The Boston Public Garden, Showcase of the City

Mary M. B. Wakefield

Since 1970 the Friends of the Public Garden has worked closely with Boston’s Department of Parks and Recreation to rehabilitate a uniquely beautiful parcel of urban open space.

Every garden needs friends—in the case of a garden that is always open to the public, lots of friends—a cadre of knowledgeable, concerned people who understand its particular situation and character. For, once established, a garden begins to develop its own unique identity—its “Genius of Place,” if you will—and becomes the kind of garden visitors remember. Its qualities are subtle and fragile and well worth preserving. For a garden that must serve ever increasing numbers of visitors, the challenge is to preserve its unique qualities for the sake of future generations.

The Boston Public Garden has long since developed its true spirit, possessing Genius of Place to a remarkable degree. It has endured extraordinary vicissitudes yet is still the Public Garden. That it has survived at all is a tribute to its early planners, its official caretakers, and those generations of citizens who have been its champions since 1838.

The Garden has had hair’s-breadth escapes from complete obliteration by buildings and streets. Greenhouses, statues, and trees have come and gone. It has conformed to successive fashions in planting and has survived the onslaughts of vandals, blizzards, droughts, floods, and hurricanes; the sweep of winds down drafty, building-lined streets; and the disintegration of its perimeter fence. It has even survived invasion by an incline entrance to the first subway in the United States. Yet here is the Boston Public Garden in the morning sunshine, peaceful and welcoming to all, its swanboats floating languidly about the Lagoon. A bevy of happy ducks follows, begging for a bite of food as if nothing untoward had ever befallen this urban paradise.

How can this be? How has the Garden been able to reach this point intact? Generations of dedicated friends—professionals, politicians, volunteers, visitors, and viewers, all of them appreciative, all of them on call to help it survive almost daily vicissitudes—generations of dedicated friends have guided it to this point.

In a few words, I will recount for you the history of the Boston Public Garden.

The Garden's Origins and Antecedents
Unlike Boston Common, which the early settlers had established on existing dry land for the use of all the town's people, the Public Garden was created on made land that originally was part of Round Marsh. All but one section of the site (Fox Hill) was inundated at each tide.

In 1794, a large part of the area was granted to private citizens for six ropewalks, because
it would be a safer location for such a fire-prone but essential industry than one near buildings. In 1821, a great dam was built by the Boston and Roxbury Milldam Corporation. Extending from the corner of the present Charles and Beacon streets to the present Brookline, with a branch to what is now called Kenmore Square, its main purpose was to provide waterpower for the mills and factories separating Round Marsh from the Charles River. The result was that Round Marsh became a vast mudflat of decaying matter and refuse of all kinds. Even in this condition the value of the land for development was apparent.

In 1824, the city purchased the ropewalks. Business and political leaders wanted the land to be filled and sold for houselots, but citizens' groups were opposed. To settle the matter, a citizens' meeting was held in July 1824; it appointed a committee to prepare a report. The report stated that for the sake of citizens' health it was public duty to keep the space open and clear of buildings, to allow for the free circulation of air from the west.

It took the city years to complete the filling of the entire area. Fox Hill itself was used for fill. Even land from as far away as Needham was used. (Along Beacon Street, a modern contractor encountered an unexpected problem: the old fence had been built on, not one sea wall, but on three resting one upon another. At the Commonwealth Avenue entrance to the Garden solid ground lay about eighteen feet beneath the present path.) The City Council made other attempts to sell the Public Garden, in 1842, 1843, 1849, and 1850, but all of them were defeated.

The Proprietors Establish a Garden

On February 1, 1838, seventeen Bostonians headed by Horace Gray (son of William Gray, one of the former owners of the ropewalks) obtained a lease from the city and became the Proprietors of the Botanic Garden in Boston. Each Proprietor paid one hundred dollars a year. Soon after they were granted the land by the city, the Proprietors appointed Trustees to act for them, though the Proprietors actually ran the Garden. Once a year the Proprietors met to hear the report of the Trustees.

