



**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 five new trustees

BOYLSTON, MA, June 29, 2026 – Worcester County Horticultural Society (WCHS), one of the oldest active societies of its kind in the country, has added five 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 industries including finance, insurance, horticulture, architecture and design, and the cultural sector. They were announced at WCHS's 185th annual meeting, held June 25, 2026.

"We are honored to welcome such talented, engaged, and community-minded individuals to the board. Their commitment to our mission of connecting people and plants will surely strengthen the Garden's leadership in the field of public horticulture," says Gayle Weiss, president of the WCHS Board of Trustees.

Kathleen Devericks, of Northborough, MA, is a property casualty insurance professional and certified Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter. She spent thirty-eight years with The Travelers Companies in senior claim management, customer experience and training positions as well as five years as a Commercial Casualty Property Agent with Bender Hatch Insurance in Boston. She has served in the roles of chairperson, director, vice-president, and instructor with Commonwealth Auto Reinsurers, Worcester County Insurance Institute, and Edward Street Child Services in Worcester. Kathleen earned her Massachusetts Master Gardener certification post-retirement before becoming active as a Garden volunteer and docent. She received the Garden's Annual Volunteer of the Year Award in 2023. She is also a member of the Northborough Garden Club.

Maria Heskes-Allard, of Leominster, MA, is SVP, Relationship Manager at Fidelity Bank. She has spent her career in the banking industry, which began at Worcester County Institution for Savings over 40 years ago as a trusted financial advisor to businesses throughout Worcester County. Maria graduated from Becker College, Southern New Hampshire College, and received an MBA from Assumption College. She currently serves as Chair Elect of Greater Worcester Community Foundation, as well as Treasurer of New Garden Park, the development entity for Worcester Business Development Corporation. She

resides in Princeton, MA with her husband, Roger, and their family.

Aimee Goodwin Lombardo, of Putnam, CT, is Managing Principal and Director of Operations at a 40-person design firm, bringing decades of leadership across hundreds of projects throughout New England. Her work is recognized for thoughtful, site-responsible design and a strong commitment to sustainability, including multiple LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold projects and designs. She holds a Bachelor of Architecture from Syracuse University, is a registered Architect, and is a LEED Accredited Professional. Aimee has served on the AIARI Board and is active in several professional planning organizations. Raised on a working family farm in Rhode Island, Aimee maintains a lifelong connection to land stewardship. As a recreational gardener, she brings a practical, grounded perspective on cultivation, environmental responsibility, and the long-term care of landscape.

Matt Mattus, of Worcester, MA, has been involved with horticulture since he was a kid, working in his parent's garden along with his brothers and sister, raising vegetables, cutting flowers, and tending to trees, shrubs, and even a golf putting green. After a 29-year creative career in global design and development roles at toy and entertainment giant Hasbro, Matt now sits as Senior Director of Horticulture for the American Horticultural Society in Washington, DC. Matt and his partner maintain two acres which includes a glass greenhouse, camellia collections, a formal and natural garden, a fish pond, and poultry. He has written two books with a third planned for a 2026 release. Matt is also a popular lecturer focusing on his botanical travels and plant collections. Matt is a former WCHS Vice President and Secretary.

Lisa McDonough, of Worcester, MA, is a community volunteer and the proud mother of six adult children. She is married to Neil McDonough, CEO of FLEXcon Company. She serves on the Hanover Theater of the Performing Arts Board and the GBH Board of Advisors. Lisa is a former WCHS President and Vice President. In her previous tenure with WCHS, she played a key role in the success of the Garden's capital campaign, Growing Boldly, which included a number of accessibility improvements across the property and the creation of The Ramble, a garden space designed for children and families.



*New Trustees pictured with President of the Board, Gayle Weiss, and New England Botanic Garden CEO, Grace Elton. From left: Gayle Weiss, Maria Heskes-Allard, Aimee Goodwin Lombardo, Kathleen Devericks, Matt Mattus, Lisa McDonough, and Grace Elton.
Photo by Troy B. Thompson Photography.*

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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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