

1997 – 2011

During this time period seven talented women shared their expertise and leadership with the New England Region members.

In 1997 Jeanne-Marie Parkes of Massachusetts spread the Region objectives with her theme of “Together Let’s Preserve What is Priceless”.

The Regional Unified Project was: Clean Water and Roadside Beautification. The project was to contribute to the improvement and beautification of the environment.

Membership in the 6 states for this period was: CT – 7,938, ME – 3,554, MA – 12,669, NH – 1,317, RI – 979 and VT 1,071 for a total of 28,528 members.

A highly successful 1997 Regional Annual Meeting was held at the Ascutney Mountain Resort, in Ascutney, VT on October 22-23 with a theme of “Horticulture Seminars”. Attendees were educated with programs on “Container Gardening in New England”, a demonstration on “Planting a Trough Garden”, “Perennials Throughout the Seasons”, “Step by Step Organic Vegetable Gardening” and a presentation by the special guest Phyllis Wood, NCSGC Parliamentarian with a title of “I So Move”. Environmental awareness continued with the 1998 Annual Meeting held in Norwich, CT October 19-20.

A PETALS grant was received, and programs and workshops at this meeting included:

Clean Water: Starting With Your Home and Yard,
Designs for Non-Point Pollution,
Environmentalism on Main Street,
Rivers and Greenways,
Environmental Protection and
What’s Up Outside.

Of special note are the numerous accomplishments of this Administration.

An official Regional logo was established,
A Regional Collect was selected,
A cup plate was introduced for sale as a fund raiser,
New England Director Jeanne-Marie Parkes purchased a paver in the name of
the New England Region for the National Garden Project of NCSGC,
An endowment from Virginia Thurston former New England Region Director
from
Massachusetts was received to establish the first New England Region
Scholarship, Regional Bylaws were initiated and
Two Flower Show School Symposiums were held. One in Hartford, CT and
the other in Bedford, NH.

Beginning in 1999 Virginia GrandPrè of New Hampshire kicked off this Administration with a theme of “Take Flight With Gardening”.

A workshop held in Bow, NH encouraged members to educate, enhance and/or create wildlife habitats, especially for Birds and Butterflies.

Every club in the New England Region received two flyers for this Regional Unified Project.

One flyer was for Birds, the other for Butterflies. The flyers outlined the project with a tear-off sheet to be returned by October 1, 1999. A two page report with a photograph was due by October 1, 2000. This report would outline the project from initiation to maintenance and benefit to wildlife while the photograph would show the finished garden.

Membership in the 6 states for this period was:

Connecticut - 8,004
Maine – 3,508
Massachusetts – 12,766
New Hampshire – 1,630
Rhode Island – 1,932 and
Vermont - 1,042
for a total of **28,882** members

The 1999 Annual Meeting was held in Portland, Maine on October 13-14.

A design program by Tony Todesco regaled members with floral design and tips on arranging.

Continuing with the New England Region theme, Elizabeth Soper from the National Wildlife Federation presented “Rediscovering Your Backyard”.

During the 2000 Annual Meeting, two workshops were held: A Book of Evidence workshop had club members bring publicity, photographs and scissors. All remaining materials were supplied and numerous Books of Evidence were completed and ready for mailing.

“What’s Up In National Council?” was presented by Nancy Goulette of Michigan. This workshop gave members information on how to take advantage of the information available through the National Council of State Garden Clubs, Inc.

Attendance continued high for the two Flower Show School Symposiums. The 1999 Symposium was held in Portland, Maine on July 13-14 and 2000 was held in Williamstown, Massachusetts June 13-14.

Goals continued to be met with:

- . Acceptance of the first Regional Scholarship named for Virginia Thurston.
- . Two new New England Region Awards – Lina Wagner Perennial Garden and the Virginia GrandPrè Wildlife Gardening Award.

The New England Region Handbook was updated and distributed to all members of the Board.

There was 100% involvement of all six New England States in the Unified Project.

Dee Mozzochi of Connecticut chose a theme of “Tend Tomorrow’s Garden” for the 2001-2003 Administration.

The Unified Project “GROW” was kicked off with a workshop in Providence Rhode Island where members were challenged to educate themselves and the public about native plants, wildflowers, invasive plants and alternate planting options.

Membership in the 6 states for this period was:

Connecticut - 8,200
Maine - 3,500
Massachusetts - 12,712
New Hampshire – 1,357
Rhode Island - 2,000 and
Vermont - 1,050
for a total of **28,819** members

On May 2, 2001 under the leadership of Lois Dupre’ Shuster, the National Council of State Garden Clubs, Inc., changed the name to the National Garden Clubs, Inc.