Although the filling in of the land was only partially complete, the Proprietors managed to lay out their garden along what is now Beacon Street (the level of the land was six feet below it). A fine, broad walk, bordered with ornamental trees, standard roses, shrubs, and herbaceous plants, led to the Charles Street entrance. Wherever the terrain allowed, there were beds of dahlias in excel-

A map of Boston showing the original extent of the Shawmut Peninsula (in black) superimposed upon the city's current area. The increase is due to the filling in of tidal flats and similar peripheral areas. As the map shows, the Boston Public Garden was established on filled-in tidal flats, as was the city's entire Back Bay neighborhood. The Commonwealth Avenue Mall, which will be the subject of Judith Leet's article in the next issue of Arnoldia, appears at the middle of the map's left-hand margin. Drawn by Russell H. Lenz, this map is used through the courtesy of The Christian Science Publishing Society and Mr. Lenz.
lent varieties. They even imported a complete bed of prize tulips for fifteen hundred dollars. The Garden was popular with the public.

Across the street from the Garden was an old circus building, which the Proprietors made into a conservatory filled with tropical plants and rare singing birds. All of the plants were botanically arranged and catalogued. Admission for nonsubscribers cost twelve and a half cents per person; ten admissions cost a dollar. A magnificent collection of over one thousand camellias was a great attraction.

The Proprietors imported an excellent English gardener to take charge, held periodic flower shows, and awarded generous prizes to the winners. The prize for the best display of roses on June 20, 1839, was twelve dollars, for example, that for the second best, seven dollars. One year, Joseph Breck supplied seeds and plants to the Garden for one hundred dollars. The noted landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing even prepared a plan (which, unfortunately, is lost) of an enlarged garden and bordering arboretum.

All this was accomplished despite great difficulties. The soil was poor, and there were occasional inroads of the tide, which did great damage to the plants. Hopes were high nonetheless, and for years the Proprietors' efforts were unflagging—despite a fire that burned the Conservatory to the ground and the lack of a greenhouse.

The Years of Uncertainty and Transition
The Proprietors continued to operate the Botanical Garden until 1847, when Horace Gray went into bankruptcy; Gray's friends felt they could no longer continue to carry on the Garden, but their achievements provided a wonderful beginning and inspiration for their successors.

For the next twelve years the future of the Garden was uncertain. One of the former Trustees, the Reverend Charles Barnard, built a greenhouse in the Garden, where he raised and sold flowers. He organized Fourth of July parades of children with bouquets of flowers, which became a popular Boston tradition. His writings kept the citizens accustomed to associating the area with flowers. Others worked, too. A small pond was created and a simple landscape treatment was maintained.

Finally, the State settled the matter. On April 6, 1859, the Governor signed the Public Garden Act establishing, among other things, the boundary line between Boston and Roxbury, authorizing the filling up of the Back Bay, and prohibiting the erection of buildings (other than a city hall or buildings used for horticultural purposes) between Arlington and Charles streets.

Until this time, private funds had sustained the Garden, while the City continued to fill in the land. Now, the press and the people wanted to have more of a Garden. The Committee on the Common and Public Squares was appointed by the Boston City Council to report on a plan for improving it. For this they held a blind contest, which was won by a young architect, George T. Meacham.

The Meacham Plan
Meacham's plan included space for a city hall, a greenhouse, children's playground, and geometrical flower beds, as well as statues, fountains, trees, shrubs, and grass. With its winding paths and irregular-shaped pond, it was said to resemble Birkenhead Park in England. It combined both formal and picturesque elements, but it was overcrowded with features. Under the superintendence of the City Engineer, James Slade, Meacham's plan was modified, eliminating most of the formal flowerbeds Meacham had proposed. City Forester John Galvin laid out flowerbeds and paths and brought in quantities of loam to grade, so that the Garden would not look too obviously manmade but a natural continuation of the slope of Beacon Hill. The greenhouse was built on Charles Street, but the
pond and pathway system were retained with comparatively few changes until recent years, and changes were made only to conform.

One of the greatest perils facing a public garden or park is that interest in supporting it waxes and wanes according to the interest of political and municipal officials. In 1859, the special committee appointed by the Boston City Council included in its report on the Meacham Plan a description of the work in progress on Central Park, referred to Birkenhead and other European parks, and added:

While other cities are expending fabulous amounts in the improvements of parks, squares, gardens, and promenades, what should we do? To be behind in these matters would not only be discreditable to our city, but positively injurious to our commercial prosperity, and in direct opposition to the majority of our citizens. . . . The area of our city is too small to allow the laying out of large tracts of land for Public Parks, and it behooves us to improve the small portions that are left to us for such purposes.

Thoroughly interested, the city implemented the plan, filled in places that needed to be completed, excavated the pond, surrounded the Garden with a cast-iron fence, laid out acres of turf, and planted trees and shrubs. Gradually, the Garden took on a more established appearance.

