

## The Reeve House

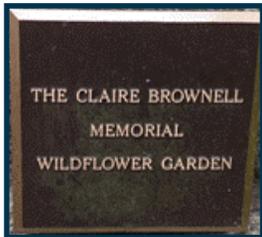


The Reeve House was built circa 1870. Edgar and Ralph Reeve donated the house to the Town of Westfield, New Jersey in 1985. It is now the head-quarters of the Westfield Historical Society at 314 Mountain Avenue.



## Claire Brownell

Claire Brownell, in whose memory the garden was created, was raised in Springfield. After attending Westfield High School, she became a lifelong Westfield resident. Vivacious and friendly, she was active in many school, church, civic, and other activities. She loved flowers and birds and the great outdoors and became a member of the Rake & Hoe Garden Club in 1978. The Rake & Hoe Garden Club is pleased to honor her memory in this unique and beautiful setting. The Claire Brownell Memorial Wildflower Garden is located behind the Reeve House.



## About Our Garden Club

The Rake and Hoe Garden Club was founded in 1952 and continues to meet throughout the year, from September through June. Meetings feature speakers on horticultural, flower design, floral crafts, and environmental topics featuring birds, bees, and butterflies. The club also offers field trips, workshops, and plant exchanges throughout the year. During the covid-19 pandemic, meetings are held through Zoom.

The club supports a Juniors program, and works with local schools as well as with Mobile Meals, Lyons Hospital, and the Jardine Academy for Cerebral Palsy students. Funds are raised through Flower Shows and House Tours. Members come from Westfield, Mountainside, Scotch Plains, and other surrounding towns. If you are interested in learning more about our activities, contact us through our website at [www.rakeandhoegc.org](http://www.rakeandhoegc.org).

*Rake and Hoe Garden Club is a member of the Garden Club of New Jersey and National Garden Clubs Inc.*



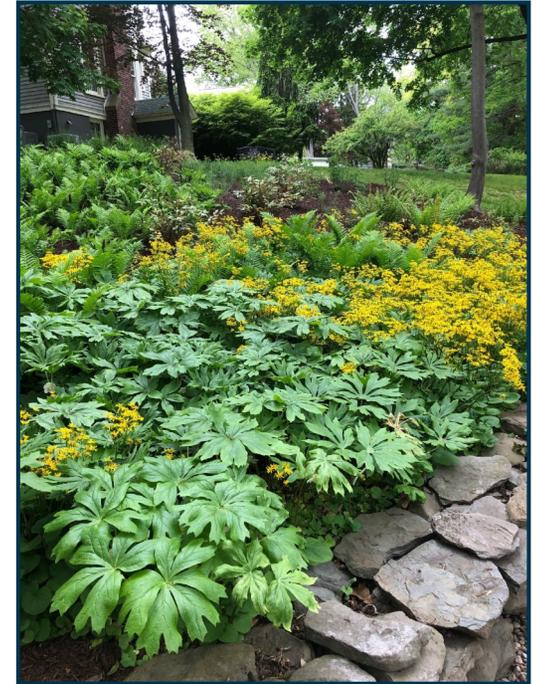
## Community Gardens

The Claire Brownell Memorial Wildflower Garden is one of four community gardens maintained by the Rake and Hoe Garden Club. The others are:

- ◆ Shadowlawn Park
- ◆ North Avenue Train Station
- ◆ Miller-Cory House Museum Period Gardens  
[millercoryhouse.org](http://millercoryhouse.org)
- ◇ New Jersey Native Plants & Children's Sensory Garden
- ◇ Colonial Herb & Vegetable Gardens
- ◇ Dye & Fern Gardens
- ◇ Heirloom Trees & Shrubs

*RHGC 2021/jdr*

## CLAIRE BROWNELL MEMORIAL WILDFLOWER GARDEN



***The Rake and Hoe Garden Club, Inc.  
of Westfield, New Jersey  
[www.rakeandhoegc.org](http://www.rakeandhoegc.org)***

# Rake and Hoe Garden Club, Inc. of Westfield, New Jersey

## History and Description

Located in a woodland setting behind the historic Reeve House, the **Claire Brownell Memorial Wildflower Garden** was officially established in May of 1996. It is on the property of the Westfield Historical Society.

At the time of her death five years earlier, Claire's husband George established a Memorial Fund with the Westfield Historical Society to create the garden in her name. Grants from the Caroline Stephens Hold Fund help support the garden's maintenance. The Rake & Hoe Garden Club cares for the garden, replacing plants as necessary.

The approach to the garden is down a grassy slope on the right side of the hill. Turning onto the garden path, visitors will view the marshy meadow below. The entrance to the path is marked by an historical memorial stone and a stand of majestic Solomon's Seal.



The seating area is nestled into the slope before a giant maple tree, a perfect setting to enjoy a variety of birds attracted by an ample food supply from plants and shrubs.

The hillside is planted with:

- ◇ Blue Star Flower (*Amsonia hubrechtia*)
- ◇ Bearded Tongue (*Penstemon barbatus*)
- ◇ False Indigo (*Baptisia australis*)
- ◇ Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*)
- ◇ Golden Alexander (*Zizia aurea*)
- ◇ Virginia Sweetspire (*Itea virginica*)
- ◇ Inkberry (*Ilex glabra*)
- ◇ Doghobble (*Leucothoe axillaris*)
- ◇ Bottlebrush Buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*)
- ◇ Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*)
- ◇ Cinnamon Fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*)
- ◇ Sensitive Fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*)
- ◇ Wood Fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*)
- ◇ Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*)
- ◇ Lesser Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*)
- ◇ Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
- ◇ Golden Ragwort (*Packera aurea*)

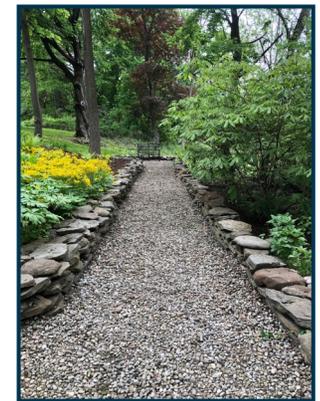
## Garden Restoration

In the years since the garden's dedication in 1996, the original steps, planting beds, and wall had disappeared under a blanket of invasive English ivy.

In 2012, Matthew Gates of Boy Scout Troop 77 in Westfield, proposed an Eagle Scout project to clean up and re-landscape the garden. With the help of other scouts and high school friends, fifty bags of ivy were removed from the property.

Matthew, son of Rake & Hoe Garden Club member Karen Jolley Gates, then worked with the garden club and the Westfield Historical Society to replace the old benches that had been vandalized. Two metal benches were designed and custom-made in a style appropriate to the Victorian Reeve House. Concrete was poured to form bases for the new benches, which were bolted into the concrete for security.

A 60-foot long retaining wall of stone was built to line the other side of the path, and the path was leveled and laid with gravel. The garden was now ready for planting by the Rake and Hoe Garden Club.



Matthew's Eagle Scout project won the First Place National Distinguished High School Service Project Award from National Garden Clubs, Inc.