

## HISTORY

The Wayland Garden Club was founded in 1922 by Mrs. Hazen Clement. It was one of the earliest clubs in Massachusetts during the garden club movement that began at the turn of the century. Mrs. Clement was intensely interested in flowers and had a lovely garden at her Plain Road home. Many of the 22 charter members were summer residents of Wayland (population 1,935 in 1920) who were attracted by the town's rural, unspoiled atmosphere. For many years, the Club's meetings were scheduled from May to October, the summer growing months. Club activities included regular meetings, flower shows and tours of gardens in fairly distant places such as Shrewsbury, Duxbury and Brookline.

In 1927, the Wayland Garden Club joined the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts, which was formed that year. The Federation required its member clubs to keep written records and to have formal annual meetings. Hence, our books of minutes begin with a meeting on May 19, 1927 at the home of Mrs. J. Sidney Stone, the first recorded President, with 17 members present. The records show a civic and social concern on the part of its members that continues to this day. In 1928, the Club voted to supply weekly flowers to the library (Miss Margaret Wheeler, the town librarian, was a charter member), a practice that continues. About 1930, the Club began sending Flower Mission Baskets of fruits and vegetables to the Robert Gould Shaw House, a neighborhood settlement house in Boston. A member would meet the 10:20 train each week to deliver the basket to the conductor. This custom continued until 1951 when a change in the train schedule ended the practice.

During World War II, the members provided Christmas and Easter decorations for Camp Devens in Ayer. In the 1940s and 1950s, the Club made monthly flower arrangements and holiday decorations for a nearby veterans' hospital and retirement home.

Garden therapy and community service programs continue today through the Wayland Council on Aging.

Civic beautification and conservation have always been a high priority for the Club. Our records show numerous donations over the years, such as a \$4 appropriation to buy paint for the town post office in 1941 and \$250 to buy foundation plantings at the town building in 1957. In 1971, the Club guided Wayland to become the first town in the state to take over the State Recycling Program and in 1974 successfully lobbied to have several of Wayland's roads designated "Scenic Roads." Two significant efforts to beautify the town were the creation of the Sanctuary and improvements to the Mill Pond skating area.

The Sanctuary is the Club's name for the land and pond area that lies between the two entrances to the Town Building. In the 1950s, the Club raised more than \$5,000 to turn these two acres of muddy swamp into a wildlife sanctuary and wetlands arboretum. Dredging began in 1961, and the planting of nearly 400 trees and shrubs began the following year. The Club's award-winning project preceded the State Wetlands Protection Act, but the interests protected under the state law are much the same as the Club's original forward-looking intentions, particularly provision of wildlife habitat. The maintenance of the sanctuary and creation of scenic vistas and trails - within the state wetlands law parameters - in concert with the Wayland Conservation Commission continue to be an important priority for the Club.

The Mill Pond dredging project was undertaken in 1974-75. The pond was filled with weeds and sludge and was no longer a desirable skating area. Garden Club members worked hard to get the town to approve funds for dredging the pond. Members later installed lights and a shed at the pond.

Over the years, the Club has continued to support a wide variety of Town groups and projects. In 1995, the Club contributed

\$2000 towards the Town's purchase of the Paine estate, so that much of the land would remain undeveloped. Members of the Wayland Garden Club coordinated with members of the Wayland Business Association and the Woodridge Garden Club in beautifying Town land in trafficked areas. A heater piece planted by the Club in 1996 received special recognition from the Federation. The Club also dedicated memorial funds in memory of deceased members of the Club to plant and maintain the herbal garden at the Grout-Heard House Museum. For many years, the Club has decorated the Grout-Heard House Museum in early December to start the Holiday season. In earlier years, members attended a special "preview open house" of the four downstairs rooms on the day before the historic house was open to the public.

The Garden Club continues to be active in the community. Each year a pair of members makes an arrangement for the Museum of Fine Art Boston's "Art in Bloom" celebration, an exciting use of our creative talent. In 2000, we held an "Arts and Arrangements" program for public enjoyment at the Wayland Free Public Library, featuring art work from Wayland Public School pupils for all to enjoy.

Throughout the years we have held both flower shows and garden tours. In 2003, the Club held a judged flower show at Traditions of Wayland, featuring customs and traditions of our Commonwealth.

In 2009, the Club was pleased to welcome many new members who had formerly formed a Woodridge Garden Club. In the past the Woodridge and Wayland Garden Clubs had served Wayland as partners in various projects including annual holiday decorations at the Grout-Heard House Museum. This tradition continues as one Garden Club.

In 2014, to the delight of the Wayland community, we held our first plant sale alongside the Friends of the Library's Book &

Bake Sale. In 2015, we repeated the plant sale, participated in the Worcester Art Museum's "Flora in Winter", initiated a scholarship for a graduating Wayland High School senior and decorated a room for the holidays at the Wayside Inn. In 2016 and 2017, the plant sale, Flora in Winter at the Worcester Art Museum and the scholarship became annual traditions.

We can look back on our accomplishments with pride. Our members have shared their passion for conservation, horticulture and artistic use of plant material with both the membership and the larger community. We collaborate with other garden and horticultural groups in the community. We donate flower arrangements to the Wayland Free Public Library weekly as well as assisting the Friends of the Wayland Free Public Library by tending the Friends' garden during the summertime. We maintain planters at our public and historic buildings and also tend several sites in town during the course of the year. We hold Garden Therapy programs for seniors. In our December workshop meeting, the club makes wreaths and decorations for public and historic buildings in town.

We have been recognized by the Massachusetts Legislature and by the Massachusetts Federation of Garden Clubs for 90 years of vitality. The Club looks forward to many more years of education, service and leadership.