From the first, newly established trees were identified and labelled by Dr. Augustus
Addison Gould, a famous botanical authority who had done the same on Boston Common. Every effort has been made to carry on the custom of labelling on a regular basis, insofar as it has been possible to do so.

The greenhouse called for in Meacham’s plan was built along Charles Street instead of where he had indicated. For many years it supplied the Garden with plants, but when needs outgrew its capacity they were met by new greenhouses, first in Dorchester, then in Franklin Park. Not only were there regular greenhouses, but a high “Dome House” with curved roof designed expressly to house the palms and other tall tropical plants that graced the Garden each summer.

During the first years, John Galvin (the City Forester) and his crew faced enormous difficulties on account of the kind and amount of fill that had been used. Portions would not drain properly while others would sink suddenly, and the gardeners would fill in the resulting hollows as well as they could. In those days, the staff of the Garden numbered over fifty men, all of whom were kept busy caring for the plantings in the new fashion, sometimes using exotic materials in pots and planters and scattered small beds. The hotter the colors the better. The public liked them, as did William Doogue, who succeeded Galvin in 1872 and maintained the plantings in the “Gardenesque Style” of J. C. Loudon of England. Others, such as Charles Sprague Sargent of the Arnold Arboretum—whom Doogue termed “that Blockhead from Harvard”—did not like them. However, Doogue ran the Garden with an efficient hand, and his plantings remained enormously popular.

In those days, vandalism was far less of a problem than it is today, and there was more labor to restore what damage was done, making it practical to have many attractive features that would be impossible today. The little peninsula with its tiny gazebo, which offered an intriguing view of the Garden from the middle of the Lagoon, had to be removed. It was too popular with the young, and its place was taken by a spectacular rock garden that rose high above the water, its stones almost completely hidden by drifts of flowering plants whose reflections multiplied in the waters of the Lagoon, a quaint and colorful landmark. Early pictures of the bridge over the Lagoon show containers of plants, and vines running along the railings, connecting the flowerbeds on either end of the bridge with ribbons of green.

Enter The Swanboats
In 1870 the City Fathers granted Robert Paget, a boat builder from England, the first boat-for-hire concession on the Lagoon in the new Public Garden. The concession employed rowboats with professional oarsmen. By 1877, Paget had launched the first of his new “Swanboats,” which could carry four or eight passengers at a time. Designed after the *Schwanboot* in Wagner’s “Lohengrin” and propelled on the bicycle principle, they were an instant success. Now even longer and operated by Paget’s grandson, they continue to this day, a symbol of Boston and the Public Garden.

There was plenty of work for the Garden staff each spring, removing the boardwalks from all of the red-gravel paths, and each fall re-laying them. The swans of that day were
sent back to Franklin Park to winter and reappeared each spring, again to follow the swan-boats on their way.

At that time, there were four hundred beds of tulips (containing over four hundred thousand bulbs) underplanted with English daisies and pansies and forget-me-nots. The roses followed in June, with twenty thousand to thirty thousand plants. Rhododendrons occupied small beds with Lilium longiflorum, followed by hydrangeas, tropical and subtropical plants, and holly beds with Lilium lancifolium in red, rose, or white, blooming until frost, and the garden, greenhouse, and storage areas were prepared for the next season's performance.

Nor was the collection of trees neglected. Six hundred trees of thirty kinds were carefully tended. Among them were two hundred elms (American, English, and Dutch), nearly one hundred maples, fifty magnolias and willows, fourteen crabs and catalpas, eleven horsechestnuts, and seven varnish trees, and specimens of Kentucky coffee tree, locust, beech, larch, tree-of-heaven, cherry, plum, peach, laburnum, oak, and ash. The ground was found to be too marshy for evergreens other than rhododendrons, so the other shrubs used were deciduous lilacs, quinces, mock oranges, viburnums, and so on.

The Years of Decline

The Public Garden Act of 1860 had stipulated that no buildings were to be erected in the Garden except for horticultural purposes, but no one dreamed that by 1897 the Garden would be host to an entrance of America's first subway. This incursion cost the Garden its privacy, for part of its fence was removed, and many of its oldest trees were destroyed. When the subway was moved out to Boylston Street in 1914, a strip of the Garden forty feet

![Looking southwest across the Public Garden from Boston Common in 1869. The partially filled-in Back Bay, including Commonwealth Avenue, appears in the near background. Near the middle left of the photograph is the Arlington Street Church. Courtesy of the Boston Globe.](image-url)
Looking southwest across the Public Garden from Boston Common in 1975. The just completed John Hancock tower forms a dramatic backdrop for skaters on the Lagoon and dwarfs the historic Arlington Street Church, which can be seen just to the left of center. A light covering of snow contrasts with the dark pattern of the Garden's pathways. Commonwealth Avenue occupies the middle of the right edge of the photograph. Compare this view with that of 1869. Courtesy of the Boston Globe.
wide went with it, reducing the Garden from its original twenty-four acres to twenty-two.

