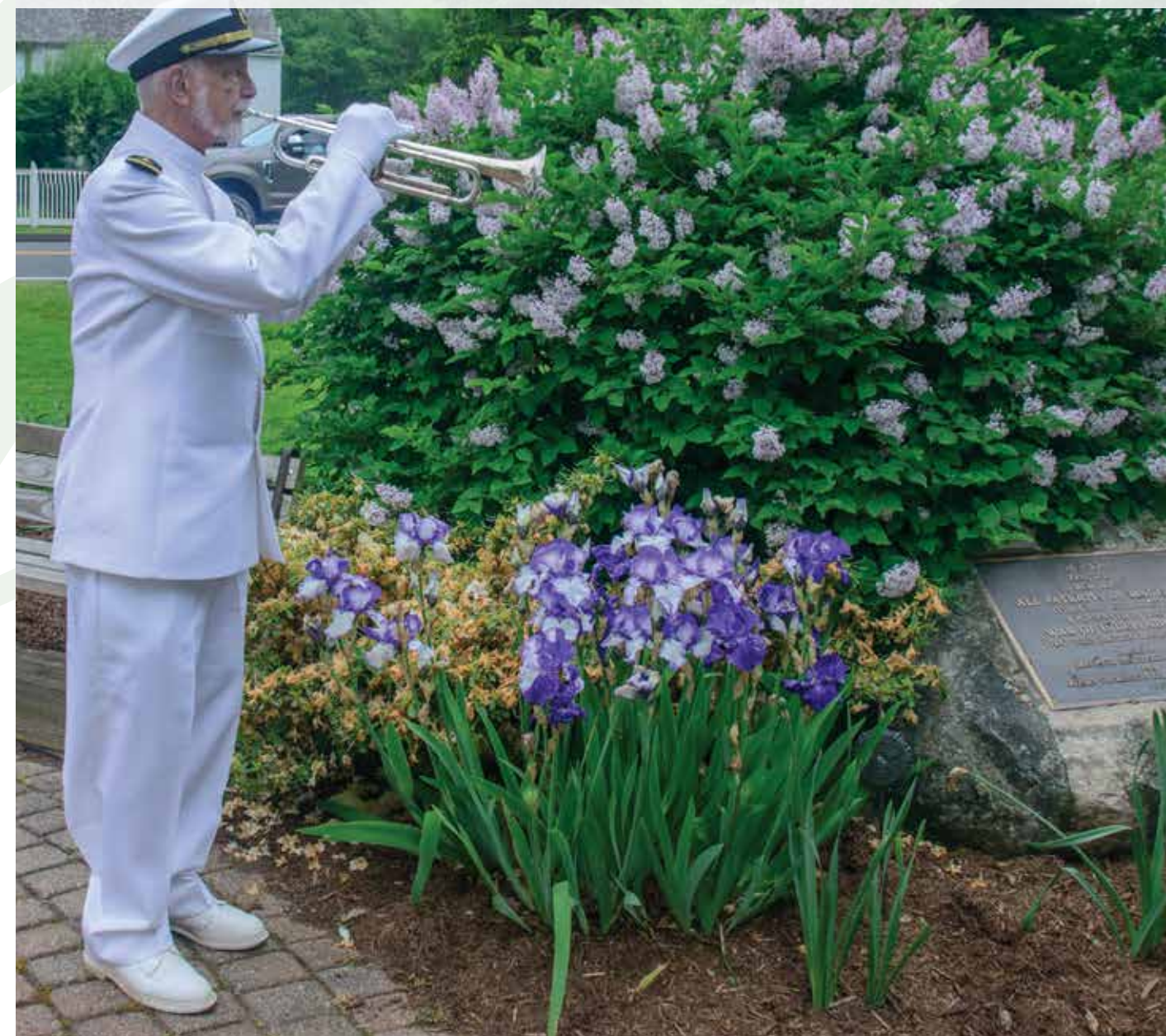
Three others with Madison roots are also commemorated: Peter Gelinas, Anthony Demas and Robert Peraza. And in 2023, club member Lee Haines redesigned the gardens. Now a tapestry of texture and leaf shapes, with occasional hydrangea blooms (Dianne's favorite) for seasonal interest. —Lindyl Arno

Veterans Garden

A huge boulder sits by the side of Boston Post Road near the Green with this inscription, "Erected to honor those of Madison, CONN who answered their country's call and gave their services for the great cause of Liberty," with the dates 1917 - 1919.

