



MASSACHUSETTS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

The Spring Flower Show Research Aid

1871-2019

Between 1871 and 2008, the Society produced 137 Spring Flower Shows that were the largest and most important horticultural events in the country. This Research Aid lists information about those exhibitions.

The Society was established in 1829 for "the purpose of encouraging and improving the science and practice of Horticulture." To support this mission, the Society's By-Laws provided for exhibitions with awards. In June 1829, the month of its incorporation, the Society began holding weekly exhibitions on Saturdays and a large Annual Exhibition in September. The exhibitions featured fruits, vegetables, ornamental plants, arrangements and cut flowers. Awards bestowed at these exhibitions were highly regarded.

By 1871, the weekly exhibitions became more elaborate and complicated to produce. Therefore, several spring exhibitions were combined into a semi-annual exhibition. At first, those exhibitions were held in June, but by 1879 the shows moved to March. As in the Annual Exhibitions, the exhibitions featured fruits, vegetables, ornamental plants, arrangements and cut flowers. As agricultural production moved west and became industrialized in the late 19th century, the main focus of the shows changed to ornamental horticulture and gardens and the annual spring flower show became the Society's major show of the year.

Over time, the length, size and complexity of the Society's shows grew. The shows were "the event" for horticultural organizations, businesses and professionals and provided a venue to network, compete, learn and promote their goods and services. The public eagerly awaited these annual shows that foreshadowed the brilliant spring days ahead and provided a temporary escape from the fickle weather in March. However, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, society and the economy were changing. The Great Recession in 2007 to 2009, increasing costs, reduced revenues and declining attendance caused many flower shows to cease operations, including the Society's. After its reorganization in 2008, the Society participated in the Boston Flower Show produced by the Paragon Group, as an exhibitor and manager of the show's amateur exhibitions, a role that aligned with its mission, and for which the Society was eminently qualified.

The list below provides the date, number of the show, location and the title/theme used to promote the event.

To search use control/f on a PC or command/space bar on a MAC and a search box will appear.

| Date | Year | Show # | Location | Title/Theme |
|-------------|------|--------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| June 20-21 | 1871 | 1 | Second Horticultural Hall | Grand Summer Exhibition |
| June 18-19 | 1872 | 2 | Second Horticultural Hall | Rose Exhibition |
| June 17-18 | 1873 | 3 | Second Horticultural Hall | Annual Rose Exhibition |
| June 17-18 | 1874 | 4 | Second Horticultural Hall | Annual Rose Exhibition |
| June 28 | 1875 | 5 | Second Horticultural Hall | Annual Rose Exhibition |
| June 21 | 1876 | 6 | Second Horticultural Hall | Annual Rose Exhibition |
| June 20 | 1877 | 7 | Second Horticultural Hall | Annual Rose Exhibition |
| June 19 | 1878 | 8 | Second Horticultural Hall | Annual Rose Exhibition |
| March 19 | 1879 | 9 | Second Horticultural Hall | Annual Azalea and Rose Show |
| March 18-19 | 1880 | 10 | Second Horticultural Hall | Annual Azalea and Rose Show |

