

## **Garden Club of Richfield Springs**

2018 marks the 80th year that the Garden Club has been serving the community and the 70<sup>th</sup> year that it has been affiliated with the Federated Garden Clubs of NYS. In 1938, Rose Masters and Lottie Haskins met with the other charter members that became this club; their common thread was a deep interest in horticulture and gardening. Through these years of service, this interest has paid off. Despite changing membership, it has continually added projects and traditions to the village that has made a difference to the people of Richfield Springs and to those who pass along Rt. 20 to other destinations.

As you approach the village from the west, you see two crabapple trees planted in the Memorial Park. One was planted by the Garden Club as part of a National Project to give thanks to our military service people. The Patriotic Tree was planted in 2007 as part of this project and as an addition to an ongoing planting of crabapple trees throughout the community.

As you approach the school, you see a flagpole garden full of bulbs, annuals and hostas in the traditional RSCS colors of purple and gold. Also, the Garden Club provides the planting of and seasonal displays of the urns in front of the school and the planter under the sign. During the Christmas season, a large wreath adorns the front of the school thanks to a project taken on by the club and the generous financial assistance from Jim Jordan. It is in memory of his mom. She was an active member of the Garden Club for many years. Behind the school in the courtyard, a new perennial bed was provided by the Garden Club in 2007. The plants were donated by a long-time Richfield resident. The students use this garden for learning experiences in several different classes.

A quick head-turn to the right and you see the library plantings and the NYS award-winning Colonial Herb Garden started in 1967. The herb garden is totally maintained by the Garden Club with several different beds and plants. Seasonal plantings are provided in the urns at the entrance to the library. Beds have been established around the library to grow plants for sale at the Annual Plant Sale. A statue was recently added to the display.

The library serves as our Garden Club's home base as meetings are often held in the Memorial Room and members provide. The club provides special displays during certain times of the year: themed displays on the shelf above the door leading from the library to the Memorial Room and a Christmas show at least every other year in the Memorial room.

When you come to the four corners, there on the left sits the restored town clock. The Garden Club has maintained the plantings around it for many years, as well as around the bandstand in the center of the part. Due to recent regulations and village decisions, the plantings around the bandstand were curtailed. In 2006-7, a massive planting of spring bulbs and lovely rose bushes and shrubs were planted around the clock. The cost was taken on by the village and club. A generous donation of bulbs was provided by Kinney Drugs. The Garden Club maintains the area.

A side trip off from Rt. 20 brings you to the firehouse. In 2007 a planting of shrubs and perennials in the colors of red, yellow, white and blue adorned the western wall. This was a result of a PETALS grant through the Federated Garden Club and labors of many members. An urn is planted and maintained by the club, as well as flowers in front of the Memorial.

The trip through town reminds us that the village changes and grows. The Garden Club continues to be vigilant as to its needs. The most recent large project was the sale of crabapples trees. Richfield Springs is known for its Hoppa Crab trees. Through the years, the Garden Club has held seven tree-selling events, which resulted in nearly 800 Hoppa Crab Trees being planted throughout the village. In 2007, the Hoppa sale was replaced with a more disease resistant crabtree called the Robinson. Over 100 were sold. The goals to maintain a sea of pink in the spring is ongoing. The Village people and merchants look to the Garden Club for sale of these trees every few years as old trees die out. It remains a Richfield tradition.

Back in the 60s, the members of the Garden Club activity tried to save the lovely old elm trees that lined our streets. A disease was killing them. The club sponsored spraying programs to ward it off. Past member, Mary Margaret Jordan and Lib McGrath enjoyed telling stories about riding on the trucks that did the spraying.

The Christmas season is an especially busy time for the Garden Club. As mentioned before, the library and school are decked out with greenery, themed tree, wreath, etc. Also, the lighted wreaths that line Main Street were chosen and purchased by the club. The club continues to work with the Village in the maintenance of these wreaths yearly. The lamp posts in the park are decorated by members with garlands and lights provided and maintained by the club. Also, the club provides the garlands for the bandstand. When the crèche in the park grew old and couldn't be repaired, the Garden Club initiated a fund-raiser to purchase the replacements. The stable setting was designed and built as gift to the village by Chris and Jackie Eggleston. The club makes every effort to maintain perspective and reason the Christmas season.

The club has always taken an interest in environmental concerns. A past project provided the elementary classrooms at RSCS with teacher and student textbooks entitled "People and Their Environment" and, for several years, interested students were sent to the Department of Environmental Conservation summer camps through the generous help of past member, Edna Koopmans.

Currently, at RSCS, all fourth graders know the Garden Club through its "Plant a Family Tree" program. After teaching the importance of trees in their lives, every student is given a tree to plant and care for. It is hoped that these trees will be important to them and that the planters and their trees will grow and mature together. Elementary students also enter the National Garden Club Woodsy Owl Poster Contest. This project encourages good environmental practices. Also, a scholarship award has been given to a senior who is interested in pursuing higher education in Horticulture or Environmental Sciences. Students also start from seeds the plants that adorn the flagpole garden.

Graduating seniors are surrounded by flowers provided by the Garden Club. For many years the floral displays were arrangements of flowers picked by members and students. More recently, the Club has turned to using baskets of plants.

Every year, there are National, State and District projects that are available for the club to participate in. Members of The Garden Club of Richfield Springs involve themselves with several of these projects if they fit into the needs of the community. Examples are the Patriotic Tree, PETALS project and Freedom Tea. We as a club look forward to continuing service to the community.

This information is provided from Fay Cole's past histories, updated by Barb Crandall and revised by Betsy Sywetz. Fay is a past president and served as historian. Barb is also a past president and serves many roles in the Garden Club. Betsy Sywetz is currently Membership Chair.

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