

## **Farmington Garden Club: Seventy-five years of creativity and service**

**By Diane Tucker, FGC Member**

Many people are unaware that the Farmington Garden Club maintains the many “pocket parks” around town. Perennial and annual plants adorn the intersections of numerous streets, giving both residents and passersby alike the opportunity to enjoy seasonally appropriate gardens the year long. You may see tiny armies of gardeners at street intersections at intervals throughout the year; caring for plants, planting new ones and undertaking to keep their plots watered.

Generally, the founding principle of garden clubs is to study and promote horticulture. The Farmington Garden Club’s worthy object at its founding was “to study and promote interest in Horticulture”, but during the 75 years since the start it has literally branched out to become an essential factor in the quality of life of Farmington. You might say that FGC has in a sense, become the face of Farmington. Every corner of the town has been the object of its generosity and talent.

From the very first, a sense of civic responsibility permeated the club goals. Early members supported the war effort by hosting canning competitions and selling war bonds and defense stamps, sending seeds to Britain and of course, planting Victory Gardens.

Closer to home among the many projects undertaken by the organization was providing a shelf of gardening books for the library. Advice was sought from the FGC by the Town of Farmington as to what trees should be planted along Farmington roadsides.

Other projects have included the publication of an open space map and scheduled walks on hiking trails around town, founding sponsor of the DiPietro Bridge flower baskets and kissing balls beautification, creation and presentation of floral baskets for the elderly twice yearly in conjunction with Meals on Wheels and the presentation of Civic awards to businesses who create exemplary landscapes. The Club also provides a \$1000 scholarship to a Farmington High School graduating senior. But, perhaps the most visible of the FGC’s long-standing projects is the Farmington Village Green. Given to the Town of Farmington by Sarah Porter in 1901 the Green has been maintained and improved by the Farmington Garden Club for the better part of sixty years. Every year since 1950 the records of the garden club have contained notations like, “Laurel bushes and bulbs were planted on the Green, myrtle in the triangle”, “Five hundred

bulbs were planted on the Village Green...weeded and cleaned up the Green....” Year after year.

This year is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Farmington Garden Club, and their plans in celebration are ambitious and exciting. The weekend of June 10-11 there will be a spectacular garden tour entitled “Outdoor Celebrations”, which will feature eight private gardens that will open to the public from 10 am to 4 pm. The last FGC garden tour was in 2004. Many of the gardens have never before been open to the public, and others have rarely been shown. There will be an exciting boutique and collectible plant sale. The proceeds will benefit the Village Green so that when the Gateway Project at Route 4 and Route 10 is done, the Green can be beautified and integrated into the newly designed and improved Village center area.

On June 9, a preview party will be held at Farmington Gardens for \$75 per person from 6 to 8 pm for those wishing to get a sneak peak, enjoy wonderful food and congratulate the fine gardeners whose work will be showcased. A silent auction will be held with items of all kinds, garden-related and non-gardening alike.

Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the gate and will be available to numerous locations including Hill-Stead Museum, Monarch Jewelers, Maximum Beverage, The Stanley Whitman House, Riverside Nursery and Winterberry Gardens.

Open gardens include 16 and 148 Main Street, 72 Garden Street, 354 & 405 Old Mountain Road, 3 Norfolk Gardens, 4 Townsend Road and 5 Brighton Way. The gardens on tour were chosen because they have special outdoor living spaces that exemplify our theme—“Outdoor Celebrations”. Homeowners will have garden and patio spaces set for outdoor entertaining, relaxation or family enjoyment. Some gardens are maintained by homeowners, thus giving our visitors an idea of what they can do themselves. Others are professionally maintained for the WOW factor.

The Farmington Garden Club meets monthly. Typical programs include speakers on diverse topics. Over the last year or so, programs have included topics like Pruning, Where do Baby Orchids Come From, Fertilizing and many others. Visitors are welcome and encouraged to attend meetings, which usually begin with a social period. For more information, please see our website [www.farmingtongardenclub.org](http://www.farmingtongardenclub.org) or call 860.677.4807.