

Winthrop Loves Trees/G.R.O.W.

Volunteer Planting-Putnam St. September 26, 2022



After some initial preparations and discussions with the Mall's owner, networking with willing volunteers, and securing donated plant materials, a lively session of gardeners gathered at Michael's Mall for planting bulbs and perennials and flowers, on both sides of the mall entrance.

A neighbor next door to my office had earlier dropped off a bag of iris tubers, jonquil and tulip bulbs a number of months ago, which had to sit through the spring and searing heat of summer, before this plant day rolled around. In the late spring, after our meeting at the site, the owner of the Mall had some of his workers and a landscaper prep the plant site at the edge of the lot with added compost and loam. I was offered some healthy clumps of tall grasses from Julia Waller's home; which, after some deep prepping of the existing soil, and dividing the clump, I had planted on Sunday at the base of the large Mall sign (*left*). I was also texted a few times by Paul Roy, who had set aside, at his home, two tubs of perennial geraniums, some liatris, and about 8 separate pots of lilies; which I picked up prior to plant day. I also had a much deferred offer from my own home-next door neighbor of a promised clump of now-spent sparkling white irises, which I dug up the day prior, to bring for this planting.



After sending out a request for help on the intended day above, a hardy group of volunteers showed up early on a sunny morning to give a hand. Our plant friends were Susan Gerow, Tracey Honan, Mikayla Dalton, Maureen McAdams, Betty Peabody of the Beautification Comm., Mike Herbert (Pres. of WIHA) and myself; and all of us dug right in – so to speak (*left*). The weather was sunny & warm, and we started with the needed weeding, and turning over/loosening the bed. This plant area (despite the earlier prepping with “black earth”) was not really composed of good humus, but was adequate for the intended hardy plants. Mike hand-shoveled through this heavy soil-lifting, and we filled up the two buckets with extracted larger stones. We discussed and located the clumps of bulbs and tubers first, and chose where the irises, liatris, lillies and geraniums would be set.

Next to the wood planter on Nick's part of the site, we also finished off the bed of geraniums that had survived the deep heat (*right*); and the rest of these clumps were divided and set along the Putnam bed. Meanwhile, some clean-up from spent plants was done by Mo & Tracey on Nick's wood planter at the Pauline St entry; as well as cleaning up a large sunflower clump there. Betty and Mo also pulled some larger dead weeds in the stoney stretch of an unfinished plant strip along Nick's parking lot. After about an hour, Nick's folks kindly brought over a large cheese pizza, and a bag of waters for us planters.



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All the donated plant material was set-in along the stretch of beds starting at Nick's lot, (*left*) and on either side of the main Mall sign near the entry drive. All told it took about 2 ½ hours to get about fifty plants set-in. And most fortuitously, there was a very timely, deep-drenching rain later that afternoon to add to our initial watering. The site will also get some mulch soon, to dress up the divided and non-flowering plants. But all the volunteers know that a spectacular show of flowers will emerge during next spring and summer. We also tested the "pluck" of the branches on the sad-looking oak tree on Nick's side; and we all agreed that this sturdy tree may recover come next spring.

Meanwhile, a large nod and a huge Thank-You to Sandy Schiff for her early am. solo work on cleaning up the bed (at the right of Town Hall) from numerous deep weeds.

As a post-note, the remainder of the planter bed along Putnam St at Nick's Place, with the help of volunteers and the DPW, will have some rubble removed, fresh loam topping it off. Then more divided plants (from over-growth perennials) at Town Hall, as well as more donors' plants, will be earmarked for planting this lengthy bed. We hope to complete that area before a deep frost, so the larger stretch of Putnam St will be a continuous show of blossoms come next Spring. Thanks to the effort of GROW helpers, the owner of Michaels Mall, and the DPW, we can begin to make a very visible difference in the appearance of the Center, and find other places, other proud resident-volunteers (*like at right*), and more donated plants to do much the same throughout the "new" Center.



Submitted for WLT/GROW
Frank M. Costantino