



“Elevated Blooms: Celebrating 40 Years at Tower Hill”

AN NGC STANDARD FLOWER SHOW

Presented by Central North District
&
Western & Central South District
of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts, Inc.
at
New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill
11 French Drive, Boylston, MA
508-869-6111 nebg.org

October 23 – October 25, 2026
Friday & Saturday 10 am – 5 pm & Sunday 10 am - 4 pm

*Free & Open to the Public
with General Garden admission*

Free for NEBG Members;
Adults \$26 (walk-up), \$24 (advance); \$20-\$22,
Seniors (65+) \$20 (walkup), \$19 (advance)
Child (4-12) \$14 (walk-up), \$12 (advance)
Child (age 3 & under) Free

Member of:

National Garden Clubs, Inc.
New England Garden Clubs, Inc.
Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts, Inc.
Central North District
Western & Central South District

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill

Located on nearly 200-acres in Boylston, MA, New England Botanic Garden, is a year-round public garden operated by the Worcester County Horticultural Society (founded 1842).

Established in 1986 on a former farm, this living museum features diverse gardens, conservatories, and scenic views of the Wachusett Reservoir. It focuses on horticulture education, environmental stewardship and sustainability, and the preservation of an irreplaceable collection of plants.

- *Mission:* To create experiences with plants that inspire people and improve the world.
- *Landscape:* The property includes nearly 200 acres of formal and naturalistic gardens, woodland trails, meadows, and specialized plant collections.
- *Highlights:* Key attractions include the Limonaia and Orangerie (subtropical conservatories), Garden of Inspiration, and heirloom apple orchard.
- *History:* The Society, one of the oldest of its kind in the U.S., moved from its downtown Worcester headquarters to this rural, hilltop location to better showcase the art and science of horticulture.





Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts, Inc. (GCFM) at Tower Hill

The Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts, Inc. (GCFM) has enjoyed a long relationship with New England Botanic Garden. In 1986, when the property opened, John Trexler, the founding director of the site asked if GCFM would be interested in working with him on a flower show. The rest, as they say, is history. The Tower Hill Flower show has been a much-anticipated event for both floral designers and NEBG guests every other year since the late 1980s. It is a labor of love for all involved.

GCFM will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2027. The organization is a 501c3 corporation comprised of over 170 Massachusetts-based garden clubs with a combined membership of over 10,000. The organization is dedicated to helping its member garden clubs as they advance the art of gardening, floral design and the welfare of our environment in their communities.

We hope you enjoy the show as much as we have enjoyed organizing it.

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Committee Chairs

General Chair	Beate Bolen	beatebolen@gmail.com 973-985-3947
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Photography Chair	Shannon Fitzpatrick	smfitzlaw@gmail.com
	Catherine Healy	lafleure55@yahoo.com

General Rules

1. "Elevated Blooms - Celebrating 40 Years at Tower Hill" is an NGC Standard Flower Show. This Flower Show conforms to the standards established by National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC). The Handbook for Flower Shows (HB), as updated with revisions posted on the NGC website, is the authority for all issues not covered by the schedule, which is the "Law of the Show". An updated copy The Handbook for Flower Shows may be downloaded from the NGC website at www.gardenclub.org.
2. Division I-Design is open to any NGC Garden Club member.
3. Division II - Horticulture is open to any amateur gardener.
4. Division III - Educational Exhibits are open to any individual or organization.
5. Entry cards are available from the General Chair, Beate Bolen, beatebolen@gmail.com and Horticulture Chair, Betsy Szymczak, szymczakb@gmail.com.
6. Advanced registration for the Design Division is required with the design Entries Chairman by September 25, 2026. Register here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C044AAAAC29AAF5C16-63944520-elevated#/> Registration is not complete until confirmed with Design Entry Chairman.
7. Entry dates:
 - a. Horticulture & Education -Wednesday, Oct. 21, 3:00 - 5:00 PM and Thursday, Oct. 22, 7:30 - 9:30 AM
 - b. Design: Thursday, Oct. 22, 7:30 - 9:30 AM

