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**New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill Awarded $100K for Worcester Tree Planting**

*In new round of funding, state supports vital urban forestry initiatives with over $1 million in grants to nonprofit partners and gateway cities*

**(June 6, 2023) BOYLSTON, MA** — The State of Massachusetts recently announced that [New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill](https://nebg.org/) will, for the second year in a row, be awarded an Implementation Grant from the Commonwealth’s [Greening the Gateway Cities Program (GGCP)](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/greening-the-gateway-cities-program). The grant, this year for $100,000, enables the Boylston-based botanic garden to expand its [Get a Tree, Plant a Tree](https://nebg.org/get-a-tree/) program in Worcester’s Main South, Grafton Hill, and Bell Hill neighborhoods. The Garden’s Get a Tree, Plant a Tree program plants free trees on private residential and commercial property in Worcester. The program aims to equitably address Worcester’s tree shortage and build a resilient urban forest by planting trees across communities where they are needed most. Last year’s grant to New England Botanic Garden brought 100 trees to Worcester neighborhoods and this second round of funding adds 200 more trees to that number.

New England Botanic Garden’s Implementation Grant comes as part of a $1.3 million investment to GGCP [announced by the Healey-Driscoll Administration](https://www.mass.gov/news/healey-driscoll-administration-announces-tree-planting-grants) on June 1, 2023. GGCP grants, known as Implementation Grants and Partner Grants, support a variety of tree planting efforts in sixteen gateway cities across Massachusetts including in Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Holyoke, Malden, Quincy, Salem, Lawrence, and more. GGCP is a partnership between the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), the Department of Conservation and Recreation’s (DCR) Urban & Community Forestry Program, the Department of Energy Resources (DOER), and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), along with gateway cities and local grassroots organizations. GGCP Implementation Grants were awarded to eight municipalities and only two nonprofit organizations, Groundwork Lawrence and New England Botanic Garden.

“It’s impossible to overstate the importance of trees to the overall health and climate resiliency of cities,” says Grace Elton, CEO of New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill. “We are proud to be selected, once again, as a GGCP grantee and to be recognized as leaders in this work. We look forward to collaborating with our partners to continue the complex but essential job of restoring Worcester’s urban forest. With this round of funding, we’re bringing more trees to neighborhoods across the city where they can provide real benefits in the years ahead.”

Trees provide a wide array of important services in urban environments. They reduce energy use, combat flooding from stormwater runoff, and improve quality of life. Trees also have the power to help cool neighborhoods, mitigating the dangers of “urban heat island” effect. Urban heat islands occur in areas with large amounts of impervious surfaces like pavement and roofing that absorb heat during the day and radiate it back out at night. Without enough tree canopy, these areas get hotter and stay hotter, especially during summer heat waves. With guidance from the DCR, GGCP grants focus on planting trees within environmental justice neighborhoods with low, and sometimes no, tree canopy. To build biodiversity and resiliency in addition to tree canopy, the DCR requires that all GCCP grantees plant trees in accordance with the 10-20-30 rule. This suggests that urban forests contain no more than 10% of any one species, 20% of any one genus, or 30% of any family in order to prevent future catastrophic tree loss from pests.

“We aim for long-term success with every tree that goes into the ground through the Get a Tree, Plant a Tree Program,” says Amy Nyman, New England Botanic Garden’s Horticulture Outreach Manager. “We work hard to choose trees that will be well suited to each specific site, and after we plant, our team ensures residents have what they need to be stewards of the trees on their property.”

In addition to planting trees through the Get a Tree, Plant a Tree program, New England Botanic Garden leads a variety of community greening efforts that address issues of environmental justice and put plant-based solutions to climate change into action. In Worcester, these efforts include watering street trees, establishing sidewalk planters, beautifying medians with pollinator-friendly plants, and working with residents and community partners to steward plants in urban spaces. The Garden is also working alongside the city and DCR to develop Worcester’s new [Urban Forest Master Plan.](https://www.worcesterma.gov/uploads/9a/6e/9a6e87a3c9750dfe97c88e3b98dfa4fa/worcester-urban-forestry-master-plan-draft.pdf)

Learn more about the impact of New England Botanic Garden’s Get a Tree, Plant a Tree program [through the Garden’s blog](https://nebg.org/2023/05/11/rebuilding-worcesters-urban-forest-one-tree-time/). To request a tree through the Get a Tree, Plant a Tree program, visit <https://nebg.org/get-a-tree>. For additional information about New England Botanic Garden and its GGCP grant, contact the Garden’s Public Relations Manager Liz Nye at lnye@nebg.org or 508-869-3060.

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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.