




Schifferstadt Heritage Garden




ABOUT THE GARDEN

 The garden was an integral part of life at Schifferstadt. It provided vegetables and herbs to be used for cooking and medicinal purposes. Herbs were also used for their scent. These were often strewn on the floors to release a pleasant aroma as people walked over them. Fragrant herbs were used to keep clothing smelling fresh and were used as insect repellent. The uses for herbs and the recipes usually came from the family's German traditions in the old country. Root vegetables were stored for the winter in the barrel-vaulted cellar.

 We don't know where the original Schifferstadt garden was situated, though it almost certainly was behind the house. It probably was larger than today's garden and possibly farther from the house. When Schifferstadt was built, Carroll Creek was closer to the house. It was re-routed in the 1970s to accommodate the expansion of Route 15.

 The existing garden was established in the late 1990s. It follows the typical German plan: four-square with a fence enclosing four square raised beds. German pioneers knew that soil in raised beds warms up earlier than soil at ground level, allowing for planting earlier in the season. It also drains faster after excessive rains. Due to limited space and greater maintenance required for food crops, the current garden has a higher proportion of herbs and lower proportion of vegetables than was typical in the late 1700s. However, all the species in the garden were used during the colonial era.

 The Native Area contains plants indigenous to Maryland that attract pollinators.



PLANT LIST

Apothecary Rose - Used to create rosewater, and to flavor milk for cakes and puddings.

Catnip - A treat for cats and used as a barrier against rats.

Comfrey - Used in old times as a poultice to reduce swelling in sprains. The FDA has banned comfrey products for internal use and warned against external use.

Costmary - Used in posies for its fresh scent. Also used as bookmarks, to make tea, and in strewing on floors for sweeping.

Currant (Black and Red) - Used for making jellies and jams.

Egyptian Walking Onion - Good for eating, pickling, and making sauces and jams.

Evening Primrose - The boiled root has a nutty flavor. Alleged to treat stomach ailments. The seed oil was used for skin conditions.

Fennel - Bulbs are used for salads and side dishes. Seeds and roots were given for coughing and gas.

Germander - Used to make ale and alleged to be a "cure all" for digestive problems, wounds, and rashes.

Hops - Used to make beer.

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Horehound - Used in ancient Rome to treat respiratory conditions. Used still for making candy.

Horse Radish - Roots shredded and eaten with meats and seafood. Can help clear sinuses.

Hyssop - Has a strong licorice scent. Used in soups and stews. Also used to treat bronchial spasms.

Ladies Bedstraw - Used as bedding and for strewing on floors before sweeping.

Lamb's Ear - Used as bandaging and as a washcloth. May help heal scrapes, bruises, and bug bites.

Lavender - Used for various perfuming purposes. Some people find it relaxing. Also used for strewing on floors, in sachets and potpourris, and as a repellent for moths and fleas.

Lemon Balm - Attracts bees. Used in beverages, and also in "strewing" because of its lemon scent.

Lovage - Similar to celery but much larger. Used in soups and salads. The stalks can be dried and used as straws.

Marsh Mallow - Used as a relief for irritation of mucous membranes. The plant was once used to make the candy that bears this name today.

Mint - Used in teas and to soothe stomach aches and cramps.

Oregano - Used in all forms of cooking. The oil has antimicrobial properties. Research suggests it may have other medical uses, but proof has not been established.

Rosemary - Used in roasted meats, soups, and stews. Contains chemicals, such as camphor, that may be useful in treating various conditions. Considered a "love charm" in the Middle Ages.

Sage - Used to flavor meats, breads, and stews. An excellent source of many nutrients from fiber to vitamins.

Salsify - The taproot was used as a vegetable with a taste similar to oysters. A latex from the root can be used as chewing gum.

Soapwort - Boiling the roots and leaves created suds that were used in washing clothes and to clean and thicken wool. Should not be eaten.

Southernwood - Used to repel moths and other insects. Also used in "strewing".

St. John's Wort - Some evidence that it works to treat mild depression and as an anti-inflammatory.

Tansy - Used as a pepper substitute, a bug replant, and as a wash for skin problems.

Tarragon - Used in cooking and vinegars. Traditionally used to stimulate the appetite. The oil can act as a local anesthetic for toothache.

Thyme - Used in all forms of cooking. The oil, called thymol, is an antiseptic and an ingredient in various mouthwashes.

Valerian - An oil from the root is said to have sedating effects and once was used to treat epilepsy.

Winter Savory - Its sharp, peppery flavor is sometimes used to flavor meats.

Wood Betony - Was once planted in churchyards to repel ghosts. Ancient herbals touted it as a cure or preventive for almost every known malady.

Wormwood - An ingredient in absinthe, it once was blamed (falsely) for hallucinations said to be caused by this drink. Many other poorly documented health claims have been made over the centuries.

Yarrow - Used as a yellow dye and as a cure-all by many traditional groups. The ASPCA says it is toxic to dogs, cats and horses.

Plants in the Native Garden Area:

- Beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*)
- Bee Balm (*Monarda didyma*)
- Black Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia fulgida*)
- Blazingstar (*Liatris spicata*)
- Evening Primrose (*Oenothera*)
- False Blue Indigo (*Baptista australis*)
- Goldenrod (*Solidago rugosa*)
- Ironweed (*Vernonia*)
- Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium dubium*)
- Obedient Plant (*Physostegia virginiana*)
- Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum*)
- Spiderwort (*Tradescantia virginiana*)
- Threadneedle Tickseed (*Coreopsis verticillata*)