8. Judging begins: Thursday, Oct. 22, 11:30 AM
9. Removal date: Sunday, Oct. 25, 4:00 - 5:00 PM or Monday, Oct. 26, 9:00 - 10:00 AM
10. An Exhibitor's meeting will be held via Zoom on Thursday, October 1, 2026, at 7:00 PM
11. There must be an emphasis on FRESH plant material.
12. No artificial plant material is permitted in any division.
13. The Classification Chairs for each Division check exhibits for conformity to the schedule prior to judging. Final determination for conformance is the judges' responsibility.
14. The General and Classification Chairs for each division are available during judging for possible consultation. They, along with the judges and clerks, are the only personnel allowed on the floor during judging.
15. The decisions of the judges are final. Awards may be withheld if not merited.
16. Each exhibitor is limited to one entry per class except in the Horticulture Division.
17. Wild collected plants of species listed by the Massachusetts Heritage Program may not be used. Cultivated plant material appearing on the list are allowed if the exhibitor provides a card noting that it was not wild collected.
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/printable-list-of-endangered-threatened-and-special-concern-species/download>
18. Plants listed on the Massachusetts Dept. of Agricultural Resources Prohibited Plant List may not be exhibited in this flower show. The list can be found at: <https://massnrc.org/mipag/invasive.htm>
19. We will strive to assure the safety of all items after placement but are not responsible for any loss or damage to the exhibits.

Awards Being Offered in the Show

The NGC Standard System of Awarding will be used in all divisions (*Handbook for Flower Shows*, Chapter 5.)

- Only one first (blue) ribbon per class or subclass. Must score 90 or above.
- Only one second (red) ribbon per class or subclass. Must score 85 or above.
- Only one third (yellow) ribbon per class or subclass. Must score 80 or above.
- One or more Honorable Mention (white) as merited. Must score 75 or above.
- Note: Multiple 90+ awards may be given in each class if warranted.

Top Exhibitor Awards

Top Exhibitor Awards must be blue ribbon winners scoring 95 or above.

Design Awards For complete requirements, refer to the *Handbook of Flower Shows*, Chapter 5. Ps.42-43

The Award of Design Excellence is offered to the highest scoring blue ribbon exhibit scoring 95 or above in Division I - Design. It is a rosette of gold ribbons.

The Designer's Choice Award is offered to the highest scoring blue ribbon exhibit scoring 95 or above in Section A Classes 1-3 and Section B, Classes 4-6. One award available per Section Two (2) awards are available. It is a rosette of purple ribbons.

The Table Artistry Award is offered to the highest scoring blue ribbon exhibit scoring 95 or above in Section C, Classes 7-9. It is a rosette of burgundy ribbons.

The Petite Award is offered to the highest scoring blue ribbon exhibit scoring 95 or above in Section D, Classes 10-12. It is a small rosette of blue and white ribbons.

Scale of Points for Design

Conformance to type	7
Conformance to schedule requirements	7
Design Principles	48
Selection of Components	8
Organization of Components	8
Expression	8
Distinction: marked superiority in all respects	<u>14</u>
	100

Scale of Points "Handbook for Flower Shows (Hb), Chapter 7.

Horticulture Awards For complete requirements, refer to the *Handbook for Flower Shows*, Chapter 5. Pg. 40-41

The Award of Horticultural Excellence is offered to the highest scoring blue ribbon exhibit scoring 95 or above in Division II - Horticulture. It is a rosette of green, blue and orange ribbons.

The Award of Merit is offered to the highest scoring blue ribbon exhibit scoring 95 or above in Section A, Classes 1-4, Section B, Classes 5-9, and Section C, Classes 10-13. One award available per Section. Three (3) awards are available. It is a rosette of orange ribbons.

The Arboreal Award is offered to the highest scoring blue ribbon exhibit scoring 95 or above in Section D, Classes 14-17 and Section E, Classes 18 - 21. Two (2) awards are available. It is a rosette of green ribbons.

The Grower's Choice Award is offered to the highest scoring blue ribbon exhibit scoring 95 or above in Section F, Classes 22-24 and Section G, Classes 25 - 28 are eligible. One award is available per Section. Two (2) awards are available. It is a rosette of dark green ribbons.

Education Award For complete requirements, refer to the *Handbook for Flower Shows*, Chapter 5. Pg. 43

The Educational Top Exhibitor Award is offered to the blue-ribbon exhibit scoring 95 or above in Division III. It is a rosette of brown and white ribbons. One award is available. Exhibits 1-3 are eligible.

