

The Grimsby Garden Club was incorporated in 1964.

However, the origins of the club go back to 1895 when Edward A. Cole, founder of Cole's Florists, organized the Grimsby Horticultural Society. As an incentive to join, premiums were given. Initially, premiums included a Genista, a 20 cent packet of Sweet Pea seeds, and a five cent Hydrangea Paniculata. In order to encourage the organization of Societies and ensure their survival, most Horticultural Societies continued to offer premiums for many years.

In 1900, the Grimsby Horticultural Society registered with the Ontario Department of Agriculture.

In 1907 the Society became affiliated with the Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) and began receiving grants. The grant in 1907 was \$46.

There is little known of the activities of the Society in the early 1900s.

In 1923, Edythe Williams (later Gillespie) won the Junior Award in Garden Competition. Miss Williams went on to be very active in the Society. The Depression and World War II adversely affected the Society and in 1943 the Grimsby Horticultural Society was declared dormant by the OHA.

In 1964 the New Grimsby Horticultural Society was resurrected. The driving force behind the Society was Len Bromley, the Postmaster of the Town of Grimsby. He was a strong Grimsby supporter and very involved in its growth and beautification. Although he did not know much about horticulture, his love of gardening and his experience in management made Len the ideal choice to become the first president of the New Grimsby Horticultural Society.

Initially, the Society had 60 charter members and it grew to 109 paid members by the end of the year. The assets of the Society for 1964 were a modest \$18.16. Projects included a flower show, bulb planting at the Stone Shop Museum and assistance in the development of Centennial Park.

Charter member Bob Fleming, a graduate of the Ontario Agricultural College, was president for 1966 and 1967. Both Bob and his wife Joyce were avid gardeners. For more than 30 years, Bob had a gardening show on a local radio station. Bob became a driving force behind the Club's involvement in many beautification endeavours including the annual purchase of hanging baskets for the downtown core, the development and maintenance of the Elm Street flower beds, and grants for various landscaping projects.

In 1969 the Society changed its name to the Grimsby Garden Club. That was also the year the Trillium awards were introduced and a Junior Garden Club was organized. The late Charles Tauskey, who was very involved in the original purchase of the hanging baskets for the downtown area, was president at the time. He and his wife Anna were dedicated gardeners and strong supporters of the Grimsby Garden Club. A flowering tree was planted at the Grimsby Museum in honour of Anna.

The first annual plant sale was held in the spring of 1970 and it continues to be a major fundraiser for the Club.

Edythe Gillespie served as president in 1971 and 1972. Edythe was a prize winner at many Grimsby Garden Club Flower Shows.

In 1979, Bob Fleming was again president. The Fleming Rose Garden at Baker Road was built and maintained by the Flemings for many years. Bob was honoured by the MP, MPP, and the Town of Grimsby for his many contributions to the town. Bob Fleming passed away in January 2005. In his honour, the Grimsby Garden Club purchased a park bench for the rose garden in the park behind Nelles Public School.

Joyce Fleming was one of Canada's active hybridizers, introducing her first hybrid rose in 1986. Overall, she created 29 hybrids, of which "Roberta Bondar" is her best known. Joyce maintained contact with rosarians worldwide and was recognized for 50 years of membership in the Grimsby Garden Club in 2014.

Lil Haworth was on the Board in 1979, eventually becoming President in 1984-85 and again in 1991-92. Lil continues to be active in the Club as a speaker and a floral judge.