

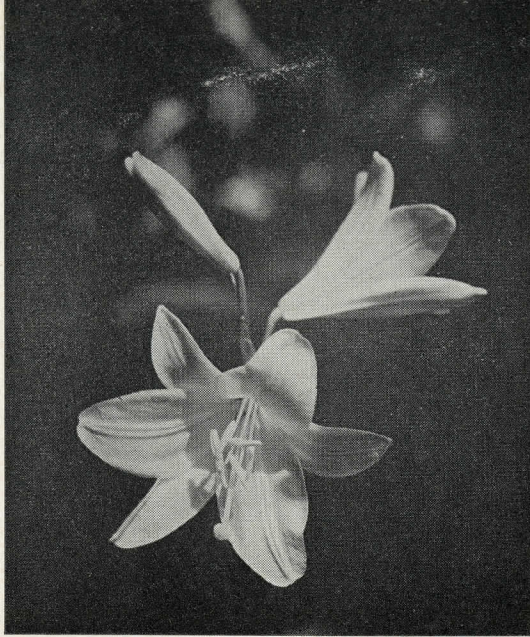
# Gardening With Mary

by John S. Stokes, Jr.



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*The wild rose  
referred to in Scripture  
symbol of Mary,  
The Mystical Rose  
Photo: R. B. Chillias*



*Madonna Lily, ancient emblem of  
Our Lady's purity, which is still  
known by its old religious name.*

ment of the vision of Father James J. Galvin, C.S.S.R., one of the prime-movers of the present-day Mary Garden restoration, who in 1952 wrote:

"Gardens should pray, gardens should remind children of their Mother. Gardens should be holy places that keep minds fresh and unsullied as Madonna lilies. Gardens should chime with names that ring like the Litany of Loreto. And gardens, if they are truly Mary Gardens, will naturally lead to Christ."

Today, more and more gardens are chiming with names like Rose of Sharon, Mary's Gold, Our Lady's Tresses, Our Lady's Slippers, Our Lady's Cushion, Mary's Candle, Mary's Tears, Assumption Lily, Mary's Heart, Our Lady's Mantle, Eyes of Mary, and

many others which were current in days gone by. Reunited to the flowers to which they belong, these names have taken on life-giving flesh and blood; and seen according to their old names, the flowers have once again become religious signs and symbols with a directness and clarity touching the heart and quickening the soul to joy and to prayerful thoughts and acts.

Working with these plant symbols one is brought to meditation also on people—on our spiritual ancestors who so loved the Blessed Virgin, the Holy Mother of God, and so reflected upon her life, graces and mysteries that they saw her praises in plants and blooms. It is as though one were actually present with and shared the mind and heart of the Christian to whose lips

first came the words "Mary's Candle" as he regarded the candle-like form of the giant mullein, or "Our Lady's Cushion" as he came upon the cushion-like tufts of sea pink. . . .

During the first years of Mary-gardening such discoveries are repeated many times as new Flowers of Our Lady are added to the garden. At the same time, old discoveries are renewed each spring, summer and fall as the plants repeat their cycle of growth and bloom. As one gains more intimate knowledge of each plant, its religious association is extended from its initial basis of form, color or liturgical season of bloom to all parts and growth periods of the plant—from seed or root to maturity and death. Each plant therefore becomes a reminder through-

*Known of old as "Our Lady's  
Keys," primrose blossoms were  
one of the many flowers which  
recalled the mysteries and life  
of the Holy Family.*





*St. Joseph, Workman,  
Patron of Mary Gardens  
Photo: Ade Bethune*



as our understanding increases of how sublimely the Holy Trinity endowed, blessed, loved and loves her as daughter, dwelling place, mother, bride, co-operator, co-redemptrix, mediatrix and queen, we are moved to imitate her virtues and to adopt her as the model for our growth in perfection and sanctification in service of God.

As our knowledge of Mary grows, so also does our love of her and our sense of personal access to her in prayer as our heavenly mother, advocate, intercessor, mediatrix and queen. Our meditations and considerations thus become interspersed and completed with spiritual acts, aspirations and ejaculations to Mary; and we strive not only to emulate her virtues but also to share her joys and sorrows and to mortify our own spirit and inclinations so we can become the instruments of her spirit.

The fruit of turning constantly to Mary, our Mother of Good Counsel, in prayer is a sense of her nearness, presence and companionship as we work and pray in the garden. This sense of Mary's presence is most helpful to us in confiding, examining and discussing our temptations, emotions, sentiments, thoughts and conscience with her as a means to the further perfection and sanctification of our thoughts and actions in conformation to the will of God, the mind of Christ

and the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Thus composed and recollected, we are moved to lift our hearts and minds to Mary in contemplation in the peace and quiet of her garden. As we do, her flowers seem to glow about her image, filled with the radiance of her virtues and graces and permeating us with a sense of the unfolding of spiritual life and growth. Plunged, as it were, into the interior of Mary in contemplation, we begin to take root and sustenance in her as our Spiritual Mother and Earthly Paradise.

Marian spirituality has been set forth so fully and authoritatively in St. Louis De Montfort's "True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary," Father Emil Neubert's "Life of Union with Mary" and other works, that there is no need to elaborate upon it here beyond what has already been said to indicate how work and prayer in a Mary Garden can be one means and aid to its development, except to note that such spiritual growth, like all spiritual growth, is properly cultivated under obedience to a spiritual director.

We must not expect, however, that our souls will be permitted to rest in contemplation on the flowery beds of the garden. Mindful that Mary, the Mystical Rose, was called from her flights of divine love in the Temple to the work of the incarnation, redemp-

tion, mediation and spiritual motherhood, we should watch and pray in expectation of God's call through Mary, to arise and go forth to new duties in the garden of the world, where the harvest is great but the reapers are few.

