

# Emerald Necklace Conservancy

The Emerald Necklace Conservancy was created to protect, restore, maintain and promote the landscape, waterways and parkways of the Emerald Necklace park system as special places for people to visit and enjoy. The Conservancy's programs and funding support and complement initiatives by the City of Boston, the Town of Brookline, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.



Rose Garden Visitor Pamphlet is provided by the Emerald Necklace Conservancy.



Visit us at the Shattuck Visitor Center in the Back Bay Fens

125 The Fenway, Boston, MA 02115  
617-522-2700 | emeraldnecklace.org



## The James P. Kelleher Rose Garden

Back Bay Fens  
Emerald Necklace | Boston, MA

## History of the Kelleher Rose Garden

The Kelleher Rose Garden, located in Boston's Back Bay Fens, was originally wetlands. In the late 1880s, Frederick Law Olmsted transformed what had become a foul tidal marsh into a clean, scenic estuary. The 1910 damming of the Charles River blocked the tidal flow, changing the ecology of the area and requiring a new design by landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff.

A passion for public rose gardens swept the country in the early 1900s. In 1931, Shurcliff designed a circular formal rose garden opposite the Museum of Fine Arts where the general public as well as rose enthusiasts could learn about rose culture and enjoy the flowers. The garden was an instant success. The garden was expanded in 1932



when the rectangular section was built. In 1975, the garden was named the James P. Kelleher Rose Garden to honor the Boston Parks and Recreation Department's Superintendent of Horticulture.

## A Restoration for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

By the late 1900s, The Kelleher Rose Garden was in decline. In 2001, the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, in cooperation with Boston Parks and Recreation, convened landscape architects, horticulturists and rosarians to develop a master plan for its renewal. Paths and planting beds were recut according to the original plans; the soil was rejuvenated and new turf laid.

An irrigation system was installed, hundreds of roses were planted and new signs were placed to help visitors learn from the garden. The restoration continued with the



reconstruction of the fountain based on Arthur Shurcliff's original 1931 design of a simple reflecting pool consisting of a 14" deep basin with a bluestone-capped edge. Like their predecessors last seen in the 1950s, four new cherubs now grace the edge of the fountain and two replica planters join the existing two.



All-America Rose Selections (AARS)

Hybrid Tea and Grandiflora Roses

Braided Pattern of Pink Roses

Climbing Roses

Floribunda Roses

Fragrant Roses

David Austin & Polyantha Roses

Miniature Roses

'Justine Mee Liff' Roses

Braided Pattern of Pink and White Roses

Shrub Roses

Shurcliff-era Historic Roses

## Tuesdays with Roses

Volunteers meet on Tuesday evenings from 5:30-7:30pm throughout the season to deadhead and weed. Rose care instruction and tools are provided. New-comers are always welcome!

To volunteer please call us at 617-522-2700 or sign up at [www.emeraldnecklace.org/volunteer](http://www.emeraldnecklace.org/volunteer).



## Did You Know?

The Rose Garden contains more than ten classes and 200 varieties of roses. There are almost 1,500 plants in total.

In 2005, the 'Justine Mee Liff' Rose, named to honor Boston's late Parks Commissioner, was hybridized by Paul E. Jerabek and planted in the Rose Garden.

The height of the fountain spray is determined by an anemometer which measures wind speed.



## In Grateful Recognition

Boston Parks and Recreation  
Emerald Necklace Conservancy's Justine Mee Liff Fund  
Plimpton-Shattuck Fund  
Edward Ingersoll Browne Trust Fund  
Bilezikian Family Foundation  
Boston Committee of the Garden Club of America  
Yawkey Foundation  
Beacon Hill Garden Club  
NSTAR Foundation  
The Emerald Necklace Conservancy's Rose Garden Advisory Committee and the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University



## Donate

Support the Emerald Necklace Conservancy and ensure that the landscape, waterways and parkways of the Emerald Necklace are restored and maintained for years to come.

Donate online at [www.emeraldnecklace.org](http://www.emeraldnecklace.org) or send your tax-deductible donation to:

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