In 1924, the boulder was moved to its present location, brought about by the Fortnightly Club. Five years later they approached the Garden Club to improve the plot around the memorial.

So began a wonderful floral tribute over the years to all those who have served our country and are gone before us.





Allis-Bushnell House

The Garden Club has a long-standing “hand and (gardening) glove” relationship with the Madison Historical Society. For *seven decades* we have beautified its historic Allis-Bushnell House with landscape design, planting, floral arrangements and even fairy houses, all to help showcase the Colonial property. During holidays, we also adorned it with floral arrangements.

For the US Bicentennial, the Garden Club transformed its herb garden into a potager garden, with ornamental food. Along oyster-shell paths, strollers brushed up against English lemon balm, sage, sweet marjoram and chamomile. —Lindyl Arno

Trees and bees... and that uplifting magnificence of nature surrounding each of our steps at Bauer Park. No wonder the Garden Club gravitates to its 64 acres, donated to the town in 1990 by Erwin and Anthony Bauer, bachelor truck farmers.

The BUZZ at BAUER

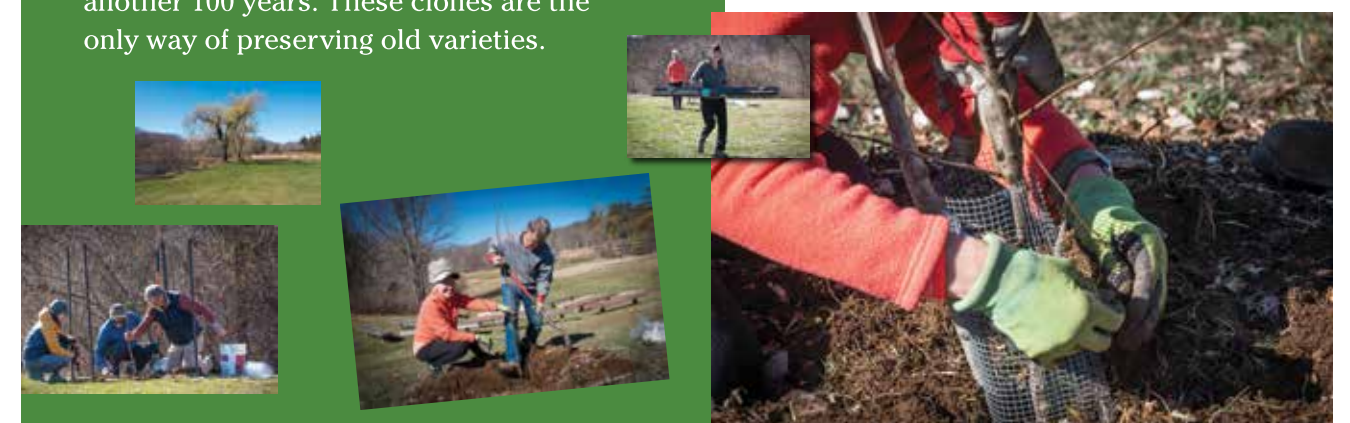


Under the direction of Tom Cleveland, our only current male GCM member, we have planted dozens of new apple and pear trees. Photo credit: Amy Etra Photography

35 Apple and Pear Trees

Fruit trees, many originally planted by the Bauer brothers in the 1920s, have aged out. *Our commitment? Planting new heritage trees.* This is done by grafting a branch of a living heritage tree onto new rootstock to make a tree that can live for another 100 years. These clones are the only way of preserving old varieties.