When did the Garden begin to decline? The Great Depression of the 1930s changed many city activities. World War Two and its successors changed the public's attitude toward parks and gardens. Keep-off-the-grass signs were little heeded; indeed, of what avail were they when art shows were held in tents in the Garden, and the public was supposed to walk on grass lawns to view the pictures? The gardeners were expected to produce new grass in the worn places with seed and no water, unless it was carried from distant locations. Evidence of the neglected maintenance of years began to be evident in iron fences so rusty they could be pulled apart with ease so that the young could walk through the new openings and across the flowerbeds. Games of Frisbee were played, with disastrous effect on the tulips. Trees died, but no one seemed able to do anything to stop it.

The maintenance staff, which at the turn of the century had been fifty strong, had shrunk to twenty-five in 1940. By 1970, it was down to four. The wear and tear caused by hippies and others continued twenty-four hours a day. The bridge became known as a site for marijuana and other drugs. The Garden's irrigation system was out of order, seeding was not always funded, and the Tree Division was growing older and smaller. A helpful citizen-sponsored program allowed the planting of crabs, cherries, and maple trees, and many people responded, but the program's success resulted in trees being
scattered throughout the Garden with little concern for their ultimate sizes and positions. Even the magnificent pagoda tree, which expands ninety feet, was obscured by young maples (there were twenty-eight Norway maples in all), and three young katsuras had invaded the Washington parterre. In short, the Boston Public Garden was rapidly becoming an overcrowded mixture of good intentions!

A survey plan for the Public Garden dated 1911 listed eight hundred twelve trees. By 1942, four hundred five of them had died, and thirty-five others were in poor condition. The reduced staff had such poor equipment it is remarkable that they were able to do as much as they did. For economy, paths were paved, the number of flowerbeds reduced. Palm trees no longer emerged for summers in the Garden (damage was feared). In addition, the bridge was unsafe, fountains broken and their figures stolen or falling into disrepair. It was these conditions, among others, that led to the formation late in 1970 of the Friends of the Public Garden.

The Friends of the Public Garden
The purpose of the new nonprofit organization was, and still is, to preserve and enhance the Public Garden (subsequently, Boston Common was included) and to assure its continuance as a place of quiet recreation, free from exploitation and encroachment. The Friends have joined with the Parks and Recreation Department in horticultural planning and capital improvements, have
provided a fund for the special planting of
trees and shrubs, and have served as an im-
portant link between the public and respon-
sible city agencies.

At first the Friends focused their efforts on
assessing the situation and on determining
what suggestions they could make toward
its restoration and whether, and in what
ways, the Friends could assist the Parks De-
partment in accomplishing those goals. Amo-
ng the Friends were people with many
talents: architects, landscape architects,
horticulturists, lawyers, financiers, writers—
all ready to help the Park Commissioner in
any way they could. Laura Dwight, who had
coordinated the planting of magnolias along
Commonwealth Avenue, was the first head
of the Friends organization. She agreed to
serve in that capacity “until the right man
could be found” to take on the job. It was not
long before he was found: the able and dedi-
cated Henry Lee. As chairman, Lee has guided
the Friends’ activities with skill and tact ever
since.

It would be difficult for anyone to imagine
what a discouraging prospect the Garden
presented at that time and how each problem
was tackled by the Friends and the Parks
Department. Many solutions were found.
The bridge over the Lagoon was made safe
and restored, the fountains repaired and their
basins renovated. New molds were made to
duplicate the design of the perimeter fence,
and it was recast, enclosing the Garden for the
first time since 1897.

The installation of the underground irriga-
tion system and new lighting required protec-
tion of the roots of individual trees. For
months, the Garden was torn up in all direc-
tions, and many were the complaints that the
rolled-out sod had no time to be watered
before visitors to the Garden were sitting and
lying upon it, so glad were they to return!
Daffodils buried for months under bricks and
mortar reappeared the following spring better
than ever. Fifty-five new benches were in-
stalled and new frames and trash barrels were
placed throughout the Garden, their plastic
liners easily removed when full and trans-
ported in the Garden’s own Cushman vehicle
to the newly constructed storage yard by
Charles Street, there to await removal by the
big city trash trucks, which are too wide for
the paths in the Garden.

