



**New England
Botanic Garden**
AT TOWER HILL

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

New England Botanic Garden honors five community groups and organizations for using plants and gardening to make a difference in the community

BOYLSTON, MA, June 29, 2026 – [New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill](#) recently announced recipients of its annual Community Greening Awards. These awards recognize individuals, municipalities, nonprofits, schools, businesses, or community groups whose gardening efforts bring people together and address a public need. Projects, which can take place across New England, meet a variety of social and ecological standards. This year, five Community Greening awardees were honored at New England Botanic Garden during the 185th Annual Meeting of the Worcester County Horticultural Society on June 25, 2026. State citations and commendations were presented to awardees.

“Community Greening Awards spotlight exciting projects from around New England where plants and gardening are being used to build sustainable, healthy, and connected communities. We are grateful to the many dedicated individuals who make these outstanding projects possible. It is an honor to celebrate their valuable contributions,” said Grace Elton, CEO of New England Botanic Garden.

2026 Community Greening Awardees:

- **The CARE Garden at Murrayfield**
Hilltowns CARE (Compassion, Action, Respect, Empathy), a grassroots community group in Huntington, MA, had a desire: to create a beautiful place where community members could collaborate on creative ideas, nature education, and appreciation of plants. They mobilized support from the Town, local businesses, funding partners, neighbors, and friends to make it happen. Established on unused space outside the Huntington Library, the CARE Garden at Murrayfield features seven accessible raised beds. Designed in a circle, the garden space invites gathering, skill-sharing, and connecting—perfect for the many programs Hilltowns CARE plans for the future.
- **Hopkinton Senior Center**
The Hopkinton Senior Center Garden Club makes the most of unused space to bring fresh, healthy food to its members. Garden Club volunteers maintain a vegetable garden, herb garden, and tomato garden. Produce is harvested weekly and used in the senior center kitchen for soups, salads, and more. Throughout the season, surplus vegetables are given to seniors to use

at home. Not only does this project help the senior center keep meal costs and fees down, but it also helps seniors reduce their grocery spending and gain better access to fresh vegetables.

- **Lunenburg Community Pollinator Habitat**

This 2-acre garden space packs in pollinator resources. Planted and maintained by volunteers, it includes several hundred types of native plants chosen for their ability to provide nectar, pollen, and habitat to a diverse array of pollinators. A well-researched and developed design nurtures whole plant communities and exemplifies what modern pollinator gardening is all about. The garden also features water totes, a stormwater management system, and deer fencing. Additionally, the space hosts educational programs and events and has an on-site kiosk with maps that help visitors learn more about pollinator habitats.

- **Storybook Garden at the Northborough Free Library**

This educational garden connects literacy and nature. As part of the project, library visitors can explore five grow bags, each themed around a children's storybook. The plants in each bag align with the theme of the book, reinforcing the library's literacy mission while also encouraging curiosity about the natural world. The physical garden, which transforms a previously unused space by the library's entrance, is complemented by a Storybook Garden Club. Through this program, children explore science and nature with a combination of indoor learning and hands-on experiences in and around the garden.

- **University of New Hampshire College of Life Sciences and Agriculture Community Garden**

Operated by Farm To You NH, a sustainable agriculture program for undergraduate students at UNH, this community garden was established to meet a variety of needs. It supports students in the summer months, creating opportunities to connect. It also engages the local community, providing healthy, affordable, organic whole foods for individuals, families, and households who have limited access to gardening resources. Over 30 gardeners maintain 24 raised beds. Coming together to garden has also inspired activities like nature walks, pot-luck dinners, and solstice celebrations that extend the garden's mission further into the community.

Each year, Community Greening Awardees are selected from a pool of public nominations. To learn more and nominate a project in your neighborhood, visit <https://nebg.org/communitygreeningawards/>.



Community Greening Awardees pictured with New England Botanic Garden CEO Grace Elton. Awards were made to The CARE Garden at Murrayfield, Hopkinton Senior Center, Lunenburg Community Pollinator Habitat, Storybook Garden at the Northborough Free Library, and the University of New Hampshire College of Life Sciences and Agriculture Community Garden. Front row from left: Erica Walls, Mike Larouche, Grace Elton, Kathy Poulsen, Ginny Albertson. Second row from left: Erin Judge, Gennifer Belt Bousquet, Robin Venezia, Jessica Fitch. Third row from left: Rachael Hutchins, Jay Bousquet, Karla Cushman, Therese Collins. Photo by Troy B. Thompson Photography. More images can be found [here](#).

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About New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill, [now celebrating its 40th anniversary](#), 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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