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| Date | Year | Show # | Location | Title/Theme |
|----------------------|-------------|---------------|---|-----------------------------|
| March 17 | 1881 | 11 | Second Horticultural Hall | Annual Azalea and Rose Show |
| March 23 | 1882 | 12 | Second Horticultural Hall | Annual Azalea and Rose Show |
| March 22 | 1883 | 13 | Second Horticultural Hall | Annual Exhibition |
| March 20-21 | 1884 | 14 | Second Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition |
| March 19-20 | 1885 | 15 | Second Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition |
| March 24-26 | 1886 | 16 | Second Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition |
| March 23-25 | 1887 | 17 | Second Horticultural Hall | Spring Flower Show |
| March 21-23 | 1888 | 18 | Second Horticultural Hall | Spring Flower Show |
| March 27-29 | 1889 | 19 | Second Horticultural Hall | Spring Flower Exhibition |
| March 26-28 | 1890 | 20 | Second Horticultural Hall | Spring Flower Show |
| March 31- April 3 | 1891 | 21 | Second Horticultural Hall | Grand Spring Flower Show |
| March 22-25 | 1892 | 22 | Second Horticultural Hall | Grand Spring Flower Show |
| March 21-24 | 1893 | 23 | Second Horticultural Hall | Grand Spring Flower Show |
| March 28-30 | 1894 | 24 | Second Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition |
| March 26-29 | 1895 | 25 | Second Horticultural Hall | Grand Spring Flower Show |
| March 24-27 | 1896 | 26 | Second Horticultural Hall | Grand Spring Flower Show |
| March 23-26 | 1897 | 27 | Second Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition |
| March 22-25 | 1898 | 28 | Second Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition |
| March 21-24 | 1899 | 29 | Second Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition |
| March 20-23 | 1900 | 30 | Second Horticultural Hall | "Harbingers of Spring" |
| March 19-22 | 1901 | 31 | Second Horticultural Hall | "Grand Spring Exhibit" |
| March 19-23 | 1902 | 32 | Third Horticultural Hall | Annual Spring Exhibition |
| March 18-22 | 1903 | 33 | Third Horticultural Hall | Grand Spring Exhibition |
| March 24-27 | 1904 | 34 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Flower Show |
| March 23-26 | 1905 | 35 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition |
| March 23-25 | 1906 | 36 | Third Horticultural Hall | Grand Spring Flower Show |
| March 22-24 | 1907 | 37 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition |
| March 20-23 | 1908 | 38 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition |
| March 24-28 | 1909 | 39 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Flower Show |
| — | 1910 | 40 | Midwinter Flower Show on February 26th to 28th & May Orchid Show on May 26th to 30th substituted for usual March Show | |
| March 25-31 | 1911 | 41 | Mechanics Hall | National Flower Show |
| March 22-24 | 1912 | 42 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition |
| March 14-16 | 1913 | 43 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Flower Show |
| March 12-15 | 1914 | 44 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Flower Show |
| March 18-21 | 1915 | 45 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Flower Show |

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| Date | Year | Show # | Location | Title/Theme |
|----------------------|-------------|---------------|--|--|
| March 17-19 | 1916 | 46 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Flower Show |
| March 21-25 | 1917 | 47 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Flower Show |
| March 13-17 | 1918 | 48 | Third Horticultural Hall | Red Cross Flower Show |
| — | 1919 | — | No Annual Flower Show in 1919. A Chrysanthemum Show was held on February 19th and an Orchid Show held on March 8th and 9th | |
| March 24-28 | 1920 | 49 | Third Horticultural Hall | Grand Exhibition of Orchids and Other Plants |
| April 6-10 | 1921 | 50 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition with American Rose Society |
| March 23-26 | 1922 | 51 | Third Horticultural Hall | Grand Exhibition of Spring Flowering Plants |
| April 5-8 | 1923 | 52 | Third Horticultural Hall | Grand Spring Exhibition |
| March 27-30 | 1924 | 53 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition |
| March 26-29 | 1925 | 54 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition |
| March 17-21 | 1926 | 55 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition |
| March 30- April 3 | 1927 | 56 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition |
| March 20-25 | 1928 | 57 | Horticultural Hall | Boston's Spring Flower Show |
| March 19-23 | 1929 | 58 | Mechanics Building Boston | "Centennial Flower Show" |
| March 25-30 | 1930 | 59 | Horticultural Hall | Spring Flower Show |
| March 17-21 | 1931 | 60 | Mechanics Building Boston | Spring Flower Exhibition |
| March 10-14 | 1932 | 61 | Horticultural Hall | Spring Flower Exhibition |
| March 13-19 | 1933 | 62 | Mechanics Building Boston | Spring Exhibition |
| March 12-17 | 1934 | 63 | Mechanics Building Boston | Spring Flower Exhibition |
| March 25-30 | 1935 | 64 | Mechanics Building Boston | Spring Flower Show |
| March 23-28 | 1936 | 65 | Mechanics Building Boston | Boston Spring Flower Show |
| March 12-18 | 1937 | 66 | Mechanics Building Boston | Spring Flower Show |
| March 17-23 | 1938 | 67 | Mechanics Building Boston | Spring Flower Show |
| March 16-21 | 1939 | 68 | Mechanics Building Boston | Spring Flower Show |
| March 11-16 | 1940 | 69 | Mechanics Building Boston | Spring Flower Show |
| March 17-22 | 1941 | 70 | Mechanics Building Boston | Spring Flower Show |
| March 16-21 | 1942 | 71 | Mechanics Building Boston | Spring Flower Show |
| March 13-20 | 1943 | 72 | Horticultural Hall | "An Inspiring Wartime Effort" |
| March 18 -25 | 1944 | 73 | Horticultural Hall | "Gardens of Our Allies" |
| March 10-17 | 1945 | 74 | Horticultural Hall | "Springtime in America" |
| March 18-23 | 1946 | 75 | Mechanics Building Boston | "Diamond Jubilee" |
| March 10-15 | 1947 | 76 | Mechanics Building Boston | "Gardens for Better Living" |
| March 15-20 | 1948 | 77 | Mechanics Building Boston | "Tulip Time" |
| March 13-19 | 1949 | 78 | Mechanics Building Boston | Spring Flower Show |
| March 12-18 | 1950 | 79 | Mechanics Building Boston | "Old-Time New England Village" |

