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Media Contacts:

Liz Nye

lnye@nebg.org

508.869.6111 ext. 143



**New England
Botanic Garden**
AT TOWER HILL

Massachusetts Botanic Garden Leads on Electric Transitions *Green Zone Certification Sets Example in Green Industry and Beyond*

(November 3, 2022) BOYLSTON, MA – A group of leaders on climate and sustainability issues recently gathered at [New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill](#) to celebrate the 171-acre Massachusetts garden as the first botanic garden in the nation to be certified 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.

To earn Green Zone certification, the Garden replaced nearly all of its high-impact, gas-powered landscaping tools with low-impact electric models, a transition that will eliminate an estimated 50 tons of carbon dioxide emissions from the atmosphere annually. This is the equivalent of planting 2,220 trees, or taking eleven gas-powered cars off the road each year, and it is just the start of the Garden's ongoing effort to decarbonize. At a celebratory event on October 27, Congressman Jim McGovern (D-MA), Representative Michelle Ciccolo (D-15th Middlesex), Mayor Joe Petty of the City of Worcester, Dan Mabe, founder and President of AGZA, and Jamie Banks, founder of national nonprofit coalition [Quiet Communities](#) made remarks supporting the significance of this milestone.

“What you have accomplished, in addition to setting a good example, actually increases the pressure on the powers that be that we need to move faster, and we need to be bolder in the actions that we take,” said Congressman McGovern in a speech. “Your choice to aim for this certification isn't just good news for our planet, but it makes you even better neighbors. You're contributing to cleaner air and protecting the local ecosystem, and all of us benefit.”

New England Botanic Garden's [Green Zone journey](#) began in 2019. The decision to pursue certification aligns with the organization's Strategic Plan, which pushes the Garden to look at all elements of its work through a climate resiliency lens. “AGZA Green Zone certification signals our commitment to sustainable practices that support a healthy environment and help combat climate change,” said Grace Elton, CEO of New England Botanic Garden.

AGZA Green Zone certification involves a structured program of education, training, and metrics reporting. AGZA partners with Quiet Communities, an organization dedicated to helping communities reduce health and environmental harm from noise and pollution, to

implement the Green Zone program in parks, municipalities, institutions, and businesses across the country. “We set out to change the industry by developing a system and solutions,” said AGZA President Dan Mabe, reflecting on AGZA’s founding. Today, Green Zone certified organizations are leading enduring transitions to cleaner, quieter, more sustainable landscape maintenance practices nationwide.

“It is so amazing that this is happening in Massachusetts and that this botanical garden is the first in the country,” said Representative Ciccolo. “You will tell other communities, botanical gardens, and landscapers that this work is possible because normally we hear it can't be done, it's too expensive, the equipment's not good enough, or workers won't like it. You are here to prove them wrong.”

Since 2019, New England Botanic Garden has replaced, or begun the process of replacing, its array of gas-powered mowers, leaf blowers, string trimmers, and chainsaws. The Garden has also incorporated a fleet of 11 electric utility carts into its regular operations. To charge this equipment, New England Botanic Garden is set to install solar technology on the roof of its horticulture barn, a project supported by a \$112,000 [Massachusetts Cultural Coalition Cultural Facilities Fund](#) grant.

“Soon we'll be able to say that all of the equipment that we use for maintaining our garden is fueled by the sun, and I'm really proud of that,” said Mark Richardson, New England Botanic Garden’s Director of Horticulture. “We hope this serves as a shining example of sustainable operations, demonstrating to people that it is possible to make this transition now. You don't have to wait until the technology improves because the technology is already here.”

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

Photo Caption: *(Back row, left to right) Congressman Jim McGovern, Representative Michelle Cicollo, New England Botanic Garden’s Director of Horticulture Mark Richardson and Land Steward Robert Graham, Mayor Joe Petty, Dan Mabe, President of AGZA, (front row, left to right) Jamie Banks, founder of Quiet Communities, and Grace Elton, the Garden’s CEO gather to “flip the switch” marking the organization’s transition to electric landscaping equipment.*

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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.