Working with Mad for Trees, we’ve 35 new additions: the Rhode Island Greening apple, for example, dating back to the 1650s. And the tart Esopus Spitzenburg, one of Thomas Jefferson’s favorites.



2 Queens plus 25,000 Worker Bees

In 2022, at Bauer's Harvest Festival, some Garden Club members bumped into bee-keeping friends and asked, "What about hives at Bauer?" A way to teach kids and adults alike about the perils honeybees and wild native bees face as the country's top pollinators.

The result? We brought in 2 queens and 25,000 worker bees, and today have 2 busy hives. All nine Madison first grade classes visited this year. Open hive demos at Bauer's Harvest Festival too. In 2025, our plan is to expand the bee yard.

And that bee initiative has earned the Garden Club a coveted 2023 National Garden Clubs award. —Elinor Griffith

Bees at Bauer won the 2023 National Garden Clubs' Certificate of Merit for Wildlife Survival.



Beekeepers Deirdre Prisco and Lewis Strauss show kids the hardworking "lady" worker bees.



Kind

As for honeybee "cousins," more than half of North America's 4,000 native bee species are in decline, according to the Center for Biological Diversity. And 1:4 species risk extinction.



Honeybees are responsible for the pollination + growth of 1/3 of the world's crops.



One out of every 3 bites of our food—including fruits, vegetables, chocolate, coffee, nuts and spices—are created with assistance from pollinators.



If the bees, bats, hummingbirds and other pollinators (mostly bees) were to vanish, an estimated 87 to 90% of plants on Earth would disappear... a catastrophic disaster for humankind.

Here's the challenge:



“”

Our Educational Garden exemplifies sustainable gardening practices, emphasizing the importance of integrating native plants to support pollinators. We are deeply committed to promoting environmentally sustainable gardening practices.

— Sue Kelley, GCM co-president and Landscape Design School Chair for the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut



At Bauer, Girl Scouts planted The Three Sisters—corn, beans and squash—a tradition for indigenous people that goes back thousands of years. These plants all nurture and support each other like a good family.



Bauer operates as an historic, educational museum, so visiting our Educational Garden is like a quick degree in horticulture. That means learning about the importance of native plants and organic food production.

And no pesticides!

You'll spot a native pollinator border, for instance, attracting bees from nearby hives. A shrub bed showcasing natives such as edible black elderberries and viburnum nudum. And around the apple tree are herbs, tulips and strawberries. Plans are underway to teach fruit-tree grafting there next year. —Elinor Griffith

Rooting for the *Future!*



What was your most treasured childhood book? Possibly, *The Secret Garden*. First published in 1911, Frances Hodgson Burnett's words still ring true:

“As long as you have a garden
you have a future, and as long as
you have a future, you are alive.”

The Secret Garden, Frances Hodgson Burnett

As activists and organizers, as thoughtful stewards of the land, the *Garden Club of Madison* wants our *FUTURE* to be bright. Hence, our commitment to educating youth and spreading the word about how we can *celebrate—and enhance—the Earth*.

GROWING FOR THE *FUTURE*

“To plant a garden is to believe in the future.”

An acclaimed actress who won an Emmy for her documentary series “Gardens of the World” said this.

What’s her name?

Hint: She also starred in *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*.

The Garden Club's Youth Educational Outreach Program works with schools, local scout troops and junior garden clubs. A three-fold focus helps instill in children the importance of: caring for the environment, respecting our natural world and developing the joy of gardening. Native plants are emphasized along with other lessons on seeds, pollinators and beneficial insects.

The program began in 2010 with a small Brownie troop learning about native plants and planting at the Veterans Memorial Garden, and has evolved to now include 12 Scout troops. This year we've touched the lives of more than 180 children and 85 seniors.

Remember, the most important gift we can give to our children is the opportunity to explore nature... and time to play in the dirt. —Julie Elting and Esther Magee

Brightening the Lives of Others



Intergenerational workshop at Madison Senior Center with seniors and Girl Scouts.



Grandmother-Mother-Daughter Tea and Flower Arranging.



Junior Garden Club at Jeffrey School harvesting in school gardens.