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|-------------|-------------|---------------|------------------------------------|---|
| March 11-17 | 1951 | 80 | Mechanics Building Boston | "Mid-Century Spring Flower Show" |
| March 9-15 | 1952 | 81 | Mechanics Building Boston | "Springtime in New England" |
| March 15-21 | 1953 | 82 | Mechanics Building Boston | "Golden Gardens" |
| March 14-20 | 1954 | 83 | Mechanics Building Boston | "Gardens Old and New" |
| March 13-19 | 1955 | 84 | Mechanics Building Boston | "Gardens the World Over" |
| March 11-17 | 1956 | 85 | Mechanics Building Boston | "Gardens on Parade" |
| March 10-16 | 1957 | 86 | Mechanics Building Boston | "It's Spring Again" |
| March 9-15 | 1958 | 87 | Mechanics Building Boston | "The Miracle of Spring" |
| March 10-15 | 1959 | 88 | Symphony Hall & Horticultural Hall | "Symphony of Spring" |
| March 13-20 | 1960 | 89 | Wonderland Park, Revere | "Wonders of Spring" |
| March 11-19 | 1961 | 90 | Wonderland Park, Revere | "Gardens of the Americas" |
| March 17-25 | 1962 | 91 | Wonderland Park, Revere | "Adventures in Gardening" |
| March 16-24 | 1963 | 92 | Wonderland Park, Revere | "Wonderland of Spring" |
| March 14-22 | 1964 | 93 | Wonderland Park, Revere | "Gardens for Living" |
| March 13-21 | 1965 | 94 | Wonderland Park, Revere | New England Spring Flower Show |
| March 12-20 | 1966 | 95 | Wonderland Park, Revere | "Gardens Beautify America" |
| March 16-23 | 1967 | 97 | Suffolk Downs, East Boston | "Plan Plant Preserve" |
| March 16-24 | 1968 | 97 | Suffolk Downs, East Boston | "New England Holiday" |
| March 15-23 | 1969 | 98 | Suffolk Downs, East Boston | New England Spring Flower and Garden Show |
| March 14-22 | 1970 | 99 | Suffolk Downs, East Boston | New England Spring Garden & Flower Show |
| March 13-21 | 1971 | 100 | Suffolk Downs, East Boston | "Centennial Spring Flower Show" |
| March 18-26 | 1972 | 101 | Commonwealth Armory, Boston | New England Spring Flower and Garden Show |
| March 17-25 | 1973 | 102 | Commonwealth Armory, Boston | New England Spring Flower and Garden Show |
| March 16-24 | 1974 | 103 | Commonwealth Armory, Boston | "Warm up to the Flower Show" |
| March 15-23 | 1975 | 104 | Commonwealth Armory, Boston | "Welcome to the Greenest Show on Earth" |
| March 13-21 | 1976 | 105 | Commonwealth Armory, Boston | New England Spring Flower and Garden Show |
| March 19-27 | 1977 | 106 | Commonwealth Pier, Boston | Spring Garden and Flower Show |
| March 11-19 | 1978 | 107 | Commonwealth Pier, Boston | Spring Flower Show |
| March 17-25 | 1979 | 108 | Commonwealth Pier, Boston | 150th Anniversary Show |
| March 15-23 | 1980 | 109 | Commonwealth Pier, Boston | "self sufficiency" |
| March 14-22 | 1981 | 110 | Commonwealth Pier, Boston | "Gardening in Your Own Back Yard" |
| March 13-21 | 1982 | 111 | Commonwealth Pier, Boston | "Gardens of the World" |

