



Garden No. 1
John Paul Jones House
Portsmouth Historical Society
43 Middle Street

Take a peek through the front gate at the historic John Paul Jones house, and you see the restored garden as it may have looked in 1859. As you enter, you are greeted by a circular garden filled with spring bulbs, perennials and two boxwoods that lead to a trellis and benches for guests to enjoy. Locals come here to eat lunch or read a book, shaded by crabapple, yew, fir, dogwood, spruce, maple, and birch trees.

A white pebbled path winds through the garden lawn. Scattered through the gardens are shrubs of bridal veil spirea, lilacs, rhododendron, celandine, giant allium, azalea, ninebark, burning bush, English ivy and roses. There are potted flowers along the back entrance. Seasonal color and scents are offered by spring tulips, jonquils, scilla, daffodils, and purple baptisia in the early spring, with tall purple iris and dahlias in late spring and early summer. The mixed borders and beds have varieties of peony, bearded iris, daylily, anemone, turtlehead, hosta, and columbine.

There are two corner pollinator gardens with native perennials, wildflowers, and herbs, planted to meet the needs of bees and butterflies. Queen of the prairie, common milkweed, anise, sunflowers, bleeding heart, hyacinth, thyme and dill are just a few of the fragrant plants here.

Trees around the property include a magnolia tree, a plum tree, lilac trees, forsythias and two cherries, a Montmorency and a flowering Japanese cherry descended from those planted on the mall in Washington, DC. The Japanese gave these as gifts to the US, after the peace agreement was signed between Japan and Russia on September 5, 1905. Treaty negotiations were held at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in August of 1905. The people of Portsmouth were gracious hosts to the Japanese and Russian delegations and were instrumental in brokering the treaty. Visit the John Paul Jones House to find out more about this important event in old Portsmouth.

Garden No. 2
40 Summer Street
Joe and Karen Freda

In the late 1940s, Francis Bridge bought a beautiful home for his family on Summer Street, blocks from downtown. Due to his green thumb and generous ways, the Bridge family quickly began living a "farmer's life ... in their backyard."

This house is Karen's childhood home; she moved back 17 years ago after thirty-four years of living "away" to help in the care of her parents, aging in place.

The home sits close to the street, giving no hint of the spacious garden behind. Karen remembers her father offering raspberries and blueberries, or her mother's preserved vegetables, to the close-knit neighborhood. The grapes and impressive rhubarb patch have been there "forever." Joe and Karen work on this garden together, and their large and abundant vegetable garden shows the literal fruits of this combined effort. The raspberries clearly benefit from their twice a year pruning. Karen and Joe enjoy the many edibles from their organic garden year-round - canning and preserving their fruits and vegetables.

One of the features of this garden is a view into the large and abundantly treed Rundlet-May house garden from the patio. You will also see a mixed bed of shrubs, including variegated weigelia, and viburnum interspersed with classic perennial favorites. In the front and back yard, newly built stone walls and granite steps (installed by Sahin Stoneworks) create raised beds for knockout roses which have a continuous bloom throughout the summer and fall.

Garden No. 3
Rundlet-May House
364 Middle Street

When construction began on this impressive Federal mansion in 1807 it was clear that the house and grounds were going to be the first of their kind for the City of Portsmouth. An 1812 survey map by J. G. Hale depicts the grand rural estate of James Rundlet with extensive orchards and a European-inspired geometry of garden paths and terraces.

Rundlet's ledgers for 1807-10 document purchases of gravel, stone and lumber for fencing; of rose bushes and grapevines; of poplar, pear, peach, fruit, and just plain "trees." A memorandum book for 1833-34 accounting for time spent by workmen adds some details: manuring asparagus, planting potatoes, picking apples, making a "railing round the currant bushes" and ladders for honeysuckle. The men graveled and rolled paths, built steps, turfed borders in the garden, and cut hay in the orchard.