Representatives of the Friends joined those
of other civic groups to attend hearings and
oppose the plan for the nearby Park Plaza de-
velopment, on the grounds that it would
dangerously impair life in the Garden with
sixty-mile-an-hour winds and shadows
across the Garden at all seasons. Fortunately,
the State rejected the environmental impact
study for the project and required a more
reasonable development. It is of vital impor-
tance to have a civic group such as the
Friends always on the watch and prepared to
defend the Garden from similar dangers.

The Boston Park Rangers are now a perma-
nent addition to the city staff. They help to
guide and monitor visitors to the Garden and
provide those who are interested with informa-
tion about the plants.

The Committee on Horticultural Planning
The Committee on Horticultural Planning
for the Public Garden was formed in the late
summer of 1971, other committees being
formed as the need arose. The Horticultural
Committee’s duties were (and still are) to
serve as an advisory body for the Commiss-
ioner of Parks and Recreation, reviewing
proposed changes and projects within the
Garden and making proposals of its own. Its
membership includes representatives of the
Parks and Recreation Department and mem-
bers appointed by the Friends of the Public
Garden.

In its first report the Committee stated
that “the successful restoration and mainte-
nance of the Public Garden requires as a first
step certain basic improvements, including a
new perimeter fence, proper equipment, stor-
age facilities, an adequate number of trained
gardeners, an underground sprinkling sys-
tem, means of controlling circulation, preventing vandalism and providing safety during all the hours the Garden is open to the public"—ambitions that have yet to be fully realized!

In 1971, Professor Clifford S. Chater of the Waltham Field Station surveyed all of the Garden's trees and shrubs. As a result of his recommendations a comprehensive program of spraying, pruning, and guying was carried out. Trees with Dutch elm disease and those deemed highly hazardous were removed. The Committee surveyed the remaining trees and recommended the removal of others injured by years of neglect and traffic. A further survey was carried out by Professor Chater and Dr. Francis Holmes using infrared aerial photography. When interpreted by an expert, such films can tell more about the health of trees than on-the-ground inspection. The aerial survey showed that growing conditions in the Garden varied greatly, probably because of the fill that had been used there.

Chater's report on the aerial survey stated, in part, that

It is . . . known that much of the original fill contained muck and other kinds of organic matter which continually release carbon dioxide to the soil atmosphere in addition to the normal amount released by plant roots. Examination of the top soil reveals that it is extremely compacted, which in turn prevents the high concentration of carbon dioxide gas from escaping and also prevents the entrance of oxygen to the soil which the roots require.

Not all of the Committee's recommendations or of the expert advice could be implemented promptly; they were simply guidelines for what ought to be done when and if city funds or private financing was available to provide it.

In the 1970s, some crises loomed large and immediate. There was the Dutch elm disease and the need to treat its victims. Several conflicting methods were recommended and tried on individual trees, many of which died. The most beautiful of the surviving elms are still receiving regular annual injections of fungicide.

An unforeseen danger arose when the Boston City Council proposed giving up the city greenhouses at Franklin Park. The summer flowers are a spectacular and major feature of the Public Garden: for over a century people have visited the Garden expressly to see them, and the present display is so remarkable that people come from great distances. The skill and knowledge necessary to create such a display are found in few if any other public places. It requires having cli-
mate-controlled storage facilities and greenhouses available as needed, with experienced personnel to operate them, to produce not only herbaceous material but tropical and subtropical plants and summer and carpet bedding plants. They also plant the pansies and tulips in the Garden that exemplify spring to Bostonians.

At that time, members of the Horticultural Committee attended the hearing of the Budget Committee of the Boston City Council and explained it, and the greenhouses have continued to operate. Today, they are even more appreciated than they were before. Classes in horticulture have been given in them. New greenhouses, easier and more economical to run, are being built, and it is to be hoped that the picturesque Dome House will be reglazed and repaired some day.

