



Over One Hundred Years of Gardening in Springfield

There has been a club for home gardeners in Springfield, Vermont for over 100 years! Mrs. Carroll Drury, a former president, had been very helpful in her recollections of Garden Club activities during the 20's and 30's and offers the following information. **The Springfield Gardeners**, as the Club was called at one time, was responsible for many civic improvements, including the collection of garbage and rubbish and the annual spraying of trees within the village limits! She recalls the group organizing around the year 1915.

During the early 1920's Miss Miriam Marsh, who owned the estate near the high school, interested the club in having flower shows. These shows were quite spectacular for a town of this size; many lasted two or three days.

During World War II the gardening group became practically inactive. At various times efforts were made to reorganize, with many of the members feeling that the club could be of service in landscaping the new housing developments. The club supported the Victory Gardens, acting as supervisors at intervals.

In 1946 the club officially changed its name to Springfield Garden Club and has held regular meetings ever since. It played a very active role in the "Keep Vermont Green" program which was responsible for legislation restricting the size of billboards.

The club helped decorate the hospital at Christmas time and provided many floral arrangements during the summer months. In the later 50's the club opened its membership to both men and women. Landscaping the Library grounds was a Garden Club project after renovations there were completed in 1966. 1968 found club members assisting with plantings and beds at the Eureka Schoolhouse historic site.

During the years 1966-74 there was again, a large focus on flower shows. Yet in 1972 the sidewalk planters were built and planted for the downtown and in 1977 the Club began awarding scholarships to a graduating high school senior with plans

to pursue further education in the fields of horticulture, forestry or environmental studies.

In 1980 the April program featured a speaker on organic gardening and in 1983, in addition to their ongoing programs, the Club planted over 1000 flowering bulbs throughout the town.

The early 90's saw the first Festival of Trees fundraiser at the Miller Art Center. It was moved to the Hartness House in 1996 and soon replaced bake sales and plant sales as the sole means of fundraising for the Club. The Festival continued to grow and was moved to different Inns for several years until space and parking became an issue and it was moved to its present location at the Great Hall in Springfield. Save the date 10/17/17.

May 30, 1990, after much planning, the large cinderblock planter on the traffic island near the Plaza was completed with the help of donations from many individuals and businesses (Bibbens, Gurney Bros.& Wiggins) all concerned with town beautification. Several vocational students from Hank Stopinski's horticulture class helped as well.

In 1997, partnering with the Audubon Society, work began on the Springweather Wildlife Habitat in North Springfield. In 1999, the Club donated banners to line the Downtown flagpoles.

Today the Club continues to give back to the community through ongoing projects such as Springweather, local programs open to the public with educational speakers, flower shows at the VAULT, the planting and maintenance of the Main Street Planters and Flower Beds at the downtown flagpole, town hall, plaza traffic island, Rtes 10/106 island, Eureka Schoolhouse and the "Plant it Pink Memorial Garden" on the Toonerville Trail and more. The Club also makes monthly flower arrangements for Meals on Wheels, plants and maintains a patio garden for the Adult Day Care Clients, maintains a Junior Gardening program and awards scholarships to graduating high school seniors and/or college students pursuing further education in pertinent fields of study.

The Garden Club is active today and still going strong. As Mrs. Carol Drury used to say.....no tricks, just hard work and lots of manure!

By Jean Swanson, Publicity Chair