



GREEN ANIMALS TOPIARY GARDEN

Home to more than 80 topiary animals and other figures for more than a century, Green Animals also blazes with colorful flowers from mid-April through October 1. The 7-acre property overlooks Narragansett Bay. It is the oldest topiary garden in the nation and is recognized by the American Daffodil Society as one of just 28 official Daffodil Display Gardens in the United States – and one of only three in New England, showcasing more than 22,000 daffodils in 70 varieties representing all 13 divisions and 19 color codes. Thirty-seven thousand tulips contribute more color during the spring before late spring perennials like columbine, lupine and coral bells give way to summer annuals, hydrangeas, daylilies and countless more unique specimens. In the fall, highlights include late-blooming mums, asters, daisies, dahlias and more.

OWNERSHIP AND ARCHITECTURE

This small country estate was purchased in 1872 by Thomas E. Brayton (1844-1939), Treasurer of the Union Cotton Manufacturing Company in Fall River, Massachusetts. It consisted of seven acres of land, with a white clapboard summer residence, farm outbuildings, a pasture and a vegetable garden. Gardener Joseph Carreiro, superintendent of the property from 1905 to 1945, and his son-in-law, George Mendonca, superintendent until 1985, were responsible for creating the topiaries.

Carreiro was recruited to design and maintain ornamental and edible gardens as part of a self-sufficient estate. Besides planting fruit trees, perennial beds and vegetable gardens, he experimented with trimming some fast-growing shrubs into unique forms. The first topiaries were started in the estate's greenhouse in 1912 and later moved.

Mr. Brayton's daughter, Alice, gave the estate its name because of the profusion of "green animals." She made it her permanent residence in 1939. Miss Brayton was an avid gardener and loved to entertain. She hosted a party for Jacqueline Bouvier (Kennedy) in her debut season and for years entertained young Caroline and John Kennedy Jr. at parties to celebrate the harvest. She also welcomed the Eisenhower family when they were in Newport, and regularly allowed the public to enjoy the grounds. Upon her death in 1972, at the age of 94, Miss Brayton left Green Animals to The Preservation Society of Newport County. Today, Green Animals remains as a rare example of a self-sufficient estate combining formal topiaries, vegetable and herb gardens, orchards and a Victorian house overlooking Narragansett Bay.

Brayton family house is closed to the public.