Later garden changes in the late 19th and early 20th centuries include a cemetery for family pets, and Colonial Revival inspired perennial and cut flower beds with plants such as small pink climbing roses and peonies, as well as three spiral trellises. Descendants maintained the original 1807 layout throughout the life of the garden and grounds, as shade trees slowly replaced much of the original orchard.

Historic New England is involved with ongoing garden restoration at Rundlet-May House, with a current focus on re-establishing garden paths, trimming overgrowth, maintaining garden trellises, and restoring the rose arbor.

Garden No. 4
31 Cabot Street
K. Campbell

When they purchased the home in 2014, the outside areas were in extreme need of attention. The front garden was littered with cigarette butts and was overgrown with weeds. A previously planted dogwood was lost in the chaos. In the back, the small, shaded yard with a collapsing porch was primarily dirt, bordered by a fence that was nearing the end of its useful life.

Since then, all the outside spaces have been completely overhauled. In the front, a raised vegetable garden was installed, various perennials planted, and hops now drape the porch and provide much needed shade during the hot summer days. In the back, after replacing the porch, they installed pavers bordered with cobblestones from Manhattan streets. The fence has been replaced by a natural border of hop vines on trellises with shade tolerant perennials at the base. The rear boundary of the area has family harvested, rough cut cedar privacy boxes that hold planters with impatiens that thrive all summer.

“Each year, our family enjoys tomatoes, peppers, carrots, beets, cucumbers, and peas from the garden. The abundance of cucumbers, and more time at home due to COVID, has allowed us to try various recipes for homemade pickles and other canning experiments. At the end of the season, any remaining green tomatoes are turned into relish. The hops are used by several neighbors for their homebrewing hobbies.

“To reduce our water footprint, we recover water collected by our dehumidifier and use it on the non-edible plants. We also compost throughout the year and use the compost to supplement the soil. We do not use pesticides on any of the plants, but we do plant marigolds in the raised bed each year to attract beneficial insects that attack and kill aphids. Some of our herbs seem to help with the insects too!”

Garden No. 5
39 Cabot Street
Vicki Fox David and Darryl David

Vicki and Darryl’s house was built circa 1810 and has had many owners and occupants in its 210+ year history. If plants could talk! The garden layout as seen today was created by previous owners, Jeff and Sherry Woods, who purchased the property in 1989. Five years later, the current owners acquired the property; they have maintained and added to the garden for 28 years.

The garden is a place to connect to the living things - plants, birds, small mammals and insects - that find their way to this place. It is an ever-changing canvas of perennials for pleasure, fruits, herbs and vegetables for food, and support for pollinator migration. Last, but not least, it is a place to gather with friends and family – a comfortable space to be outside together in almost any season of the year. The garden is formally informal. The color palette is primarily yellow and purple. It is most colorful in the spring and early fall.

In many ways the garden is a “friendship” garden in that many of the perennials are divides from gardens of friends over many years. Interesting features are the herb and vegetable garden at the back fence (abutting the Rundlet-May garden); the arbor leads to the shade garden and private patio on the north side of the house. The apple tree in the yard produces five types of apples - a miracle of the grafting process. Native and pollinator plants are rotated in when possible. Water for the plants is collected in the water barrel near the front shed. Composted kitchen refuse is used to nourish the soil.

The general garden layout was created by the previous owners sometime after they purchased the property in 1989. The current owners acquired the property in 1994 and continue to add to and maintain the garden.

Favorite plants are from fellow gardeners whose own garden favorites needed to be divided. We attempt to return the favor whenever possible! Favorite tools are often multi-generational hand-me-downs.

Garden No. 6
68 Cabot Street
Debora and John Mayer

Hard to believe this lovely garden area was once almost entirely paved over. Since 1998, Debora and John have been creating these peaceful, colorful, and low maintenance garden spaces.