Enchanted Fairy Gardens



Showing off fairy houses designed for the Enchanted Fairy Garden Village at the Deacon John Grave House.



Junior Girl Scouts making their own latrines.



The Country School Environmental Club planting garlic.

Sowing Seeds of Wonder



GCM worked with 82 participants, ages 3-11, planting seeds in miniature terrariums.



Children, families, and community members participated in the 1st annual Country School of Madison STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) Expo.

Planting and Harvesting



The Country School Environmental Club planting garlic.



Junior Garden Club at Jeffrey School harvesting in school gardens.



Brooksies planting daffodil bulbs at Ryerson School.



Yes YOU Can Make a Difference

KEEPING THE SOUND “SOUND”



Long Island Sound Study
(Courtesy of longislandsoundstudy.net/2010/03/conditions-by-basin)

Waste water

Storm Water Runoff

Lawn Pesticides

Lawn Fertilizer

And Don't Forget Marshes & Forests

Salt marshes mitigate the effects of sea level rise. During storms, marshes soak up flood waters and absorb wave action. They filter runoff and excess nutrients, provide food for many aquatic animals, and are nurseries for fish, shrimp and crabs.

Coastal deciduous forests are also one of the most depleted coastal habitats. Madison has coastal forests at Salt Meadow Park and in Hammonasset State Park.



Fence Creek Marsh is near neighborhoods vulnerable to sea level rise.

REWILD YOUR GARDEN, HELP THE PLANET!

At the Garden Club, we strive to create landscapes that are an extension of nature. The goal is to help ecological processes that are natural within our landscapes, so that all the insects, water, seeds and animals (including humans) that pass through end up healthier.

What YOU Can Do... about Nitrogen Pollution

Reduce your lawn and manage it naturally; white and red clovers supply natural nitrogen and support pollinators.

Limit the amount of fertilizer and get a soil test before application.

Soil testing is available at UConn Soil and Nutrient Analysis Lab for \$15.

Instructions are online: <https://soiltesting.cahn.uconn.edu/>

Leave clippings on the lawn to provide natural nitrogen.



Aerial shot of Flanders Bay, LI, showing nitrogen pollution from outdated septic systems that cause rust tides and algae blooms, 2013.
(Courtesy of Auxiliary Coast Guard.)

Also to protect our area, extend your borders with native, salt-tolerant plants. (A list is available at <https://seagrant.uconn.edu.>) And don't use pesticides. Pyrethrins, used against ticks and mosquitoes, are highly toxic to fish, crabs, oysters, and aquatic insects.

Why Rewild?

- Reduce carbon footprint.
- Prevent water contamination from unnecessary fertilizers and pesticides.
- Increase native pollinator populations of bees, birds, butterflies, moths, and insects.
- Create pollinator corridors.
- Morally, to contribute to a healthier planet for all.

What YOU Can Do... in Your Garden

In addition to limiting pesticides/herbicides and fertilizer, you can try these steps:

- Plant native trees, shrubs, grasses and perennials.
- Reduce lawn mowing (3+ inches) and leave those clippings!
- Take part in NO MOW APRIL/MAY.
- Set out bird houses and “welcome mat” debris piles.
- Create a compost bin rather than buying fertilizer.

Join the CT Pollinator Pathway.
For information:
madforbees@gmail.com

The time is **NOW**...
before it's too late!



Source: udel.edu

Try Forest Bathing for Mental Health

Forest bathing began in Japan. It is simply taking a walk in the woods. Surprisingly (or not, for practitioners), this new medical science reduces blood pressure and stress hormones, improves sleep and increases the level of anticancer proteins.

“When I am among the trees,
especially the willows
and the honey locusts,
equally the beech, the oaks
and the pines, they give off
such gifts of gladness.
I would almost say
they save me, and daily.”

—Mary Oliver,
When I Am Among the Trees



Source: Adobe Stock

FOR THE LOVE OF TREES....