One of the major programs of the Horticultural Planning Committee is the continuation of the Memorial Tree Planting Program initiated by its committee member Edward Weeks. The Committee chooses the variety of tree to be planted and selects the site for it. People tend to think that a horticultural committee's only job is to provide horticultural embellishment. That is the fun, of course, but first the committee must look to the design of the area. With this fact in mind, the Horticultural Planning Committee recommended that several paths be changed in the Public Garden and others eliminated to facilitate traffic circulation and ease of maintenance. Where turf was subject to constant traffic, as at the edges of the Lagoon near the swanboat landing and at the end where skaters change their skates, paving was more

Recent view along the main walk of the Public Garden showing the bedding plants (Impatiens and Browallia) and standards (Lantana) and the post-and-chain fence. Photograph by the author.
A swanboat plies the waters of the Lagoon in this idyllic view of the Public Garden. Photograph by Paul G. Paget.
practical than turf. The flagpole had for many years been lost in a sea of grass and trees; to pave its surrounding base and develop a path to it with seats off the main route seemed practical and pleasant for visitors and reminiscent of little paths the Garden had once had. Later, memorial seats were added around the flagpole itself.

Four beds of roses, topiary yews (the present-day version of the potted plants of long ago, when people longed for evergreens), and the changes in the Garden's paths and beds are all attempts to adapt the present design to new conditions and to the multitudes of visitors without altering the Garden's character.

Until fifty years ago, a third of the trees in the Public Garden were elms, as had been the case for many years. Among them were magnificent specimens that had been there well over a century and gave the Garden a special character. In planting today, the Horticultural Planning Committee tries to choose the best of the ornamental varieties of trees that are available so that the traditions of the past will be continued and the image of a beautiful garden will be perpetuated while at the same time the service and information of a city botanic garden will be available to an interested public.

The Challenge for the Future
When the Proprietors of the Boston Public Garden began their work one hundred fifty years ago, their hopes and dreams for an arboretum or botanic garden were impossible to attain, for the soil in the Garden was poor, there were occasional inundations by the sea, and the many varieties of plant material existing today were not even imagined. Nevertheless, the Proprietors made an inspiring beginning, and ever since it has been the task of succeeding generations to carry on their work according to the advances of their own times. The Garden still suffers from the effects of filled land in its soil characteristics, stability, and levels. These conditions are being taken care of as they appear, but they pose unexpected problems and expense.

The Garden is remarkable in that it successfully combines the concepts of botanic garden, park, and quiet retreat consistent with current use. Because it was originally conceived as a botanical collection, it is today a living demonstration of some of the varieties of trees and shrubs that will thrive in the heart of a city if only they are given suitable sites, care, protection, and all the space they will need to develop their ultimate sizes and mature characteristics. Generations of interested citizens have encouraged the planting of a broad variety of the best ornamental trees and shrubs available in their times, and the tradition has been carried on ever since. The image of a beautiful garden will be perpetuated while, at the same time, the service and information of a city botanic garden will be available to an interested public.

Until fifty years ago a third of the Garden's trees were elms. Among them were magnificent specimens that gave the Garden a special character, but Dutch elm disease, poor maintenance, and overuse have eliminated many of them. The palette of plants available to the present generation is far more extensive than it has ever been. Species of trees and shrubs have been imported from China, Japan, Korea, and other countries, and there are many new cultivars. Today, every effort is made to choose plants that are not only ornamental but well adapted to the existing growing conditions in the Garden. Harmony, not ostentation, is the predominant goal being sought.

Once the framework of trees is in place, companion shrubs, groundcovers, and permanent bulbs are planted wherever they are needed to add seasonal interest and color without materially increasing the need for maintenance. Wherever appropriate, special characteristics are developed in individual areas, among them the pinetum near Charles and Boylston streets, a group of deciduous
needle-leaved trees near Arlington Street, and
a row of twenty-six hybrid shadblows \((Amelanchier\) spp.) paralleling the Belgian elms.

The Public Garden is a showcase for the
City of Boston, providing beauty for the casual visitor and broader knowledge for others. The biggest challenge is to assure that the Garden never again suffers the type of decline it did before the Friends of the Public Garden was formed. But there are other challenges.

A public garden is not static but alive and constantly in service, twenty-four hours a day. It is remarkable that this one has done so well for so long, but because it is now nearing its capacity, its protection and maintenance will have to be carefully coordinated with the type of use it will receive in the future. As more and more people visit the Garden, a balance must be struck between their activities and enjoyment, on the one hand, and the ability of the plants, which give the Garden its special appeal, to withstand their impact, on the other. Expert maintenance can only help to mitigate the damage, but not even that can cure it, and all the carefully chosen trees and shrubs in the present collection should be given every chance of reaching their full potentials. The time has come to decide on permanent ways to protect the Garden so that it will continue to be a green and flowering oasis in the heart of a big city.

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