The sidewalk garden by their brick Federal style home, built in 1813 by Daniel Marden, is filled with perennial geraniums, ground-cover chrysanthemums, Turtle heads, and Irises, with two rose bushes - New Dawn and Betty Prior. The rhododendron and hydrangea began life as a neighbor's potted plant and found a home with other re-gifted and shared plants in the garden.

The curved garden bordering the yard includes Kousa dogwood and Japanese maple trees, a painted bunny rabbit salvaged from the transfer station resting in vinca, a climbing hydrangea, and a rain garden making use of run-off from the roof gutters. Quince centers the rain garden surrounded with irises, lady's mantle, penstemon, campion, speedwell, and betony. Against the house, spurge, black-eyed Susan, clematis, old fashioned foxglove and peonies fill the space next to a small vegetable garden.

The sculpture by Herbert Kallem (1909-1996), *One-Man Band*, marks the entrance to the circular, brick patio pocket garden offering a shaded retreat of Hosta, lilies, European ginger, Astilbe, and Debora's grandmothers' peonies. The fragrant styrax japonica tree joins the only original garden plant, an old rose bush, lining the garden wall.

Garden No. 7
87 Cabot Street
Peg O'Neil

When Peg O'Neil purchased her house in 1992 there were only bits and pieces of a garden. Built around 1917 when the Naval Shipyard was expanding, the house style is known as Vernacular or Folk Victorian, characterized by the ornate detailing on the porch hood and the bay window. If you walk around Portsmouth, you will see many similar houses.

The only remaining perennials from when Peg moved in are peonies, which she says by some miracle are still blooming! There was a chain link fence, three huge Norway Maples (two from the neighbors), a tiny pear tree, dwarf lilac and a pink flowered Rose of Sharon. She moved things around and two of the maples are gone. The fence is now cedar. Over the years she has planted many, many perennials - some make it, some don't.

The garden is just for pleasure - color, attracting birds and bees and butterflies - to sit and watch and enjoy. She considers the style of her garden is mish-mash - see what comes up, move plants around or just leave them be, try to keep the weeds out. As for the streetscape, she just wanted a pleasant yard and house front that might bring a smile or a sigh to a passerby.

With the shortage of water in the summertime lately, Peg tries to capture the water in the shower as it's warming up and the kitchen sink and haul this out to the garden. Every little bit helps!

Garden No. 8
22 Winter Street
Lucy and Bill Clarke

Lucy and Bill have lived in their home since 1979. Two years ago, the huge brick school building across the street was demolished – along with it, all the gardens that grew there - and a fence installed along the property line. Last summer Lucy took over the strip in front of the fence where she grows sunflowers in the ground that the goldfinches love, and other flowers and vegetables in large pots (as the soil quality is questionable and limited).

Lucy is a professional gardener, so having her own space to manage as she wishes is important to her. She believes in conservation, composting and reusing materials. Bamboo trellises are stored from year to year. Pots are stored in the backyard and under the porch. One of her conservation practices is that she tries hard to never water the pots with hose water, using rain buckets and saved water from indoor use, carried by hand to the pots. Plants that are disease prone are avoided and she utilizes many organic gardening methods. A few plants come from local growers, but she starts her own from seed or winters over plants and bulbs in pots. Her favorite pole beans and cucumber varieties have come from Territorial Seed Company. She likes Green Art in Kittery for great starter plants but relies heavily on self-seeded annuals and hardy perennials to fill in the ground spaces between the pots.

For many years she has grown vegetables in pots around the house because it's right on the street. She loves picking dinner veggies every day. The garden produces just enough for 2 people with a little to share with the neighbors. Along the driveway is a trellis set into the same large pots as the plants. There are pole beans (She has to pick the beans from a step stool!), sugar snaps, tomatoes, cucumbers, herbs, and perennials that winter over in the pots and join the others in the spring. Along the edge of the house, it is quite shady and is covered with piles of snow in winter. Pulmonaria, Bleeding Hearts, Spring bulbs, Solomon's Seal, Hosta, Japanese Waxbell, Sweet Autumn Clematis and morning glories do well there. An heirloom rose has thrived, a Rose of Sharon, and a red Rhododendron. It's an orderly jungle by late summer.

