



**New England
Botanic Garden**
AT TOWER HILL

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

New England Botanic Garden CEO Grace Elton honored with prestigious Garden Club of America award

Commendation recognizes Elton's leadership in conservation education and environmental stewardship

BOYLSTON, MA, October 22, 2025 – [New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill](#) is thrilled to announce that CEO Grace Elton was recently honored by [The Garden Club of America](#) (GCA) with a [Community Commendation](#). Each year, GCA Community Commendations recognize club members for exceptional achievements, leadership, and contributions to their communities. The award celebrates Elton's outstanding efforts to promote plant conservation, and environmental stewardship, in particular, her role in establishing a formal affiliation with leading international and national environmental organizations, the U.S. branch of Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI-US) and the Ecological Landscape Alliance (ELA). Elton accepted the *2025 Zone Conservation Commendation* on October 15 at a gathering of the Worcester Garden Club, the local GCA chapter that nominated her for this special recognition.

"I'm deeply honored to receive this recognition from The Garden Club of America. This commendation reflects not only my personal commitment to environmental stewardship and conservation, but also the dedication of our Garden's staff, board, and community of supporters to the vision of a world where people and plants thrive," said Elton.

Since taking the helm at New England Botanic Garden in 2017, Elton's transformative leadership has grown the organization's mission, footprint, and role in the community. Today, more than 250,000 people visit New England Botanic Garden each year to learn about plants and experience the joys of the natural world. Environmental stewardship, woven throughout New England Botanic Garden's strategic plan, serves as a guiding principle for Elton's many achievements. In 2022, New England Botanic Garden became the first public garden in the nation to earn Green Zone certification from the American Green Zone Alliance for efforts to decarbonize horticultural operations; In 2023, the Garden added 14 acres of

vital native plant habitat to its footprint and protected them from future development with a conservation easement; and in 2024, Elton forged the partnership GCA is celebrating her for. The affiliation with BGCI-US and ELA strengthens all three organizations in plant conservation, research, and ecological horticulture practice while also advancing the Garden's strategic priorities.

"The Worcester Garden Club is proud to recognize this advancement in significant conservation efforts spearheaded by Grace Elton," said Barbara Athy, Awards Chair for the [Worcester Garden Club](#). "Beyond horticulture, we have found Grace's expertise invaluable and inspirational as an educator and a community activist."

To learn more about New England Botanic Garden and its mission and programs, or to plan a visit, go to nebg.org.

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Grace Elton, CEO of New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill

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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