

ENJOY YOUR VISIT TO THE GARDEN ON THE BRIDGE

Follow the spectacular brick paving that threads through the park. Walk under the arch that is reminiscent of a long-gone arch workers walked under as they came by the hundreds to work in the mills. Sit on a bench to watch the river flow, gaze at the waterfalls and remember those that worked at the mills. And enjoy the plantings that now make this a year-round visual treasure.



THE GARDEN CLUB OF WINDHAM



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For more information, visit our web site:
gardenclubofwindham.org

Join us!

Town of Windham Links:

Town of Windham:
Windhamct.com

Victorian Neighborhood Association:
Victorianwillimantic.org

Windham Textile Museum
Millmuseum.org

Third Thursday Street Fest:
Willimanticstreetfest.com

Windham Garden on the Bridge



THE GARDEN
CLUB OF
WINDHAM

**“Rooted in the community...
planting possibilities”**



Entrance to the Garden on the Bridge

A Little History

Willimantic, Connecticut in its heyday was the home of the American Thread Company with a 130-year history of producing cotton and silk thread, velvet and synthetic fabrics. Its shrinking textile industry left in 1985, leaving behind the empty fieldstone mill buildings on the Willimantic River. These buildings are now home to the handsomely refurbished Windham Mills commercial complex and Artspace condominiums, both privately owned.



Willimantic Today

Willimantic today is a residential base for both Eastern Connecticut State University and the University of Connecticut. Willimantic is in the process of transforming itself through a network of citizen-based initiatives into a place known for celebrating its rich Victorian past and present diverse identity. A variety of festivals have evolved into local institutions, such as the annual Victorian Days weekend, monthly Third Thursday festivals, and the Fourth of July Boom Box Parade.

History of the Bridge

The bridge with its cut-stone twin arches was built in 1857 over the Willimantic River, whose flow had powered the mills. In 1903, trolley tracks were added, which remained until they were removed for car and truck traffic. The bridge survived the hurricanes and flooding of 1938 and 1955 but was found inadequate to handle increasing traffic. A new bridge was built upstream in 2000, now called the Frog Bridge for its four large iconic frogs sitting atop spools of thread, both symbolic of local history.

Transformation to Garden on the Bridge

Our beautiful Garden on the Bridge project, funded by State DOT enhancement funds and the Town of Windham, has been, and continues to be a community effort. Town of Windham staff, a design team from the University of Connecticut and the Garden Club of Windham contributed endless hours toward integrating a strong community-oriented vision in the design of the bridge. The Garden on the Bridge is owned by the Town of Windham, which maintains the integrity of the structure. Care and maintenance of the gardens is an



ongoing collaboration between the Town and the Garden Club of Windham.



The Garden

The Garden on the Bridge was designed to create a park-like quality, welcoming visitors to this unique and special place. Captivating colored pavers and hand built stone planters form the hardscape. The garden features a number of massive containers with a mixture of shrubs and trees which will form the backbone for future plantings. Perennial and annual plantings have been selected for their ability to enhance and thrive in this unique environment. Like any garden, plantings will change over time.

THE GARDEN CLUB OF WINDHAM

Founded in the fall of 2002, the Garden Club of Windham has a strong dedication to public service. Club founder and first President Virginia Darrow had a vision that included enhancing the beauty of the Windham community with gardens and well cared-for public spaces.

Our motto is:

"Rooted in the community...planting possibilities"