Garden No. 9
217 Cabot Street
Emily and Eric Krohne

Emily and Eric inherited the lovely parterre garden from the previous owners of the home, which was built in 1850. In the spring, the beds come alive with daffodils, tulips, squill and bergenia, also known as pig-squeak for the sound the leaves make when rubbed. Later perennial blooms include columbine, peonies, foxglove, iris, roses, coreopsis, clematis and a variety of day lilies. Of particular interest is the featured Blackberry lily, also known as a leopard lily. The previous owner brought seeds from Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, Virginia, garden and planted them many years ago. The plant is not a true lily but is a member of the iris family with the name *Belamcanda chinensis*. Despite references that suggest it is hardy only in zones 8 - 10, this lily/iris survives and flowers reliably in zone 4. Don't miss the waterfall feature in the back corner of the yard beneath the towering evergreen that provides much needed cooling summer shade.

The owners, who moved into the home in July 2021, are caring for a new baby and a 2-year old, who enjoys 'mowing' the pea stone walkways. Their garden has had the help of a local gardener and Emily's mom's friends, who have helped the young couple get the garden in shape. Enjoy the recently pruned hibiscus Rose of Sharon in the front garden and be sure to see the 1800's marble stepping stone incorporated into the brick walkway.

Garden No. 10
287 Cabot Street
Jen Meister

When Jen moved to her home in 2000 there were small gardens around the house and a lawn that barely grew in spots. It took her until 2020 to finally take out the lawn and replace it with deeper gardens and the patio.

The “elephant in the room” is the enormous Norway Spruce that overshadows (and at times, overhangs) the garden. While it is beautiful, it also presents challenges to what will grow underneath it (and among the roots).

The primary goal of the garden is to make Jen smile! She loves looking out from her kitchen table and hanging out on the patio surrounded by beauty. During the pandemic, it became THE place to entertain small groups of friends. It is also a wonderful reason to get out and get her hands dirty!

Jen’s garden style is a mix of eclectic and whimsy. Since the primary goal is to make her smile, touches of whimsy, from the garden décor to the actual plantings, all have a sense of fun. Two of the daylilies bear the names of two of her nieces. Many of the plants are transplants from friends and relatives. Most of the Hosta are transplants from her parent’s home in NE Ohio. Daisies are prevalent as they were her mom’s favorite.

Jen designed, planted, and maintains the garden with lots of input from friends! Spruce Creek Landscapes designed and installed the hardscape. Sharing plants with friends, local plant sales, and our local garden centers are the best sources of plants and seeds that she has found. From the snowdrops in early spring to the Montauk daisies well into the fall, there is usually something blooming. The trees and bushes are chosen for interesting bark during the winter. The garden ornaments also add to the winter landscape—and Pinky, the flamingo, stays out all winter (with her scarf!).

Garden No. 11
295 Cabot Street
Jenn Lombardo

Jenn and Scott Lombardo bought their house in 2014 and set about making it the calming, meditative oasis you see today. The brick patio features comfy seating, a fire table, and heaters to make it usable into the fall. Well-designed lighting means that evenings filled with love and laughter can carry on long past nightfall. The remodeled shed offers refuge from rain or pesky mosquitos, but plenty of windows for light and fresh air.

Did you notice there is no grass to mow? The streetscape features a crabapple that Jenn is proud to have planted herself, hydrangea, reblooming lilac, and anemones, for three seasons of flowers. To the right of the drive, all the way up to the neighbor’s house are periwinkle and hostas. On the left are Russian sage and peonies for fragrance, bee balm and coneflowers for pollinators, and burgundy and gold iris for their rich color.

