



Suffield Garden Club

75th Anniversary

1934 - 2009

Dedication

On our 75th anniversary, we wish to honor all of our past and present members. Over the years, so many have committed their time while finding great camaraderie mingled with a sense of accomplishment. May the Suffield Garden Club flourish for many years to come.

The Beginning

Suffield Garden Club PO Box 164 Suffield CT 06078-0164

www.suffieldgardenclub.org

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Compiled by the History Committee: Marilyn Wilson, Peggy Robards & Joyce Zien

On June 25, 1934, a group of Suffield women held a meeting for the purpose of organizing a Garden Club at the home of Mrs. William F. Ladd. In July 1934, the Suffield Garden Club was organized, officers were elected, and a constitution was adopted.

Organizers

Mrs. Hugh M. Alcorn
Mrs. H. Meade Alcorn, Jr
Mrs. Hugh G. Barclay
Mrs. U. Hayden Brockway
Mrs. Henry M. Clarke, Jr.
Mrs. William M. Cooper
Mrs. Luther N. Curtis
Mrs. Charles S. Fuller
Mrs. Fred Hovey
Mrs. Leon M. Hilditch
Mrs. Frank E. Healy
Mrs. Hiram Jones

Mrs. Ernest I. Kearns
Mrs. Charles F. Kurvin
Mrs. William F. Ladd
Mrs. William H. Nelson
Mrs. William H. Paine
Mrs. Edward Perkins
Mrs. Leslie Pomeroy
Mrs. William J. Pye
Mrs. Bernard L. Sutton
Mrs. William Trafford
Mrs. William Upson

Charter Members

Mrs. Howard Alcorn
Mrs. Bernhard J. Ahrens
Mrs. Arthur G. Bissell
Mrs. Charles Bissell
Mrs. Leavitt Bissell
Mrs. David Brockett
Miss Mary Burnap
Miss Alexina Burgess
Mrs. E. J. Claudell
Mrs. Thomas Couch
Mrs. H.H. Hopkins
Mrs. Charles Haskins

Mrs. John Hebbard
Mrs. George Harmon
Mrs. Karl C. Kulle
Mrs. Clemente Mather
Mrs. Francis Mather
Miss Grace Montgomery
Mrs. George Montgomery
Mrs. Ray Moran
Miss Christine Nelson
Mrs. Clinton Pomeroy
Mrs. F. G. Pomeroy
Mrs. E. H. Richmond

The 1930s

In 1936, members from Windsor Locks, Springfield, and East Hartford were included. The 1939-40 membership also included five men: Arthur Bissell, Charles Bissell, Kenneth Scott, Luther Spence and John Van Horn. By 1937 the club had 104 members, and as many as 135 by 1942. We have always been a large club and still boast 114 members.

We sometimes feel overwhelmed with our periodic flower shows and garden tours. Our early founders had at least one show and/or tour every year. The first flower show was held from 2:00-9:00 p.m. allowing

working townspeople to attend. In 1940, the year opened with a very successful flower show in the high school auditorium— said to be one of the best small flower shows in the country.



1959 Flower Show in Hatheway House Barn

Kenneth Scott was instrumental in preparing the membership for flower shows and his own entries won top prizes. In November and December of 1939, Mr. Scott gave talks on use of dried grasses, weeds, seed pods, and berries, etc., in winter bouquets. Mr. Scott suggested, “a seeing eye for discovering beauty in common things is a first requisite.” In the minutes, the secretary wrote, “Mr. Scott awakened us to the beauty of winter woods and fields.”

Members took their luncheons and field trips very seriously. Distance was never a problem. The 1936 annual luncheon was at the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, Mass. In 1938, they took trips to Boston and New York flower shows. The newly formed transportation committee was very busy.

Our Club joined the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut on November 2, 1936.

The original purpose:

The object of the Club shall be to stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening among amateurs: to aid in the protection of native trees, plants and birds: and to encourage civic planting.

