



MASSACHUSETTS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Grand Annual Flower Shows Research Aid 1871-2025

Between 1871 and 2008, the Society produced 137 Spring Flower Shows that were the largest and most important horticultural events during the 19th and 20th centuries in the United States. This Research Aid contains the dates, themes and locations of those exhibitions.

The Society was established on March 17, 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 to hold weekly exhibitions on Saturdays and its grand annual exhibition in September. The exhibitions featured fruits, vegetables, ornamental plants, arrangements and cut flowers. Awards at these exhibitions were highly regarded and valued by business, professional and individual recipients.

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, the semi-annual exhibitions were held in June, but by 1879, they moved to March. As in the Annual Exhibitions, the exhibitions featured fruits, vegetables, ornamental plants, arrangements and cut flowers. When agricultural production moved west and became industrialized in the late 19th century, the focus of the shows changed to ornamental horticulture and gardens. 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 Spring Flower Show grew. The shows were "the event" for horticultural organizations, businesses and professionals and provided an avenues to network, compete, learn and promote their goods and services. The public eagerly awaited these annual shows that provided an escape from winter and inspiration for their own gardens. 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.

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.

| Dates | Year | Show # | Location | Name/Theme |
|-------------|------|--------|---------------------------|---|
| June 20-21 | 1871 | 1 | Second Horticultural Hall | Grand Summer Exhibition aka The Rose Show |
| 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 |
| March 17 | 1881 | 11 | Second Horticultural Hall | Annual Azalea and Rose Show |
| March 23 | 1882 | 12 | Second Horticultural Hall | Annual Azalea and Rose Show |

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| Dates | Year | Show # | Location | Name/Theme |
|----------------------|------|--------|---|--------------------------|
| 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 | Spring Flower Show |
| March 18-22 | 1903 | 33 | Third Horticultural Hall | Grand Spring Exhibition |
| March 24-28 | 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 26 to 28 & May Orchid Show on May 26 to 30, substituted for the March Show | |
| March 25-31 | 1911 | 41 | Mechanics Building Boston | 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 |
| March 17-19 | 1916 | 46 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Flower Show |
| March 21-25 | 1917 | 47 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Flower Show |

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| Dates | Year | Show # | Location | Name/Theme |
|----------------|------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| March 13-17 | 1918 | 48 | Third Horticultural Hall | Red Cross Flower Show substituted for the Spring Flower Show |
| — | 1919 | No Annual Flower Show in 1919. A Chrysanthemum Show was held on February 19th and an Orchid Show was 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-Apr.3 | 1927 | 56 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Exhibition |
| March 20-25 | 1928 | 57 | Third Horticultural Hall | Boston's Spring Flower Show |
| March 19-23 | 1929 | 58 | Mechanics Building Boston | "Centennial Flower Show" |
| March 25-30 | 1930 | 59 | Third Horticultural Hall | Spring Flower Show |
| March 17-21 | 1931 | 60 | Mechanics Building Boston | Spring Flower Exhibition |
| March 10-14 | 1932 | 61 | Third 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 | Annual Spring Flower Show |
| March 23-28 | 1936 | 65 | Mechanics Building Boston | Spring Flower Show |
| March 12-18 | 1937 | 66 | Mechanics Building Boston | Annual Spring Flower Show |
| March 17-23 | 1938 | 67 | Mechanics Building Boston | Annual Spring Flower Show |
| March 16-21 | 1939 | 68 | Mechanics Building Boston | Annual Spring Flower Show |
| March 11-16 | 1940 | 69 | Mechanics Building Boston | "Victory Garden Movement" |
| March 17-22 | 1941 | 70 | Mechanics Building Boston | "Gardens for All" |
| March 16-21 | 1942 | 71 | Mechanics Building Boston | "V is for Victory" |
| March 13-20 | 1943 | 72 | Third Horticultural Hall | "An Inspiring Wartime Effort" |
| March 18 -25 | 1944 | 73 | Third Horticultural Hall | "Gardens of Our Allies" |
| March 10-17 | 1945 | 74 | Third Horticultural Hall | "Springtime in America" |
| 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" |

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| Dates | Year | Show # | Location | Name/Theme |
|-------------|------|--------|--------------------------------|--|
| March 13-21 | 1965 | 94 | Wonderland Park, Revere | "Town and Country Gardens" |
| March 12-20 | 1966 | 95 | Wonderland Park, Revere | "Gardens Beautify America" |
| March 16-23 | 1967 | 96 | 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 | "Spring Time - Garden Fun Time" |
| March 14-22 | 1970 | 99 | Suffolk Downs, East Boston | "Springtime Park" |
| March 13-21 | 1971 | 100 | Suffolk Downs, East Boston | "Centennial Spring Flower Show" |
| March 18-26 | 1972 | 101 | Commonwealth Armory, Boston | "Camelot" |
| March 17-25 | 1973 | 102 | Commonwealth Armory, Boston | "Let every man create his own Eden" |
| 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 | "Old-Time New England Village" |
| March 19-27 | 1977 | 106 | Commonwealth Pier, Boston | "Scheherazade: Exotic Gardens of Morocco." |
| March 11-19 | 1978 | 107 | Commonwealth Pier, Boston | "Once Upon a Time" |
| 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 3-21 | 1982 | 111 | Commonwealth Pier, Boston | "Gardens of the World" |
| 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" |

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| Dates | Year | Show # | Location | Name/Theme |
|--|------|--------|-----------------------------|--|
| 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 show was held by the Society. Instead, during the Society's reorganization, it sponsored "Blooms!" in a collection of hotels and retail spaces between March 12th through 22nd. In 2010, the Society ceased production of the New England Flower Show.</p> <p>After its reorganization in 2008, the Society participated in the 2010 to 2019 Boston Flower Shows produced by the Paragon Group, as an exhibitor and the manager of the show's amateur exhibitions, a role that aligned with its mission, and for which the Society was eminently qualified.</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" |
| 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" |
| <p>The 2020 Boston Flower and Garden Show was cancelled due to the Covid pandemic. Paragon ceased production of the "Boston Flower and Garden Show" after that date.</p> <p>For almost 100 years, the Fall Flower Show was a major show of the Society, beginning in the year of its founding 1829. After the Spring Exhibition became the foremost show of the Society in 1871, major fall exhibitions were held until the 1980s. Beginning in 2024, the Society came full circle, reestablishing its premier annual show as the New England Fall Flower Show, thus supporting the Society's motto "Growing Together," that upholds its mission "to promote the art and science of horticulture, while staying true to its founding motto, 'Commune Bonum,' for the public good."</p> | | | | |
| September 21-22 | 2024 | 138 | The Garden at Elm Bank | "Heritage and Hope" |
| September 20-21 | 2025 | 139 | The Garden at Elm Bank | "World in Bloom" |