A PETALS grant from the National Garden Clubs was received to fund the printing of 5,000 brochures titled “Control Invasive Plants”. These were distributed to each state for disbursement throughout the Region.

The 2001 Annual Convention held in Plymouth Massachusetts October 17-18 included a Plymouth Plantation Visit, Trolley Trip through historic Plymouth and the Mayflower Society Headquarters. Programs for the meeting included a design program “Swinging With the Masters” by Penny Decker and “Colonial New England Landscaping” by Dr. Owen Rogers of the University of New Hampshire.

A Landscape Design Refresher was held in Bedford, New Hampshire on October 15-16, followed by the Annual Convention of 2002 at the same location on October 16-17.

Highlights of the Convention included: Special guest Lois Dupre Shuster, President of the National Garden Clubs, Inc., Walking Tour of the Manchester Historical Society, a design program “Decorating for the Holidays” by Joanne Krause, and “Perennials” by Frank Wolfe of Lake Street Gardens in Salem, New Hampshire.

The New England Region tied with the National Capitol Area for 2nd place for the NGC Emerald Award for the NER Unified Project.

State PETALS awards were won by all six states.

Celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the New England Region was led by Maureen M. Colton of Rhode Island with a theme of “Exploring Treasured Gardens” during the years 2003-2005.

The Unified Project “Preserving Precious Treasures: A Guide to Historic Gardens” was published to highlight the works of the New England garden clubs. Each garden was planted and maintained by a garden club on a historic site. The Directory listed gardens by state, garden club and the site where the gardens were located. Seventy-six (76) garden clubs and 100 gardens are listed in the guide. The directories were placed in libraries, garden clubs and preservation societies.

Membership in the 6 states for this period was:

Connecticut - 7,964
Maine – 3,040
Massachusetts – 12,149
New Hampshire – 1,259
Rhode Island - 1,825 and
and Vermont - 1,107
for a total of **27,344** members.

Killington, Vermont was the site for the 2003 Convention on October 21-22. A tour was conducted of the Marsh Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Mansion Park and gardens as a prelude to the Annual Meeting. The meeting and workshops were in keeping with the National and Regional Historic Gardens theme.

The 2004 Annual Convention was held in historic Mystic Connecticut and combined a duo refresher in Landscape Design and Garden Study. The Region was pleased to welcome June Wood, National Garden Club President in attendance.

The Region participated in the America-A-Bloom NGC Project by planting at Habitat for Humanity homes throughout the Region.

A student enrolled in Landscape Design was awarded the first bi-annual Virginia Thurston Scholarship.

The Deanna J. Mozzochi Creative Design Award (#20) was approved. The award will be presented for the best creative design of the year.

The Maureen M. Colton Award (#21) was approved. The award is for the best class of designs in a Standard or Small Standard Flower Show.

A memorial service was conducted to honor Past Regional Directors Jean Williams of New Hampshire and Vermont and Mary Lou Smith of Maine. New Hampshire and Vermont honored Jean Williams with a Gems of Honor at the NGC Headquarters. The Region purchased a Gems of Honor Tribute as well.

“The Garden of Youth” was the theme for the 2005-2007 years for New England Director Pamela C. Hebert of Vermont.

The Unified Project “Children’s Gardens – SPROUTS” encouraged clubs to work with youth groups, not only on a one to one basis, but to incorporate this endeavor in their

annual programs.

Membership in the 6 states for this period was:

Connecticut - 7,910
Maine - 2,842
Massachusetts - 12,726
New Hampshire - 1,365
Rhode Island - 1,905 and
Vermont – 1,167
or a total of **27,915** members.

This administration's' theme "Autumn Downeast" was announced at the 2005 Annual Meeting held in South Portland Maine on October 18-19. At the opening dinner, Ann Jordan illustrated the theme with her "Designing Downeast" floral program. The morning topic "Using History to Motivate Children to Garden in Today's World" continued the youth objectives with a program presented by John Forti, Curator of Historic Landscapes at Strawberry Banke Museum in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Continuing with the same theme, the 2006 Annual Meeting October 15-16 in Providence, Rhode Island featured Peg Tart, of Newfane Vermont and the New England Region Wildflower Chairman with "The Wonderful World of Wildflowers, Herbs and Weeds". This is an eight week after school enrichment program for ages 8-11. Some of the activities are: exploration of school ground weeds, planting a wildflower trail at the school, planting seeds and planting a patriotic tree dedicated to local volunteer fire fighters on Flag Day.