Our founders got right to work with their civic projects. In 1939, member and horticultural expert, Mrs. Hayden Brockway, prepared a plan for a community garden at the Gay Manse on North Main Street, soon to be occupied by the head of "Suffield School." The second civic plan and planting was at our town library. Many tree varieties were planted along town streets. Mapleton Avenue got its name from the maple trees that were placed there. In 1940, the first dogwoods were planted on Main Street. We currently maintain over 130 dogwood trees within the town center.

The War Years

The club was certainly impacted by the unstable times of the war years. No yearbook was put out in 1943. Conditions were so uncertain, it was impossible to plan so far in advance. Our club gave much support to the local chapter of the Red Cross. Mrs. Howard Alcorn and her committee held a benefit food sale for the Red Cross.

"We have found out from the ration board that we may have a commercial ration supply of sugar, etc., which will be distributed to members who will bake for this food sale."

Mrs. Hugh Alcorn held a plant sale at her gardens to benefit the Red Cross. The club sent cut flowers to the American Red Cross Station Hospital at Bradley Field (now Bradley International Airport) on a regular basis. The members grew flowers specifically for this purpose.

Most importantly, the members contributed and raised money toward planting and furnishing a quadrangle at the Bradley Field base Hospital as an outdoor recreation space for convalescing soldiers. Members donated Christmas gifts and furnished many pin-up lamps, bed trays and even cigarettes for the soldiers.

Our war efforts continued. The club purchased a \$100 war bond and participated in a program to help Europe feed itself by contributing money toward the purchase of vegetable seeds to be sent overseas.

Jesse Fowler Smith, Suffield horticulturist, was made an honorary member in 1944. Jesse is remembered for his outstanding contribution, “Suffield’s Floral Wealth,” a herbarium presented to the High School in 1958. It contained more than 1,036 species of Suffield ferns and flowering plants. He also documented notable Suffield trees. The town farm was named the “Jesse Fowler Smith Forest” in his honor.



Rose Austin and Joan Bunting

The 1950s

Helpful Hints began to appear in the yearbook during 1952-53.

JUNE: Plant all fast growing annuals now. Late in the month, remove foliage that has died down from bulbs. Spray roses with an all-purpose spray once a week, fertilize once a month.

JULY: Enthusiasm begins to wane! Keep the weeds down and water when needed, you will be glad you did.

AUGUST: Vacation Time! If you've been a good girl 'til now, things won't look too bad when you come back. Pinch late blooming mums before you go. Have a good time!

In an effort to promote enthusiasm and interest in club work, a point system was developed and published in the 1953-54 yearbook.

Merit System

Points are awarded as follows. However, from time to time, a special project may arise that will warrant the awarding of points.

President, 25; other officers, 20
Project Chairman, 25; Co-chairmen, 20
Standing committee, 20
Monthly Chairman, 10
Committee Chairman, 20
Committee member, 10
Hostess, if present, 5
Opening home, 10
Enter Competition, 10
Win=10; 2nd=5; 3rd=3
Enter out of town show, 15
Win=15; 2nd=10; 3rd=5; 4th=3
New idea adopted by the club, 15

The Vice President is responsible for the recording of points. You may check with her to find out how many credits you receive.

The point system is no longer used. Annually, members now must choose specific civic projects to support with their time and talents.

Hatheway House Garden: 1960s & Beyond

The Club's floral garden project at what is now known as the Phelps-Hatheway House has become one of our oldest devotions.

