



**Arabella N. Dane**  
**37<sup>th</sup> GCFM President**  
**1995-1997**  
**“Cultivating Your Community”**  
**189 clubs – 13,500 members**



Massachusetts garden clubs were actively involved in our towns and cities. More than thirteen thousand strong, we continued to beautify our communities, lead the effort to protect our environment, preserve our heritage, share our gardens, work with young people and elderly, educate our members, and collaborate with other organizations and share similar goals.

During the past two years, 88% of Massachusetts clubs participated in civic projects, which involved planting at traffic islands, town commons, public schools and public buildings, investing approximately \$120,00 per year in these projects. At the beginning of the administration, twelve clubs received PETALS grants for their community projects. In addition to providing funding, these clubs provided countless hours of labor to bring their projects to fruition and create beauty in their towns and cities. Whenever possible, they worked in conjunction with other civic groups, students and interested individuals in their communities. Since the beginning of GCFM, conservation of our natural resources has been a prime project. This administration has focused on “Project Native” which seeks to preserve native species through leadership, education and action.

GCFM and the New England Wild Flower Society cooperated in a project which raised several thousand dollars while building awareness of the *Magnolia virginiana*, an indigenous endangered tree. GCFM also distributed 12,000 of these Magnolia trees and 106,000 other natives trees in support of “Project Native” and the national president’s “Millions of Trees” initiative. Our tree symposium and Operation Wildflower symposium drew capacity attendance. “Project Native” were recognized as important conservation efforts. Awards were received from the Massachusetts Tree Wardens and Foresters, and the New England Wild Flower Society.

A well-attended Arbor Day celebration sponsored by GCFM honored the Friends of the Boston Public Garden. Boston’s Mayor Menino, GCFM representatives as well as city school children participated in a program crowned by the planting of a *Magnolia virginiana* tree on the island in the lagoon of the Boston Public Garden.

GCFM continued to grow with the addition of eight new clubs. It grew in other ways: in technology, with a web page and continued modernization of office equipment; in forming an investment committee which is developing a plan to ensure appropriate income from the organization’s funds; in taking steps to assure the archives are organized, safe and accessible for legitimate use; and in initiating the first in New England National Council of State Garden Clubs’ Environmental School.