

Study Mary Garden  
John S. Stecker, Jr., June, 1980





Our Lady's Excellency  
Windowsill Mary Garden  
John S. Stokes Sr., June, 1980





Some religious plant associations came from the liturgical feast days in the Church calendar for which plants were in bloom, such as, in the exhibit garden, "Lent Flower", "Easter Bells", "Pentacost Flower" and "Assumption Lily". Some, such as "Lily-of-the-Valley" came from scriptural symbolism. Others came from striking plant shapes which brought to mind events of the Bible or suggested details in the lives of Jesus, Mary or the saints: "Heart of Jesus", "Eyes of Mary", "Our Lady's Keys". Others such as "The New Eve" and "Trinity Flower" were theological in reference, and still others, such as "Our Lady's Bedstraw" and "Tree of the Cross" came from old popular legends.

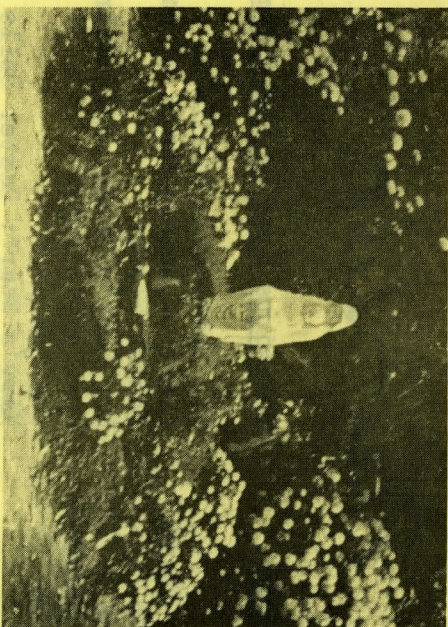
These names evidently were circulated in the popular oral traditions of the medieval period by mendicant monks, pilgrims, warriors, wandering scholars, roving singers, itinerate players, merchants and other travelers, who regularly stayed at monasteries as hostels.

In this pre-literate period religious faith was transmitted primarily through such popular traditions, rather than through formal schools and textbooks as today. Popes, bishops, priests, friars and scholars all nourished these traditions, but the traditions themselves sustained the faith as they circulated among the people, utilizing symbols taken from life and work and from nature.

By cultivating a contemporary Mary Garden, one is able to place oneself in the position of medieval man as he recalled and meditated on truths of religion through the nature symbols of oral tradition. One can thus enter psychologically into the directness of his relationship with God and the symbolically recalled events of scripture through which he followed Mary as his model for collaboration with Christ in building God's kingdom on earth . . . as testified by the numerous medieval cathedrals, universities, cities and kingdoms dedicated to Mary.

Further information and plant lists are on file at the library of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 325 Walnut St., Philadelphia, or may be obtained by mail (only) from Mary's Gardens, 124 W. Chestnut Hill Ave., Philadelphia, Pa. 19118, the exhibitors of this educational garden.

PHILADELPHIA SPRING FLOWER SHOW, 1968



## Mary Gardens

of medieval times were monastery gardens in which flowers with names and symbolism reflecting religious life and thought were grown by gardening monks.

Prominent among flowers with religious symbolism were those named for Mary, the mother of Jesus, and reported as dedicated to her in early books such as C. Baubin's "Plants Which Have Various Holy Names", published in Switzerland in 1591. The pre-Reformation Mary Garden at Melrose Abbey, Scotland, is described in the first chapter of Rosetta Clarkson's book, "Green Enchantment".

The documented research of Mary's Gardens of Philadelphia has found over 1,000 flower, plant, shrub and tree names symbolical of Mary in listings by botanical and folklore researchers systematically cataloguing the plants and common plant names of the Western world.

In this exhibit Contemporary Mary Garden species and hybrids commonly available today have been substituted in some instances for symbolically equivalent species more familiar in medieval times.



# Plant List

Common Name	Religious Name or Symbolism
1 Ajuga	St. Lawrence's Gridiron
2 Bleeding Heart	Heart of Jesus; Heart of Mary
3 Candytuft	Easter Flower
4 Columbine	Our Lady's Shoes; Holy Spirit*
5 Cowslip Primrose	Our Lady's Keys*
6 Crab Apple	The New Eve*
7 Daffodil	Mary's Star*; Easter Bells
8 Forget-me-not	Eyes of Mary
9 Foxglove	Our Lady's Gloves or Thimbles
10 Funkia	Assumption Lily
11 Grape Hyacinth	Lent Flower; Church Steeples
12 Japanese Andromeda	Lily-of-the-Valley Bush
13 Lady Tulip	Our Lady's Tulip
14 Lavender	Mary's Drying Plant
15 Lavender Cotton	St. John's Plant
16 Milfoil	Our Lord's Back
17 Pansy	Our Lady's Delight*; Trinity Flower*
18 Peony	Mary's Rose*; Pentacost Flower
19 Periwinkle	The Virgin's Flower*
20 Rosemary	Rose of Mary
21 Sage	Mary's Shawl
22 Spirea	St. Peter's Wreath
23 Spreading Yew	Tree of the Cross
24 Sweet Woodruff	Our Lady's Bedstraw
25 Thyme	The Virgin's Humility
26 Boxwood	Candlemas Greens
27 Iris	Mary's Sword of Sorrow*

\* Religious art symbol also

For summer and fall blooms, Marigolds (Marygolds) would replace Pansies; Ageretum (St. John's Flower), Forget-me-nots; and Chrysanthemums (All Saints Flower) Foxgloves.

The focal garden figure of Mary, Seat of Wisdom, is a ceramic stoneware casting from the original by liturgical artist, Ade Bethune, of Newport, Rhode Island.

