



MASSACHUSETTS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

THE GARDEN AT ELM BANK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Massachusetts Horticultural Society restores sledding access for 2025/2026 winter season

Wellesley, MA — Tuesday, December 2, 2025 — Massachusetts Horticultural Society (MHS) announces the reopening of the sledding hill in the Garden at Elm Bank for *Free Winter Recreational Access*. This winter, community members may again use the sledding hill through a dedicated winter entrance—at no charge—whenever two inches or more of natural snowfall is present.

“We recognize that the deer fencing cut across a long-standing use of the Garden and we did not have a legally or insurance compliant way to maintain that access. We have worked over the past year to ensure access and legal compliance,” said **James Hearsum, President & Executive Director of Massachusetts Horticultural Society**. “By creating a free, clearly defined sledding zone that operates under defined snow conditions, families can now return to the hill in a way that works for both the community and the organization.”

When the Sledding Hill Will Be Open

The sledding hill will be open **only when the Garden receives at least two inches of natural snowfall**, as measured on-site by MHS staff. On days when this condition is met, the dedicated sledding gate will be unlocked **from dawn until dusk**. On all other days—including times with less than two inches of snow—the gate will remain closed.

Visitors are encouraged to check the MHS website and social media for operational updates that may be posted throughout the winter season.

How to Access the Sledding Hill

- Access is provided **through a single, designated winter entrance** located at the Northwest corner of the Elm Bank Soccer Fields.
- Parking is permitted only in Elm Bank Reservation Parking Lot A.
- The remainder of the Garden at Elm Bank—including buildings, gardens, parking lots and pathways—remains **closed to the public for the winter season**, except during Festival of Trees, MHS’s biggest fundraiser of the year.
- There is **no cost** to access the sledding hill.

Community Safety and Conduct

MHS reminds visitors that sledding is an inherently risky activity. Conditions change frequently in winter weather, and all sledding is **at one’s own risk**. Children must be supervised at all times, and visitors must stay within the marked sledding zone.

Emergency assistance should be obtained by calling 911.



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A Growing Purpose

The sledding hill at Elm Bank has been enjoyed by families for many years. While this area is on its way to become a fully developed part of the core Garden at Elm Bank in the coming years, MHS will not prevent public access for sledding during the 2025–2026 winter season—from the first qualifying snowfall of 2025 through March 31, 2026. We are delighted that the increased garden programming in this area was enjoyed by 10,801 guests in 2025 and anticipate a growing use of this part of the garden as our family programs continue to expand.

“For many families, sledding at Elm Bank is a simple seasonal tradition,” Hearsom said. “MHS is committed to allowing this to the extent possible.”

For updates on sledding status and winter operations, visit: www.masshort.org/sledding

For media inquiries, please contact Meghan Connolly, Marketing Specialist, at mconnolly@masshort.org or 617.933.4934.

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About Massachusetts Horticultural Society

Massachusetts Horticultural Society is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that helps people change their lives and communities for the better by growing plants together. MHS disseminates information on horticulture and related sciences through its Library, educational programming, exhibitions, and community outreach initiatives. Through these, MHS engages guests with the importance of plants, gardens and natural landscapes in their lives and helps them to become active growers and gardeners themselves. As the first established horticultural society in the United States, MHS has been practicing horticulture ‘for the public good’ since 1829.