The Principal Financial Group "Let Freedom Ring" project awarded \$19,000 in grants to New England Region states and clubs. A certificate was received for the Region's contributions to Habitat for Humanity and the "Green the Gulf Coast" project of National Garden Clubs.

The New England Region website was established and the Ruby Throated Hummingbird was adopted as the NER bird. The Monarch Butterfly was chosen to be the NER butterfly. Michelle Mensinger of New Hampshire put a wonderful exhibit on the NER website which put the wings in motion for both.

The first New England Region pin was created and sold at this time.

New Blue Star Memorial markers reached its highest peak since the project began with 83 new orders.

A new award (#22) was approved: The Pamela C. Hebert Garden of Youth Award. Over 100 different projects and activities were completed by the Region clubs and ranged from entering the Smokey Bear contest to creating a garden for Children at Risk, certified visitation venue. Ninety-nine (99) clubs participated with three states having a state-wide project.

After serving as New England Alternate Director in 2005-2007, Sonia Cianchette of Maine chose as her 2007-2009 theme "Future Choices: Native Alternatives to Invasive

Plants”.

The Regional Project “Seek Regionally Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants” had all six states compiling informational publications to address the issue of giving gardeners ecological sensitive choices.

Membership in the 6 states for this period was:

Connecticut – 7,561
Maine – 2,652
Massachusetts – 14,221
New Hampshire – 1,390
Rhode Island - 1,624 and
Vermont - 1,033
for a total of **28,481** members

Bartlett, New Hampshire was the location for the October 16-17, 2007 Annual Meeting. The opening program featured floral designs through the decades with a challenge section for all attendees to create a “design of the future” at their dinner tables. Other programs reflected both breast cancer awareness and the fruits of the works of the Region with a video presentation of the myriad of projects sponsored by the states and clubs.

The historic village of Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts served as the perfect venue to highlight the theme of Historic Garden Preservation.

All four schools sponsored by the National Garden Clubs, Inc. were held during this time period with high attendance and high caliber instructors. All six states compiled their Regional Project lists and placed them on their state websites.

Bringing the last of this time period of Administrations was Kathleen Thomas of Massachusetts. Her 2009-2011 theme of “The Future Starts Today” encouraged members to make a difference in our environment.

With the Regional project of “New England Growing Naturally” the New England Region went green. All information (documentation, meeting registrations, the newsletter, etc.) were posted on the Region’s website, saving the region a considerable amount of money and providing an example to all regional garden clubs that it is possible to operate successfully using environmentally sound practices.

Membership in the 6 states for this period was:

Connecticut – 7,133
Maine – 2,449
Massachusetts – 12,083
New Hampshire – 1,154
Rhode Island - 1,484 and
Vermont - 1,042
for a total of 25,345 members

The 2009 Annual Convention was held in East Windsor, Connecticut September 21-22 with a theme of “Recycle – Reuse – Rewards”.

Programs for the meeting included Trash Can Creative – a design program with a designer from each state using recycled materials.

Conservation activity presentations included pop-tops for the Shriners; a skit with Kermit the Frog; How to deal with electronic waster; and a presentation from the New England Wildflower Society on Nasami Farm.

At this meeting, bylaws were revised to bring them in line with the National Garden Clubs, Inc. and changing the rotation for the Annual Meeting and Symposiums so that the states could choose if they wished to hold them back-to-back.

The fall colors of Stratton Mountain Vermont hosted The 2010 Annual Convention on October 18-19 continuing the environmental goals of this Administration with the theme “Going Green”.

A Regional Standard Flower Show “Recycle” was presented with participation by all states.

Julie Messervy gave a presentation on landscape designing while Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont spotlighted their activities on Restoring “blighted” areas, Water Preservation and Environmental Literacy respectively.

Wrapping up the programs for this meeting was the President of the New England Tropical Conservancy who spoke on rain gardens.

Symposiums were held in New Hampshire and Maine, Flower Show Schools in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont and Environmental Education Schools in Maine and Massachusetts.

Accomplishments for this Administration included:

The support and work toward all states attaining 501(c)3 status.

New Awards established: The New England Wildflower Society Award, Excellence in Teamwork Award and The National Gardening Association Award.

A new Civic Development Grant – The Virginia Thurston Civic Development Grant.

Modification of the New England Unified Project to the New England Regional Award for the best work done for the NGC President’s project.

Creating a new, upgraded website for the Region with a domain name of:
www.NGCNER.org.

Virginia GrandPrè – 2011