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| Date | Year | Show # | Location | Title/Theme |
|---|------|--------|-----------------------------|--|
| March 12-20 | 1983 | 112 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | The Flower Show! |
| March 10-18 | 1984 | 113 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Put a Little Color in Your Life" |
| March 9 -17 | 1985 | 114 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Spring's Reflections" |
| March 19-27 | 1986 | 115 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Enchanted Places" |
| March 14-22 | 1987 | 116 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Flowers Around the World" |
| March 5-13 | 1988 | 117 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "A View From Your Window" |
| March 4-12 | 1989 | 118 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Thank Goodness It's Spring" |
| March 10-18 | 1990 | 119 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Bridges to Paradise" |
| March 9-17 | 1991 | 120 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "A New England Sampler" |
| March 14-22 | 1992 | 121 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Rediscover the Americas" |
| March 6-14 | 1993 | 122 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Through the Garden Gate" |
| March 5-13 | 1994 | 123 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "A World of Color" |
| March 11-19 | 1995 | 124 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Magical Moments" |
| March 9-17 | 1996 | 125 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Celebration" |
| March 8-16 | 1997 | 126 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Secrets of the Garden" |
| March 7-15 | 1998 | 127 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Gardening Lifestyles" |
| March 13-21 | 1999 | 128 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Artistry in the Garden" |
| March 11-19 | 2000 | 129 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Symphony of the Senses" |
| March 17-25 | 2001 | 130 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "The Inspired Garden" |
| March 16-24 | 2002 | 131 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Shades of Spring" |
| March 15-23 | 2003 | 132 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "The Garden Journey" |
| March 13-21 | 2004 | 133 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Deeply Rooted" |
| March 12-20 | 2005 | 134 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "A Fresh Perspective!" |
| March 11-19 | 2006 | 135 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Welcome Home! " |
| March 17-25 | 2007 | 136 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Yes! You Can!" |
| March 8-16 | 2008 | 137 | Bayside Expo Center, Boston | "Rhapsody in Green" |
| <p>In 2009, no official flower show was sponsored by the Society. Instead, during the Society's reorganization, it sponsored "Blooms!" in three hotels and three malls between March 12th through 22nd. In 2010, it ceased production of the New England Flower Show. Instead, it was an exhibitor and the manager of the amateur competitions at the "Boston Flower and Garden Shows" produced by The Paragon Group between 2010 and 2019.</p> | | | | |
| March 24-28 | 2010 | | Seaport World Trade Center | "A Feast for the Senses" |
| March 16-20 | 2011 | | Seaport World Trade Center | "A Burst of Color: Celebrating the Container Garden" |
| March 14-18 | 2012 | | Seaport World Trade Center | "First Impressions" |
| March 13-17 | 2013 | | Seaport World Trade Center | "Seeds of Change" |
| March 12-16 | 2014 | | Seaport World Trade Center | "Romance in the Garden" |
| March 11-15 | 2015 | | Seaport World Trade Center | "Season of Enchantment" |

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| Date | Year | Show # | Location | Title/Theme |
|-------------|-------------|---------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| March 16-20 | 2016 | | Seaport World Trade Center | "Nurtured by Nature" |
| March 22-26 | 2017 | | Seaport World Trade Center | "Superheros of the Garden" |
| March 14-18 | 2018 | | Seaport World Trade Center | "Savor Spring" |
| March 13-17 | 2019 | | Seaport World Trade Center | "The Beauty of Balance" |

The theme of the 2020 Boston Flower and Garden Show was "Garden Party: Celebrating Friends & Family." While the Society and its volunteers completed the installation of its 2020 flower show exhibits, due to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic, it made the decision not to have its staff or volunteers attend the show.

The show, which was scheduled to run from March 11th to 15th, was closed on March 13th due to restrictions imposed under the the Governor's Declaration of a State of Emergency. Paragon Group ceased production of the "Boston Flower and Garden Show" after that date.