

Call for Artist Proposals

DECORATE A GNOME FOR OUR FALL EXHIBITION

Gnomevember at New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill
November 2026

OVERVIEW



Be a part of the magic this *Gnomevember*! New England Botanic Garden seeks talented and artistic individuals or groups to submit unique design proposals to bring our concrete garden gnomes to life through artistry and storytelling. These gnomes will be displayed at New England Botanic Garden during the *Gnomevember* exhibition, displayed in the Fall of 2026. Each gnome is made from concrete, is 28 inches tall, and weighs 60 pounds. A \$350 stipend will be awarded for each completed gnome.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

In November 2026, New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill will present a whimsical, family-oriented exhibition – *Gnomevember*. This exhibition will showcase a collection of uniquely stylized gnomes designed by local artists. Each gnome will be accompanied by an interpretive sign and will be part of an outdoor display featuring at least forty other garden gnomes. The exhibition will cover accessible areas in our formal gardens to encourage visitors to explore the Garden in search of each distinctive gnome.

Gnomevember aims to engage visitors of all ages with informal education opportunities that are whimsical and artistically inspired. In keeping with our mission to “create experiences with plants that inspire people and improve the world,” we seek imaginative artists to design and decorate garden gnomes that are inspired by nature, challenge their traditional nature, and celebrate inclusivity and diversity. We hope each artist will offer a unique twist on the traditional garden gnome.

BENEFITS & RECOGNITION

Selected artists or groups will receive the following benefits and recognition:

- A \$350 stipend per completed gnome, which covers all materials and the artist’s time.
- Gnome featured in the 2026 *Gnomevember* exhibition, with the potential to be displayed in future gnome exhibitions at the Garden.
- Recognition on an interpretive sign next to their gnome, on our website, and social media.

TIMELINE

- Proposals due: August 3
- Proposals chosen & participants notified: August 7
- Gnome pick-up at 11 French Drive, Boylston, MA: August 17 – 21
- Gnome biography due (e.g., description, name, etc.): September 7
- Gnome drop-off at 11 French Drive, Boylston, MA: October 12 – 16
- *Gnomevember* exhibition: November 2026

GUIDELINES

The staff at the New England Botanic Garden will select six artists to design and decorate a gnome that will be added to this year's exhibition. To ensure a high-quality display, we are seeking artists and designers with experience in creating exceptional outdoor artwork for a family audience. Successful proposals should be creative and original, featuring a unique gnome story or persona, and must include a detailed, high-quality sketch of the proposed gnome design. Once selected, participants will be notified and provided with an undecorated concrete gnome. Artists will be required to pick up and drop off their gnomes at the New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill, 11 French Drive, Boylston, MA, between 10am and 5pm. If participants are unable to pick up or drop off their gnomes, an exception for special delivery can be made upon request. If you require special delivery, please indicate it in your proposal.

Completed gnomes must be returned to the Garden by 5pm on **October 16, 2026**. The chosen gnomes will be displayed during the *Gnomevember* exhibition, which will open in November 2026, with the possibility of extending the exhibit from mid-October through mid-December. Following the 2026 exhibition, the gnomes will become part of the permanent New England Botanic Garden gnome community.

Design Guidelines

Garden gnomes should:

- Be playful, whimsical, and family-friendly
- Have artistic appeal for adults, with high-quality craftsmanship
- Be photogenic and offer fun, unique photo opportunities
- Take into consideration the Garden's mission to *"create experiences with plants that inspire people and improve the world."*
- Reflect the Garden's values of creating an inclusive experience for everyone
- Be able to withstand outdoor weather conditions for multiple months at a time
- Be recognizable as a garden gnome, abstractions are welcome, but visitors must be able to associate an abstract design with its natural counterpart without difficulty
- **NOT** include extra elements that may break off or go missing. The design should focus only on painting the gnome.

Construction Guidelines

- Use **latex acrylic exterior paint** or **outdoor acrylic paint** (concrete paint is not required)
- **Do not** attach extra elements to the gnome; use only paint
- **Do not** use enamel, water-based, or oil paint (they do not bond to concrete)

- **Do** use sealants if you choose to use regular acrylic paints. Sealers are not needed with latex acrylic exterior house paint.

Ownership and Usage Rights

New England Botanic Garden owns all decorated and undecorated gnomes. Gnomes will not be returned to artists. New England Botanic Garden reserves the right to use all images, renderings, and models to promote and interpret the exhibition in print or electronic formats.

Gnome Design Options

There are two different garden gnome designs. Please indicate which gnome you would prefer to decorate on your proposal form. You may be asked to switch depending on the variety of proposal submissions.

CURRENT GNOMEVEMBER GNOMES

The pictures below show a sampling of gnomes from past *Gnomevember* exhibitions.



Briefly describe your artistic experience (If possible, include a link to your website or social media that showcases your artwork.): _____

Which style of gnome do you want to decorate? (*Circle*)



IMPORTANT! Please attach a DETAILED sketch of your gnome design and briefly describe your gnome proposal for the 2026 *Gnomevember* exhibition. Proposals will only be considered with a detailed COLOR sketch.