1962. The handsome 18th century Hatheway House is donated to the Antiquarian and Landmark Society (now Connecticut Landmarks).
- 1963 Under Val Gallivan's presidency, Suffield Garden Club members ask to take on as a civic project the restoration and maintenance of the gardens on the south lawn. Doris Leete becomes chairwoman of the project.
1964. Mary Edwards, well-known Hartford landscape architect, is selected to design a garden. Inspired by the historic wallpaper in the house, she chooses a combination of early Dutch formality and late 18th century free design used in England. The "feel" of the mansion's original French hand-blocked wallpaper is considered. Featured are to be the beautiful pink and white 19th century peonies already at the house that are now over 145 years old! Money is raised for the project through many generous donations by club members and townspeople, as well as by a club-sponsored house tour.
- 1965 Planting begins with trees and shrubs. One hundred dozen bulbs are planted. Perennials are planted as funds allow. Doris Leete donates large sums throughout.
- 1967 The members who worked in the garden cheerfully call themselves the "*Hoe and Hose Workers—Blue Jean Contingent.*"
- 1982 Two colonial benches, reproductions of those used in Williamsburg, are added.
- 1986 Brick edging is installed in memory of Val Gallivan. Cost is more than \$4000.
- 1989 Memorial Garden is installed by Suffield resident Tom Deupree. Garden Club members continue planting and maintaining the beds weekly from spring to fall. The workers call themselves the "*Tuesday Morning Girls.*"
- 1993 Suffield Garden Club donates \$10,000 toward the restoration of the "summer house" in memory of Val Gallivan and Doris Leete, and \$900 for a new storage shed.



Doris Leete and Patti Ahrens in the Hatheway Garden

Civic Engagement & Contributions

The community garden of 1939 launched a tradition of dedicated civic engagement by the Club. The Main Street dogwood project of 1940 continues. We regularly undertake special projects at Kent Memorial Library and other locations in town. New projects have been added over the years that continue to this day—

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|------------------|---|
| 1960-61 | Library Flowers |
| 1961-62 | Junior Gardeners |
| 1963-64 | Hatheway House Garden |
| 1964-65 | Arbor Day Program |
| 1976-77 | Memorial Fund |
| 1983-84 | Bridge Street Island
Garden Therapy |
| 1985-86 | Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day |
| 1996-97 | Town of Suffield Gateway Signs |
| 1999-2000 | Ethel Wilson Memorial Herb Garden (Hatheway House) |
| 2005-06 | South Main Street Island
Eastern Bluebird Nest Box Program |

In 1976 the Memorial Fund was established as a method by which members and friends could memorialize those they wished to honor. The fund supports Arbor Day, and Suffield High School senior scholarships and awards.

Since 1936 when SGC joined the State Federation, we have donated to many Federation-sponsored projects at the State and National levels. Our latest contribution, in honor of our 75th anniversary, is to the fund for the Children's Rooftop Garden at the new Connecticut Science Center in Hartford.

We make annual donations to the Connecticut Arboretum, Connecticut Horticultural Society and New England Wild Flower Society. Locally, the club donates to the Suffield Land Conservancy and Suffield Chamber of Commerce.



Norma Cobb and Barbara Coffin holding the 50th anniversary needlepoint made by members and won at raffle by Virginia Hilyard.

We look forward to carrying on the traditions
entrusted to us by the
Suffield Garden Club Organizers.

The path has been trod and we are proud to
continue the journey!

SGC... Over the Years

Then

Board of Management

Dues: \$1

Guest Dues: 25 cents

Meeting Time: 2:30 p.m.

Box Lunches

Meeting Year: Feb. – Oct.

Annual Meeting: Nov.

Meeting Site: Homes

Yrbk. Listing: “Mrs. Russell Cobb”

Now

Board of Directors

Dues: \$25

Guest Dues: \$5

Meeting Time: 11:45 a.m.

Light Luncheon

Meeting Year: Oct. – May

Annual Meeting: June

Meeting Site: 2nd Baptist Church

Yrbk. Listing: “Norma Cobb”

Monthly Programs

- 1937-38** Bring Your Problems
1940-41 Raising and Canning Vegetables
Making Corsages
1941-42 Amateur Gardening in a Pit and Lean-to Greenhouse
1944-45 Home Canned Foods
Salad Demonstration
1947-48 Heirlooms and Hobbies
Book Reviews
1949-50 Flower Arrangements Suitable for the Church
1955-56 Mr. and Mrs. Night—Landscape Construction
1956-57 Easy Gardening for Busy Housewives
1957-58 Hat Contest
1961-62 Does Suffield Need a Historical Zone?
Driftwood Compositions for Distinction and Fun
1974-75 Sick Plant Clinic
What Makes a Garden Great?
Gardening Under Artificial Lights
1980-81 Bubble Bowl Underwater Arrangements
1987-88 Microwave Cooking Techniques