Recognition Awards

Award of Appreciation is offered, by the show committee, for non-judged exhibits. It is a rosette of orchid ribbons.



Division I – Design Division Rules

1. The NGC Design Policies/Rules are printed in the *Handbook For Flower Shows (Hb)*, Chapter 7. Exhibiting in the Design Division, NGC Policies and Guidelines..
2. Advance registration with the design Entries Chairman is required by September 25, 2026. Register here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C044AAAAC29AAF5C16-63944520-elevated#/> Registration is not complete until confirmed with Design Entry Chairman.
3. Plant material and non-plant material permitted and not permitted in the Design Division are printed in the *Handbook For Flower Shows (Hb)*, Chapter 7.
4. All plant material used in the design must be identified by common and/or scientific name, provided by the exhibitor and included with the entry tag.
5. The exhibitor is required to conform to the stated description and limitations of the Design Type if named in the class.
6. Rules for Design Types, Advanced Design Types, Table Designs and Table appointments are printed in the *Handbook For Flower Shows (Hb)*, Chapter 7.
7. Each exhibit is to be the work of a single Exhibitor and may be completed at home or in the show area.
8. Entries are open to any National Garden Club members. Exhibitor may enter as many classes as desired, but only one exhibit per class. Exhibits may be refreshed during regular show hours.
9. On entry day, the final list of plant material must be submitted to the Design Classification Chairman. When the design is completed, it must be passed before the Exhibitor leaves the show area by the Design Entry Chairman, who checks for conformance to the schedule.
10. Plant material need not have been grown by the exhibitor.
11. Unless otherwise noted, underlayment permitted in all classes except Petite (Classes 10, 11, and 12) and may hang down over the sides.

12. Fresh plant material may not be treated in any manner. Dried plant material may be treated.
13. Statements of Intent provided by the exhibitor are not permitted unless otherwise noted in the class description.
14. Designers are on their honor that the design being entered has not been previously entered or judged in an NGC Flower Show.
15. An Exhibitor's meeting will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, October 1, 2026 at 7:00 PM

Division I - Design
" Cultivating History: Forty Years of Beauty"
(Eligible for Award of Design Excellence)

Section A: "Strolling through the Garden" (4 entries per class)

Eligible for Designer's Choice Award

Class 1: "Secret Garden" (A formal garden featuring a reflection pool, fountain, and pergola)

An Underwater Creative Design, in which some or all plant materials and components are submerged in a clear container filled with water. Staged on a white pedestal. Top 16" square x 42" high, backed by cream walls.

Class 2: "Cottage Garden" (Features dense plantings and traditional, informal designs to create an intimate, inviting space)

An American Traditional Line Mass design, using fresh and/or dried plant material, Staged on a white pedestal. Top 16" square x 36" high, backed by cream walls

Class 3: "The Orangerie" (features tropical, citrus, and rare plants)

A Creative Design, emphasizing vertical thrust, using fresh and/or dried plant material, Staged on a white pedestal. Top 14" square x 36" high in front of 6' high white divider

Section B: "Celebrations Throughout This Year" (4 entries per class)

Eligible for the Designer's Choice Award

Class 4: "Night Lights"

An Illuminary Design. A creative design incorporating light (must be battery powered). Staged on a white pedestal. Top 16" square x 36" high, backed by a brick wall.

Class 5: "Elevated" (An Orchid Exhibition)

A Panel Design. Orchids optional. Staged on a white pedestal. Top 14" square x 36" high, backed by a brick wall.

Class 6: "Disco Fever" (Music in Bloom)

A Framed Spatial Design organized as a single unit, suspended in a frame, or frame-like structure created by the designer. No actual movement is permitted, but motion is implied. Height and width of the design are defined by the frame, but design may exceed depth of the frame. Staged on a white pedestal. Top 16" square x 42" high, backed by cream colored wall.

Section C “Limonaia” (Lemon House) (Features camellias and date palms, offering a cooler, Mediterranean environment) (4 entries per class)

Eligible for the Table Artistry Award

Class 7 “Rooted in Love”

A Novice Class. A Semi-formal Table. An intimate, romantic dinner for two staged on a round table, 36” diameter x 29” high, backed by windows. The table is covered with a white floor length tablecloth provided by the committee. Cloth overlay permitted, may extend over the sides but not touch the floor. Please do not include flatware. Open to a novice who has not won a Blue Ribbon in an NGC flower show.

