

## LIFESTYLE

# Tower Hill announces new name to highlight regional appeal and a new garden



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BOYLSTON — Some new names and initiatives have just sprung up at Tower Hill.

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill is now the official name of the nonprofit organization owned and operated by the Worcester County Horticultural Society. Previously, the organization was Tower Hill Botanic Garden. Also, the organization is opening a new 1.5-acre garden, The Ramble. There is a new logo — an apple blossom in an arch. And there is a new website: [www.nebg.org](http://www.nebg.org).

The new name became official April 13, said New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill CEO Grace Elton.

A Facebook posting said, "We are thrilled to announce that we have a new name and a major new garden!"

On its website, New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill explains that "our new name reflects our goal of helping people all over New England make joyful connections with plants."

Meanwhile, "to better inspire children and their families to become passionate stewards of the environment, we have opened a major new 1.5-acre Garden, The Ramble.

"There's a lot of reaction on social media," Elton said. "It's overwhelmingly positive. They're excited we want to extend our reach and invite more people to Central Massachusetts."

The Worcester County Historical Society, which since 1842 had been a downtown Worcester institution, opened its public gardens at Tower Hill Farm in Boylston in 1986. Open year

round, there are 171 acres of woodland trails and formal gardens along with a view of Wachusett Reservoir.

Elton said that a name change has been talked about for years, but in 2019-20 the organization undertook a strategic planning program that surveyed about 1,000 people. They were asked about the organization's objectives and programs, and "one thing that came out of all the surveys, focus groups, is we've really become a regional resource and our name didn't reflect that."

On its website the organization said, "Our new name is not about redefining who we are as a horticultural society and a Garden but embracing who we have become and opening up the possibilities to be more. Today, we belong to both our local community and to all of New England. And our new name reflects the growth the Garden has experienced over the past few years into a regional destination that not only captivates visitors with the wonders and beauty of the Garden but also the importance of promoting sustainability and biodiversity in the natural world."

Elton said the organization worked with a consultant "to test a whole lot of names out."

What emerged was that the words "Tower Hill" should not be dropped, she said. And so New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill seemed like the perfect title.

"Some people say 'It's always been Tower Hill' for me," Elton said. "And that's fine. It always will be 'Tower Hill.'"

The Ramble is described as "an enchanting, world-class garden that offers children and families from all over the region opportunities to interact with the natural world. With innovative features that invite visitors to explore its 1.5 acres, enjoy a picnic at the Pavilion, take outdoor classes and play on the lawn, The Ramble will inspire children and families to become passionate stewards of the environment."

The Ramble will officially open in May but people are welcome to visit it now although it is still a work in progress, Elton said.

There will be "whimsical features and fun things you can climb and crawl through," she said.

The name change and The Ramble come about as the organization says it has recently made a number of renovations on the property including doubling the size of parking lots; adding native plants, rain gardens and stormwater management best practices to benefit the local

watershed; creating several ADA-accessible paths including the primary path from the parking area to the Visitors Center; and expanding the entrance to the Visitors Center.

W. Gary Smith designed The Ramble and also an art exhibition that will be on display this summer and into the fall titled "Uprooted" that includes large-scale sculptures spread over the grounds, Elton said.

More immediately, there are plenty of activities planned next week for April school vacation week, she said.

The new logo design is by Stephanie Audette Connor of Stephanie Audette Design of Worcester County.

Elton said the apple blossom theme reflects the fact that NEBG has an heirloom apple collection of 100 different antique apple varieties.