



**New England
Botanic Garden**
AT TOWER HILL

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Worcester County Horticultural Society, operator of New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill, welcomes six new trustees and introduces new board president

BOYLSTON, MA, June 30, 2025 – Worcester County Horticultural Society (WCHS), one of the oldest active societies of its kind in the country, has added six new members to its board of trustees. The historic organization owns and operates [New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill](#), a popular public garden in Central Massachusetts that welcomes more than 250,000 visitors a year for garden viewing, trail walking, educational programs, special events, exhibitions, and more. New trustees bring experience in finance, education, law, nursery management, and scientific research. They were announced at WCHS's 184th annual meeting, held June 26, 2025, at which time, the organization also introduced a new board president.

"We are honored and excited to welcome such talented, engaged, and community-minded individuals to the board," says Grace Elton, CEO of New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill. "Their professional expertise, diverse perspectives, and passion for our mission of connecting people and plants will surely strengthen the Garden's leadership in the field of public horticulture."

Jeanie Connolly, of Princeton, MA, is a SVP, Sr. Commercial Lending Officer at Clinton Savings Bank. After graduating from Bentley University with a B.S. in Accounting, she has spent 40 years in the banking field. She currently serves on WCHS's Finance and Investment Committee. An experienced board member, Connolly has dedicated service to several leading organizations in central Massachusetts including the YWCA, ArtsWorcester, and Mount Wachusett Community Foundation.

Jyoti Datta, of Worcester, MA, is a retired school principal who earned a Master of Education from Lesley University. She is actively involved with the community, having served on the Worcester Public Library Board of Directors for a six-year term. She is also a corporator at the Worcester Art Museum, a member of the Worcester Art Museum's Education and Community Engagement Committee, a trustee at Worcester's Bancroft School, and a member of the Worcester Garden Club.

Ellen Hornig, of Shrewsbury, MA, holds a Ph.D. from Cornell and taught economics at the State University of New York at Oswego. Later, she founded and ran Seneca Hill Perennials, a mail-order nursery specializing in unusual hardy plants. She helped popularize the garden use of many South

African species and various North American asclepias (milkweed). Her personal gardens have been recognized with the North American Rock Garden Society's Millstream Garden Award.

Andrea Mattei, of Sutton, MA, has dedicated her legal career to commercial and corporate finance with expertise advising in the real estate and hospitality sectors. She completed her J.D. at The University of Maryland Carey School of Law and currently practices with Lerch, Early & Brewer based in Bethesda, MD. She lends her skills in several volunteer capacities including as a member of the President's Working Group on Real Estate at her undergraduate alma mater, Mount Holyoke College.

Gail Radcliffe, of West Boylston, MA, holds a Ph.D. in molecular biology from Brown University and has more than 30 years of experience assisting medical device and diagnostics companies with technical assessment and clinical and regulatory issues. She is currently a board member of the Worcester Economic Club and a past member of the Massachusetts Biomedical Initiatives board. She enjoys spending time outdoors and is a strong proponent of an edible backyard.

Priya Vaidya, of Shrewsbury, MA, has been an engineer at Intel Corporation since 2000 after graduating with a master's degree in electrical engineering from UMass, Amherst. While working as a senior researcher professionally, she is an avid artist and poet at heart. She and her husband have been members of New England Botanic Garden since 2008 and she volunteers for many Garden events, including Diwali Lights, a cultural celebration held in partnership with the India Society of Worcester.

Gayle Weiss, of Holden, MA, assumed the role of WCHS board president in November 2024. She earned her J.D. from Suffolk University and led a legal career that included roles with the Massachusetts Superior Court, Bowditch & Dewey, and Unum. She has dedicated her talents to the region's nonprofit community, serving in leadership capacities on the boards of Worcester Youth Guidance, the Worcester Economic Club, Legal Assistance Corporation, and the Devereaux School of Massachusetts. Weiss will continue to lead the WCHS board alongside 25 trustees, including those newly elected.

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Photos: Images of new trustees can be found [here](#).

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, the Garden is operated on nearly 200 acres by the Worcester County Horticultural Society, one of the oldest of its kind in the country, and is open to the public for garden viewing, trail walking, educational programs, private events, weddings, exhibitions, and more. In 2023, New England Botanic Garden was voted "Top Botanic Garden in the U.S." by *TravelAwaits*. New England Botanic Garden is an [AAM-accredited](#) museum that includes an irreplaceable collection of plants and creates opportunities for visitors to experience the wonder of plants, learn about the natural world, and make joyful connections. Learn all about New England Botanic Garden including its history, mission, and its staff at www.nebg.org.

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