Class 8 “Citrus and Spice”

A late afternoon Tea Tray for One. Please do not include flatware. Staged on a round white pedestal, 21” diameter x 36” high, backed by a cream wall.

Class 9 “Lemons & Limoncello”

An Informal cocktail table for two. Please do not include flatware. Staged on a round white pedestal, 30” diameter x 36” high, backed by a brick wall.



Section D “The Ramble” (an immersive garden designed for children and families). (Four entries per class)

Eligible for the Petite Award

Class 10 “Curiosity Cottage” (A whimsical wooden playhouse for imaginative play)

A Petite design, using fresh and/or dried plant material. No dimension greater than 12”. Committee will provide a white “L” shaped 14” x 14” underlay and backdrop, on a 42” high shelf. Color may be added.

Class 11: “Stones in the Stumpery”

A Petite Design, using fresh and/or dried plant material, and including one or more stones. No dimension greater than 8”. Committee will provide a white “L” shaped 10” x 10” underlay and backdrop, on a 42” high shelf. Color may be added.

Class 12: “Tunneling Through the Ramble”

A Petite Design, using fresh and/or dried plant material and including one or more arches. No dimension greater than 5”. Committee will provide a white “L” shaped 7” x 7” underlay and backdrop, on a 48” high shelf. Color may be added.



Division II - Horticulture Division Rules

1. The NGC Horticulture Exhibit Policies are printed in the *Handbook for Flower Shows*, Chapter 6, "Exhibiting in the Horticulture Division."
2. The rules for a single species cut or container grown specimen are listed in the *Handbook for Flower Shows* or its supplement *Horticulture Exhibiting and Judging*.
3. In order to receive an NGC Top Award, the exhibitor must identify his/her entry by its binomial name or currently accepted scientific designation (Consult *Handbook for Flower Shows*.) Exhibiting in the Horticulture Division, Chapter 6. Common names may be added in parentheses.
4. Entry cards are available at the show or in advance from the General Chair Beate Bolen, beatebolen@gmail.com and/or the Horticulture Entry Chair, Betsy Szymczak, szymczakb@gmail.com.
5. Entry cards are to be filled out in advance, if possible, using return address labels, pencil or waterproof ink. If handwritten, the scientific or binomial name must be underlined. If typed, it must be italicized. (Refer to the *Handbook for Flower Shows*, Chapter 6 for a correctly filled out entry card.)
6. Exhibitors may have more than one entry per class if each is a different species, variety, type, cultivar, or color.
7. Cut specimens should not have foliage below the water line except for gladiolus.
8. If a plant is considered a flowering plant, it should be exhibited as a flowering specimen. Foliage plants may flower but should be exhibited as foliage plants if they are grown for their leaves.

9. Specimens with a class designation in the schedule may not be entered in the “Any Other Worthy” class.
10. All plant material must be fresh and in the possession of the exhibitor for the appropriate number of days: Annuals, perennials, 90 days; Combination plantings, 6 weeks growing together; Arboreal, 6 months.
11. Committee will provide clean, clear, colorless glass containers, and plastic or cotton wedging if needed for each cut exhibit in Sections A, B, and C unless otherwise noted. Exhibitors may provide their own clean, clear, colorless glass containers.
12. Pebbles or glass marbles may be used as ballast for top-heavy specimens to improve stability. These weights must not obscure the stem.
13. All tables in Division II Horticulture will be covered with burlap tablecloths provided by the Committee.
14. The Horticulture Classification Chair and/or General Show Chair have the authority to subdivide classes by color, form, size, cultivar, variety or other distinguishing characteristics.
15. The Classification Chair must initial all entries before placement.
16. The Scales of Points for Horticulture are located in Chapter 14 of the *Handbook for Flower Shows*.

