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**New England
Botanic Garden**
AT TOWER HILL

Going Electric, New England Botanic Garden Becomes the First AGZA Certified Green Zone® Botanic Garden in the Nation

(September 21, 2022) BOYLSTON – [New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill](#) announced today it is the first botanic garden in the U.S. to be certified as a Green Zone by the [American Green Zone Alliance \(AGZA\)](#). An AGZA Green Zone is one in which routine maintenance is performed with low impact equipment. This certification represents the culmination of a multi-year effort to evaluate carbon emissions and other pollution associated with the Garden’s horticultural and maintenance operations and, in response, adopt alternatives to the use of gas-powered equipment. Achieving Green Zone status signals New England Botanic Garden’s ongoing commitment to sustainable practices that support a healthy environment and help combat climate change.

The Garden will be celebrating this significant milestone with a special ceremony that aims to bring together green industry professionals, local municipal leaders, and elected officials on Thursday, October 27. Members of the media are invited to attend.

Gas-powered landscaping tools, a staple of the industry for decades, contribute to global warming by releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. They also produce harmful exhaust, toxic waste, and noise pollution, all of which have long-term negative impacts on the health of equipment operators, communities, and ecosystems. AGZA Green Zone Certification is a structured program involving education, training, certification, and metrics reporting to achieve an enduring transition to cleaner, quieter, more sustainable landscape maintenance practices. AGZA and nonprofit [Quiet Communities](#) work together to implement the program nationwide in parks, municipalities, institutions, and businesses.

“Sustainability is a key component of New England Botanic Garden’s strategic plan,” said Mark Richardson, New England Botanic Garden’s Director of Horticulture. “It’s part of our organization’s DNA, so we were happy to find partners in AGZA and Quiet Communities that recognize the importance of this work. We hope to be a resource to other institutions, municipalities, and green industry professionals looking to make similar transitions on their properties.”

New England Botanic Garden began its journey toward Green Zone certification in 2019. Over the past three years, the organization has replaced, or begun the process of replacing, its array of gas-powered landscaping equipment—mowers, blowers, string

trimmers, and chainsaws—with battery-powered electric models. To charge this equipment, as well as a fleet of 11 electric utility carts, the Garden is set to install solar panels on the roof of its horticulture barn. This installation, an important component of the organization’s sustainability goals, is supported by a \$112,000 [Massachusetts Cultural Coalition Cultural Facilities Fund](#) grant.

An ELF® (Environmental Landscape Footprint) report generated by AGZA and Quiet Communities estimates that the electric transitions at New England Botanic Garden will eliminate 50 tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually—the equivalent of planting 2,220 trees, or taking eleven gas-powered cars off the road each year. “The reduction in impacts achieved by New England Botanic Garden’s initiative is a quadruple win—for the environment, for the health of workers and citizens, for our ecosystems, and for our planet,” said Jamie Banks, President of Quiet Communities.

In establishing the Green Zone, New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill aims to set the example for other botanical gardens and parks that appreciate the value of clean, quiet, sustainable landscape maintenance in improving the health and well-being of staff and visitors.

“Botanic gardens are beacons in our society which communities look upon for education, science, and inspiration from the natural world,” said Dan Mabe, founder of AGZA. “The New England Botanic Garden has taken a leadership role in the state of Massachusetts and the entire nation by completing their Green Zone Certification and setting an example of verified low impact landscape maintenance operations.”

On Thursday, October 27, preceding the AGZA certification ceremony, Mark Richardson, along with New England Botanic Garden Land Steward Robert Graham, will present on the Garden’s experiences transitioning to electric equipment and offer recommendations for how other organizations can adopt similar best practices. Their discussion will be part of the Season’s End Summit, an annual event organized by the [Ecological Landscape Alliance](#) that features talks by experts from the environmental community and brings together green industry professionals from across the country. The Summit is open to the public. To learn more and register, visit <https://www.ecolandscaping.org/event/ela-summit-2022/>.

For more information about New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill and its sustainability initiatives visit <https://nebg.org/sustainable-initiatives/>. For more about the AGZA certification ceremony contact Public Relations Manager Liz Nye at lnye@nebg.org.

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About New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill is a nonprofit organization located at 11 French Drive in Boylston, Massachusetts. A regional destination, we are operated on 171 acres by the Worcester County Horticultural Society, one of the oldest of its kind in the country, and are open

to the public for garden viewing, trail walking, activities, private events, educational classes, weddings, exhibitions, and more. We are an [AAM-accredited](#) museum that includes an irreplaceable collection of plants. We hope to engage you in a life-long passion for growing plants for their ornamental, economic, and ecological value. Learn all about New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill including its history, mission, and its staff, please visit www.nebg.org.

About American Green Zone Alliance

AGZA was founded in 2013 and helps transition the landscape maintenance industry safely and responsibly to lower impact technologies and operations. Through workforce training, property certification, and impact data reporting, AGZA takes a solutions-based approach educating the industry to seek more sustainable paths that are economically, and workload feasible.

About Quiet Communities

Quiet Communities (Concord, MA) is national nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to helping communities reduce health and environmental harm from noise and pollution with evidence-based approaches and solutions. Its landcare program focuses on transitioning the outdoor power equipment industry to low impact alternatives to protect public health, worker health, and environmental quality.