

The transformation of Gloucester's public gardens begins well before spring is upon us!

Generous Gardeners have been active nearly all winter getting ready for spring 2025 by planning layout and design of garden beds, ordering plants, tools and other materials, connecting with our 80+ volunteers, and marketing our special events, listed below:

Mark your calendars!

- May 17 Plant Sale, Stacy Boulevard includes dahlia tubers!
 9:00 am 12:00 pm or until sold out (near tennis courts)
- June 4, 11, 18 Dahlia Tubers Sale
 9:00 am 12:00 pm (sheds at corner of Stacy Boulevard and Hough Avenue)
- July 5 Garden Tour, Magnolia
 10:00 am 4:00 pm (starts at the Magnolia Library, 1 Lexington Avenue)

We hope you will support us by attending these wonderful events, and consider donating to our nonprofit, all-volunteer organization. For more information, visit our website at **www.GenerousGardeners.org**.

Grant Circle - Welcoming Entry to Gloucester

The land at Grant Circle was once the Town Green and site of the first meeting house and a number of residences. A rotary was erected there by the state in 1956 to honor Chester H. Grant (1897–1954), a decorated WWI soldier and public official in Gloucester. Today, it is a major traffic hub and the Gateway to Cape Ann.

The "Plant Grant" landscape beautification plan was completed in 2014 by the Cape Ann, Rockport, and Gloucester garden clubs, transforming the area to a garden oasis and creating a welcoming entry to Cape Ann. New trees, shrubs, perennials, and spring bulbs were added in newly created beds to bring color, variety, and interest to existing trees and grass.

Generous Gardeners took over the care and maintenance in 2019. We gather as a group throughout the growing season to ensure that Grant Circle gardens look their best.





Above left: Grant Circle before and (right) after its 2014 landscape transformation Below left: Chester H. Grant memorial plaque and (right) spring blossoms in April 2025





New Tarp System Withstands Winter Storms - Protects Soil and Plants



The increase in frequency and severity of winter storms over the past several years has caused significant damage to the soil and plantings in the Stacy Boulevard gardens. Generous Gardeners responded by placing tarps secured by sandbags over the beds but found the materials strewn about by the force of wind and water. Salt-soaked soil often had to be replaced before spring plantings could begin.



Dahlias Get Top Billing

Aside from soil, other casualties of the salt water were the masses of spring tulips and perennials along the waterfront, which died under the tarps. The explosion of dahlias, however, which are dug out in late fall and stored in a climate-controlled environment, are welcomed and treasured replacements.

New Tarp System Stays in Place

After much research and investigation, Antonietta Calabrese, our dahlia expert, found a replacement tarp system which proved itself in the winter of 2024-25.



16 Boulevard beds with new, secure tarp system await removal and storage



Antonietta with Arthur Sharp, Brian Hardy, Ken Doughty, Steve Howard, Jack O'Neil







On a chilly April morning with ice still on the tarps, the crew's work included: detaching straps; removing wood frames; removing, cleaning, drying, and folding tarps; removing hardware, and storing all until needed again in late fall.

Generous Gardeners: Dahlia Tubers Planting Process

Dahlia Tuber Body



1. When and where to plant Toward the end of May or beginning of

June - when the ground is at least 55 degrees, plant in an open sunny location. Planting dahlias too early, in cold wet soil, may result in rotting tubers.



2. Soil

Use nutrient-rich, well-drained, loose soil; sandy, loamy, or acidic soil works well. If heavy, amend with sand, peat moss, or compost to improve soil drainage.



3. Dig holes

Small varieties: 4" deep, 12" apart Large varieties: 6" deep, 12-18" apart



4. Fertilize soil

Add ¼ cup of low nitrogen food such as crab shell or bone meal in each hole; mix into soil



5. Plant tubers

Place a single or group of tubers in soil - with eyes up Cover with 2" of soil Do not add water



6. Stake Label stake with dahlia name:

insert into soil

7. Add soil

As it starts to sprout cover with more soil to make it even with the ground



8. Water

Water about twice a week after sprouting Do not soak or they will rot



9. When to pinch

Within 3-4 weeks it will grow to about one foot with 2-4 sets of leaves; pinch off center to make it split into two branches







10. Cages

- When a foot or so high, place a cage around bigger varieties
- Leave stake at smaller
- We use square tomato cages as their wide legs provide more support than round cages
- Support branches with Velcro tape
- Attach name tag to cage

11. Dahlia Maintenance

- Some larger varieties, take 90-120 days to bloom, others take about 60 days
- Begin fertilizing with a low nitrogen food at the start of July when plants are at least one foot tall; we use Neptune Harvest organic fish fertilizer
- Feed every 4 weeks, with the last feed in September
- Deadhead spent blooms to encourage more blossoms

12. Tips for Healthy Dahlias

- Use rich, well-drained soil
- Choose a sunny, wellventilated location
- Deadhead regularly
- Treat as an annual unless willing to dig and over-winter



Plant Sale - includes dahlia tubers!

Saturday, May 17 9:00 am - 12:00 pm Stacy Boulevard (near tennis courts)





Dahlia Tubers Sale - 3 opportunities!

Wednesdays: June 4, 11, 18 9:00 am - 12:00 pm (at sheds, corner of Stacy Boulevard and Hough Ave)





Generous Gardeners

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Printed at Daily Printing Inc., Beverly MA

Spotlight on Volunteers



"I discovered the Generous Gardeners after my third visit to the Boulevard in September of 2023 and am honored to now be in the 'Spotlight.' The beautiful gardens are maintained by volunteers which is a great way for me to work in the garden without having one of my own. The people of the gardening group are the magnet that keep me going. I come to 'work' just to have fun with friendly, dedicated, supportive peers – and to play with flowers for free!"

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY OF VOLUNTEERS

We currently have over 80 volunteers in our organization who care for over 48 spaces in Gloucester and we welcome new volunteers who are interested in our mission. If you are interested in volunteering, please email Susan Kelly at **susanegenerousgardeners.org** and let her know of your interests!

Remember to ask for our new brochure which explains the many gardens along the Boulevard. Look for them at the tennis courts and near the bridge.



Susan Chen shown here in fall 2024 with the fruits of her labors. She has been indispensable in assisting wherever needed, and especially enjoys keeping the Boulevard gardens in top shape.