Division II: Horticulture
**“Tower Hill Treasures: A Celebration of
New England Horticulture”**

(Eligible for Award of Horticultural Excellence)

Section A “Bloom at the Peak”

(Eligible for Award of Merit)

Annual in New England, grown for Flowers, cut specimen,
one stem

Class 1 *Celosia argentea* (Celosia) -Single stem, no
side shoots

Class 2 *Dahlia* - Single disbudded bloom with one set
of leaves

Class 3 *Tagetes* (Marigold) -Single stem, three (3)
leaves required, no side shoots

Class 4 Any Other Worthy Specimen

Section B “Towering Blooms”

(Eligible for Award of Merit)

Flowering perennial, cut specimen, one stem

Class 5: *Chrysanthemum* - Single, disbudded
bloom, one flower per stem, with at least
three leaves, or as a spray with many
flowers per stem

Class 6: *Sedum* (Stonecrop)

Class 7: *Solidago* (Goldenrod)

Class 8: *Symphotrichum* (Aster)

Class 9: Any Other Worthy Specimen

Section C “Towering Aromas”

(Eligible for Award of Merit)

Herbs – one cut stem

Class 10: *Rosmarinus officinalis* (rosemary)

Class 11: *Salvia officinalis* (sage)

Class 12: *Thymus* (thyme)

Class 13: Any Other Worthy Specimen

Section D “Persistent Beauty”

(Eligible for Arboreal Award)

Broadleaf evergreens: (single branch, no more than 30” in length, including an apical tip, central leader and several nodes) displayed in the exhibitors’ own clear glass container.

Class 14: *Ilex* (Holly)

Class 15: *Leucothoe*

Class 16: *Rhododendron*

Class 17: Any Other Worthy Specimen

Section E “Voices of the Woodland”

(Eligible for Arboreal Award)

Conifers: (single branch, no more than 30” in length, including an apical tip, central leader and several nodes) displayed laid on the table top.

Class 18: *Abies* (Fir)

Class 19: *Picea* (Spruce)

Class 20: *Pinus* (Pine)

Class 21: Any Other Worthy Specimen

Section F “Potted Paradise”

(Eligible for Grower’s Choice Award)

Combination Plantings; container not to exceed 12” diameter. A grouping of three or more botanically different plants with similar cultural requirements. Exhibitor provides the container and must provide a diagram of plant placement on the materials card.

Class 22: Dish Garden -miniature landscape in a low shallow container- maximum 6” deep

Class 23: Planter - a grouping of plants in an indoor or outdoor container

Class 24: Terrarium

Section G “Pinnacle & Pot: A Hilltop Celebration”

(Eligible for Grower’s Choice Award)

Container grown plants – single species grown in container; indoor/outdoor, container not to exceed 10” diameter.

Class 25: Begonia

Class 26: Cactus/ Succulent

Class 27: Orchid

Class 28: Any Other Worthy Specimen





Division III - Education Rules

1. Education Exhibits may be the work of more than one individual or organization unless a Student Judge, or an Accredited Judge is seeking exhibiting credit for preparing an education exhibit.
2. An exhibit must occupy a minimum of 18 sq. ft. of surface area.
3. Some plant material is required in each exhibit.
4. The committee will provide a table for each exhibit measuring 8' x 30." It will be covered with a burlap tablecloth provided by the committee.
5. Advanced registration with the Education Entries Chair, Vana Nesor, vana.nesor@gmail.com is required by September 25, 2026
6. The Scale of Points for Education Exhibits is listed in the Handbook for Flower Shows, Chapter 14.

Division III: Education
"Rooted in Splendor:
A Journey Through
New England Botanic Garden"

(Eligible for Educational Top Exhibitor Award)

Highlighting the curated collections, stunning hilltop views, and educational mission, featuring the blend of horticulture, nature, and design in scenic New England Botanic Garden

Exhibit 1 "Outstanding Herb Friends for the NEBG Vegetable Garden"

Wonderful herb companion plants that would enhance any Vegetable Garden are often showcased at the NEBG and add so much by attracting beneficial pollinators, deterring certain pests, and adding fragrance, beauty, and culinary value.

Exhibit 2 "What do Apple Detectives do?"

Why and how do passionate orchardists and volunteers search tirelessly for clues to track down forgotten 19th-century apple trees and save them in the NEBG's Apple Orchard Garden.

***We wish to acknowledge the help and support
of
New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill
and the entire Staff***



***A special thank you to Karen Syner, of
Springfield MA for our beautiful cover art***



***We are grateful to the many volunteers whose
creativity, talent, time, and hard work
created this beautiful show.***