



Colonial Herb Garden at the Pardee-Morris House

This herb garden is an example garden with four sections: culinary, medicinal, household and aromatic. During the colonial period, this garden would have been located close to the kitchen door, so these vital plants would be easily accessible for their daily use.

Culinary Garden

Rosemary was grown as a culinary herb. It provided a tasty accent to lamb, game, and stew dishes. As the herb of remembrance, it was added to bouquets, wedding cakes and puddings.

Lovage is closely related to celery, but tastes stronger. Because every part is edible, lovage was used in soups, stews, salads, dips and dressings. Lovage has been supplanted by angelica in medicinal use for digestive ailments.

Chives have been used in cookery since at least 300 B.C. They are high in Vitamins A and C.

Thyme flavored foods and added another herb to the Colonial family's medicine chest, with antibacterial and antimicrobial benefits.

Oregano was used across so many cultures in soups, sauces, stews, meats and fish. It is antiseptic, antibiotic and anti-fungal as well as aids in digestion and headaches.



Medicinal Garden



Comfrey was indispensable to Colonial women in making poultices or salves to heal wounds, mend bones and treat burns and skin rashes.

Self-heal / Heal-all was used for almost any and every malady or injury, especially good to treat fever, sore throat, and skin irritations. "A special herb for inward and outward wounds." - Culpeper

Lamb's Ear's soft leaves were used as bandages.

Yarrow found its way into Colonial gardens for its usefulness in treating wounds.

Feverfew was brought over on the boat from the Old World. Its flowers are the source of a potent traditional headache and migraine remedy. It was known to ward off insects and heal insect bites and stimulate digestion.



Household Garden

Lavender was prized in an age where unpleasant odors were common. Dried lavender would be tucked among stored clothes to refresh them by infusing the garments with their scent.

Santolina serves as insect repellent and, when taken internally, rids the body of intestinal parasites.

Parsley seasoned food and worked as a health tonic. It was also used as a dye, producing a green color. Iron salts would bind the dye to fabrics.

Rose petals have been used as confetti for millennia in celebrations and ceremonies. The fruits are a significant source of Vitamin C and the flowers are useful for treating colds, sore throats, and breaking fevers.

Catmint's scent both attracts cats and repels mice and rats. Aromatic catmint leaves were used as a seasoning. It was also valued for inducing sleep and addressing colds.



Tea/Aromatic Garden

Lemon Balm was used on tables and floors to keep them sweet smelling and ward off insects. Lemon balm is the main ingredient in an alcohol-based herbal tonic called Carmelite Water which is still sold today. It is also a sedative to induce sleep, used to dress wounds and reduce fevers and headaches.



Sage enhances the flavor of game meats and stews. It was also used historically as a medicinal herb with antimicrobial properties and it is anti-inflammatory. Along with bee balm, sage was a prized substitute for black tea.

Spearmint was grown for its refreshing scent and culinary purposes; mint tea remains a popular herbal beverage today.



Bee Balm served as a tea substitute after the Boston Tea Party, when black tea imported from England was difficult or impossible to obtain. Bee balm is medicinal, offering antibacterial and antimicrobial benefits. Beloved of bees, bee balm helps attract pollinators to the garden.

Rose Geranium was used for sachets, sugars, jellies, potpourris, desserts and drinks. Rose geranium is the main source of rose aroma in most rose fragrances.

Compiled by Rachel Heerema, herbalist and Master Gardener intern. Rachel Heerema and Giulia Gouge researched, designed, and installed the Herb Garden in 2017 and continue to maintain it.

Sources:

<http://www.motherearthliving.com/gardening/herbs-for-the-colonial-garden>, based on Dooryard Garden: Colonial Herbs by Jane O'Sullivan and Rhonda Haavisto.

<http://www.strawberybanke.org/garden/HerbGuide.pdf>, Strawberry Banke Museum, Portsmouth, NH