“The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit.” —Nelson Henderson

Benefits of a Mighty White Oak

“The mighty white oak, *Quercus alba*, is the king of trees... and a true bird feeder!” says Doug Tallamy in *Nature's Best Hope*. “This keystone plant can support 557 caterpillar species, the preferred food of most nesting birds.”

- Bird feeders: 557 caterpillar species!
- Health: 3 tons Oxygen + 1 ton less CO2. One 25-year-old red oak with a 20-inch diameter will store 1 ton of carbon dioxide, which is equal to traveling 6 miles in an airplane. And produce 3 tons of oxygen.
- 50% cleaner water: Roots help filter rainwater, absorb stormwater and prevent erosion. In fact, trees filter and clean more than 50% of the US water supply.
- Other tree powerhouses: cherries, willows, birches and cottonwoods

WANTED: More Trees in Madison!



According to state data, between 1985 - 2015, Madison lost almost 1000 acres of tree canopy with 100 - 300 trees an acre. In addition, Eversource removed 1000s of trees as part of their powerline clearcutting program. And due to invasive pests—pine bark beetle, emerald ash borer, parasitic beech leaf disease, etc.—many of our forests are endangered.

Mad for Trees, a grassroots project, has a goal of planting 1000 native trees and shrubs by 2026... Madison's 200th anniversary. Free tree and shrub giveaways are

held each spring and fall. AND the Garden Club of Madison and Mad for Trees have partnered at Bauer Park to plant several dozen heritage apple and pear trees. —Kellie Brady

Could your yard use a tree? Visit mad4trees.org

BEWARE NEONICS



NEONICOTINOIDs are neurotoxic pesticides. Sadly, Connecticut SB190—an act to prohibit the use of Neonicotinoids in nonagricultural applications—died Spring 2024 in committee. But they are already banned in the EU, Quebec and Ontario, and heavily restricted in NJ. When sprayed only 5% reaches the plant while approximately 95% ends up in the soil where it will persist for years.

- The EPA suggested that Neonics are likely driving the extinction of 200+ species.
- Non-organic apples, cherries and strawberries all contain Neonics residue. Peeling or washing doesn't help.
- The effects on humans, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council: tremors, low testosterone, altered insulin regulation and metabolism changes.
- One corn seed treated with a neonic is enough to kill 25,000 bees.

Please contact
your legislator to
support banning
Neonics in
Connecticut.

On the Road.

Our celebratory Centennial exhibit soon hit the road for others to enjoy. Its first stop? The Healing Arts Gallery in the Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven. This six-month exhibit in 2025 was arranged by GCM member Roz Cama; an interior designer, Roz also hosted our May 2024 100th anniversary luncheon at her home, which is situated on land owned by Club founder Mary Grenelle Wilcox... call it, going “back to the future!”

Next, among other stops, the exhibit will enliven the walls of the Madison Senior Center





100th Anniversary Exhibition

This exhibition was made possible by the hard work of many volunteers of the Garden Club of Madison and contributions from the following:

Donald Budnick, CEO, Ardent Displays, printing

Exhibition Committee
Organizer and Editor: **Elinor Griffith**
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Copy and Image Editor: **Barb Lessard**, assisted by **Rick Camp** (image editing)
GCM Co-Presidents: **Sue Kelley & Marleen Pacelli**
Centennial Event Co-Chairs and PR: **Pam Gallagher & Pippa Mannino**
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Exhibit Installation: **Tom Cleveland**
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Sponsors
Penny & Allan Katz
Verdek Green Technology
Rosalyn Cama
Lindyl & Vito Arno, Maureen Dalton, Donna Gregory & Elaine Gwyther

Special Thanks
The Charlotte L. Evarts Memorial Archives, Inc., Madison, Connecticut. (CLEMA)
Archivist **Nancy Bastian** for granting permission to reprint historic images from their collection.
The Madison Historical Society
for the loan of **Clarissa Badger's Wild Flowers (1859)**.
Amy Etra Photography
Grove Gardens Florist

*"I think this is what hooks one to gardening:
it is the closest one can come
to being present at creation."* —Phyllis Theroux, writer



