

2015-2016 Annual Report of the Bath Garden Club

Elizabeth Lakeman, President

Our Yearbook, inspired by the theme “Celebrating Women Who Love Gardening”, charted our direction for a very busy year. Designed by Pam Allen, it not only informed members of projects and programs, but presented fascinating insights into highly regarded women in landscape design and horticulture; while providing essential member contact information in an artfully designed format.

Our Youth Activities Committee worked with preschoolers to plant marigolds, viewed the Children’s Garden, enjoyed a garden party and worked with first graders to pot marigolds while discussing plant structure, soil, plant food, water and sunshine; and planted sunflower seeds whose plants were used in the fall by teachers in various projects.

The Club’s Campership funds, dispersed annually to financially support children’s experiences with gardening and the environment were awarded to RSU 1. To date, \$500 in scholarships have been awarded for the annual seventh grade trip to the Ferry Beach Ecology School in Saco, Maine. The Committee will meet in late April 2016 to allocate the remaining \$1,500 for disbursement to the LOCAL Garden (which has transitioned from RSU 1 to the Kennebec Estuary Land Trust), Merrymeeting Audubon Society and Pine Tree Camps.

In June, we celebrated our annual meeting with a luncheon at the Maine Maritime Museum. This venue provides an opportunity to visit with friends while dining on a wonderful meal in a lovely setting.

The spring and summer found us planting and maintaining the Butterfly Garden in the Library Park, Bath as well as the historic Donnell House garden at the Maine Maritime Museum. The Civic Beautification Committee also filled the six Leeman Highway boxes with spring/summer annuals, switching to holiday greens and winterberries in late fall.

During the summer months, our Club members were busy with the maintenance of gardens, flower boxes and markers throughout the community. July saw us in the gardens at the incoming president’s house; while August found us touring the landscape of Pineland Farms.

The Conservation Committee was busy maintaining the identification signage at Thorne’s Head Trail and installing informational signage for the bog and pasture pines.

In the fall, our Club formed a partnership with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension (Androscoggin-Sagadahoc chapters)/Master Gardener Volunteers to

cultivate horticulture skills, creativity, landscape design skills, environmental stewardship, leadership development, legacy to youth and future generations, and commitment to educating and enhancing our community. Through this partnership we have added an additional project of installing and planting a 20'x40' vegetable bed for the Plant Home, an assisted living facility on the banks of the Kennebec River in Bath, as well as moving a flower bed for cut flowers to make it walker and wheelchair-accessible, planting bulbs in the fall, cutting brush and pruning apple trees there. We received a \$400 grant in April through the Natural Resources Council for this project. The gardens at the Oliver House, a home for at-risk teens and young adults, are managed by our Garden Therapy Committee, too, for which they were awarded over \$430 in vegetable, herb and flower seeds based on their continuing and outstanding work there by High Mowing Seeds, a 100% certified organic, non-GMO project verified seed company based in Wolcott, Vermont. They will be featured in an upcoming catalog and on their website.

Our pattern of community involvement continued with the popular and highly successful November meeting designing over 90 baskets of holiday greens distributed through the Meals-on-Wheels program, which was recognized by Senator Linda Baker (Senate District 23).

The Candy Cane Train, a fundraiser for the Tri County Literacy Program, received support from the Bath Garden Club in December. Dedicated members braved the cold winds off the Kennebec River to decorate the train platform with holiday greens, festive decorations and lights to create a special entrance on a magical train ride. Later in the month we celebrated the holidays with our annual coffee, as we recognized new members and past presidents in attendance. During the celebration, members donated over \$700 to provide food assistance to families in need in the Bath area.

Heading into spring, we revised our Membership Renewal form to give members an annual choice of committee assignments. We have been busy planning the yearly Plant Sale to be held May 14th at the Library Park in Bath. This event, our major fundraiser, has historically provided over 2,000 perennials, annuals and herbs; as well as baked goods and the sale of garden treasures. We also continue our partnership with the Sagadahoc Preservation, Inc. providing fresh flower arrangements for the houses on the Day's Ferry and Woolwich house and garden tour, scheduled for June 21st. In addition, we are planning a Festival of Greens to herald the arrival of the 2016 holiday season. I am delighted to report that we have added 9 new members this past year as we continue to celebrate women who love to garden.