As you approach the gate on the right is an espaliered apple that eventually will have 3 varieties for eating. Jenn has been training it in its candelabra form. In the far back of the house, there are several varieties of clematis including less common bell flowered Roguchi, cone flowers, daisies, rose of Sharon, and a fastigiate Japanese maple that won’t outgrow its space. Rather than being a garden overflowing with plants, this garden has them spaced to appreciate their individual beauty. Smooth black stones by the back steps in a container, and at the low side of the garden help with water control while keeping with the meditative theme.

The granite bench in front of the trellis is a bonus that the landscapers dug up while creating the patio! All they needed to do was add two stones as legs.

Garden No. 12
303 Cabot Street
Ben Pohopek and Cariker Cunningham

Ben and Cariker's home, as well as several others on Cabot, were the houses for managers at a nearby shoe factory. When they moved in, the previous owner had done so much to this small sunny yard- a star magnolia flanked by a dogwood and a white lilac tree- as anchors. Railroad ties held the flower beds and spirea were planted to hug the deck that they added. When Ben and Cariker moved in, they started adding their favorite sun-loving perennials - daisies, black-eyed Susans, echinacea, Russian sage as well as small shrubs like azalea, boxwood, butterfly bushes, caryopteris and climbing hydrangeas. Also, they added shade lovers such as anemone, turtlehead, wild ginger and astilbe. The primary goals for the yard are to create an outdoor space that is inviting to friends, lush and vibrant throughout the summer (although fall is its best time) and to invite pollinators!

The style is very informal and Cariker has always wanted it to seem a little wild - maybe like an English garden. She likes not seeing much dirt! Instead, they love seeing nature folding into itself. They tried to strike some balance between chaos and order through a fair amount of repetition of plants - row of boxwoods, row of tall grasses, and many spirea.

Last summer, Ben installed the antique granite cobble border in lovely curves that doubled the size of the beds allowing so many more plants! The cobbles came from an old road in Rochester, NH. At the same time, they also had a small patio of brick type pavers and a walkway professionally installed. Otherwise, they do all the garden work.

They have struggled with their big German Shorthaired Pointer tromping through the beds and killing plants and shrubs and the only thing that has helped a little are the small fences employed to discourage him. As you will probably notice, the grass is a little sad! The price you pay for having a dog. Well worth it though!

Garden No. 13
101 Langdon Street
Tom and Deb Hiney

The Hiney's house was built on an empty lot in 2017. At that time, it had grass and typical landscaping for a newly built home. The current design and install was performed by **Bee the Buzz**, of Boston, daughter Tori Hiney's business. Tori designed the garden so that native plants take over spots where weeds would be. Plants were sourced from Rolling Green, Northeast Nursery, and the Native Plant Trust - about 98% native plants. The plants that are non native came with the original landscaping of the house. Deb does like annuals, so she tries to sneak some in here and there. And while there is an irrigation system, Tori has convinced them that they don't need it, so this garden is also very water wise!

The lawn was unusable to them, devoid of any life or movement, and the water coming off the house in a storm went straight down the steep lawn and into the storm drain. It was clear that lawn had no mitigating effect on storm water run-off. There was no reason to keep it!

To save on time and labor costs, the Hiney's invited family over to de-install the former landscape and install the new oasis - around 700 plants. The original landscaping made the space seem incredibly small. All the de-installed turfgrass was later used on install day to build up the berms where birch trees now stand. They also built a retaining wall which didn't technically add space to the property, but the change in grade makes all the difference to the perception that the space is larger than it really is.

The primary goal of the garden has become ecology. The garden served as respite for the family during season 1 and 2 of the pandemic. The design was based on different spaces for different uses, entertainment, relaxation, enjoyment, and pollination. Over time the love of the use of the gardens and activity in the garden became more engaging than the ever-changing garden itself. The garden is part of the Pollineighborhood - A geographically localized community supported and comprised of pollineighbors.

During the spring, summer and fall it is abuzz with every kind of insect, butterfly, bird etc., even bunnies. They love that the garden is self-sustaining and requires little to no maintenance. When they garden now, they garden with ecological intention.