As we are thus summoned to go forth into the world, we still carry within us the interior garden which was nourished in our souls while we cultivated and meditated on the Flowers of Our Lady in the Mary Garden. And in our hands we carry the distilled essence of Marian flower symbolism in the rose garden of our rosary beads. Mary, too, who has been our constant companion in her garden, goes forth with us so that in the world we may continue to perform all our duties and works by her spirit, with her as the example and model for all our actions, in her as our spiritual mother, for her as our most venerable Queen and Mistress and through her as our heavenly intercessor and mediatrix, that we may better perform them through, with and in Christ, her Son, to the honor and glory of God the Father Almighty in the unity of the Holy Ghost.

**The outdoor statues by Ade Bethune of Mary, Seat of Wisdom (27") and St. Joseph, Workman (25") illustrating this article are available from Mary's Gardens, 124 West Chestnut Hill Ave., Philadelphia 18, Pa.**



out the entire season, and not just when it is in bloom, of some aspect of Our Lady's life, graces and mysteries.

Considered from the viewpoint of their growth and cultivation, the rose, the lily and all flowers and gardens have also been used extensively in Christian tradition as symbolizing the spiritual life and growth of the soul, of which the soul of Mary, the Mystical Rose, the Garden Enclosed, the Queen of all Saints, is the most perfect and holy example and model.

According to the figure drawn from the Scriptures and developed by St. Bernard, St. John of the Cross, St. Louis De Montfort and others, our souls are gardens in which Christ sows the seeds of grace and the Holy Ghost plants the roots of virtues through Mary, mediatrix and distributrix of all graces and model of all virtues. As the stewards of our souls and their salvation, we are to cultivate these virtues and graces by cutting back the thistles and thorns of cares of the world, rooting out vices and imperfections, sheltering tender virtues from the withering cold of the north wind of spiritual dryness, pruning back shoots of passion and self-will, and protecting our more established virtues from destruction by the little foxes of temptation. The plants in the gardens of our souls are nourished and also cultivated by Christ, Whom we receive

in Holy Communion and Who abides and works in us as the Divine Gardener. When in time the virtues mature into protecting walls or rings enclosing our gardens, then the most beautiful and delicate mystical flowers and fruits appear, which are the delight of Christ Who "feeds among the lilies." Then, too, the south wind of the Holy Spirit breathes through the garden, wafting up its fragrance to God, Our Heavenly Father, as a holy sacrifice of praise.

According to a similar figure from Scripture, the Liturgy and the Saints, our souls are flowering plants which are to "send forth flowers as the lily, and yield a fragrance, and bring forth leaves in grace and praise with canticles, and bless the Lord in His works" (Communion verse, Feast of the Most Holy Rosary). The principles of this growth are the warming rays of Christ, the Sun of Justice and the waters or dew of sanctifying grace which we receive in due season from the Holy Spirit through Mary, the "Heavenly Light Cloud Bearing the Rain of Grace," under the providence of Our Heavenly Father. The more our soul grows from absorption of the waters of grace, the more of these waters it can absorb, in emulation of Mary, the Mystical Rose, the Spiritual Vessel, who from the moment of her immaculate conception was ever full of grace. Mary, our spiritual mother, is also

the Enclosed Garden of the Eternal Father and the New Paradise of Eden, within whom and in whose soil we are rooted, and by whose spirit we are nourished. Mary's spirit is sweet above honey, and her inheritance above honey and the honey-comb; but we who know her shall yet hunger and thirst for Christ. And as we receive our true nourishment by partaking of Our Lord's Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, we are engrafted and incorporated as branches of Christ, the True Vine, growing at the center of the enclosed garden of Mary and cultivated by our Heavenly Father, the Husbandman, to Whom the fragrance of our blossoms are wafted by the Holy Spirit.

Thus the garden and flowers which we may first have cultivated as a setting for and adornment of Our Lady's statue or shrine, and then transformed into a Mary Garden filled with Flowers of Our Lady proclaiming her praises and serving as a basis for meditation on her life and mysteries, are also a school of spiritual growth for the soul devoted to Mary.

This growth begins as we cultivate Our Lady's Flowers before her image in her garden, believing in her, loving her, recalling her, proclaiming her praises, praying to her and meditating on her virtues, graces, privileges, mysteries, joys, sorrows and glories. Then,



*Eyes of Mary  
more popularly known as  
Forget-Me-Not*



# Your Mary Garden

Your Mary Gardens can be small or large: a small bed of flowers at the foot of Our Lady's statue or shrine, or a larger garden around it or leading up to it.

Begin your garden with Flowers of Our Lady already familiar to you or commonly grown in your neighborhood. Then add others, choosing from the following list of fifty of her flowers most widely grown in the United States.

## I. Basic planting of perennial plants for bloom year after year:

LOW	MEDIUM	TALL
Snow Drop: <i>Candlemas Bells</i>	Solomon's Seal: <i>O. L. Locketts</i>	Wild Rose: <i>Mary's Rose</i>
Violet: <i>O. L. Modesty</i>	Bleeding Heart: <i>Mary's Heart</i>	Peony: <i>Mary's Rose</i>
Rock Cress: <i>O. L. Cushion</i>	Columbine: <i>O. L. Shoes</i>	Madonna Lily: <i>Mary's Lily</i>
Primrose: <i>O. L. Keys</i>	Rosemary*: <i>Legend of O. L.</i>	Bell Flower: <i>O. L. Bells</i>
Lily-of-the-Valley: <i>O. L. Tears</i>	Spiderwort: <i>O. L. Tears</i>	Bebalm: <i>Sweet Mary</i>
Sea Pink: <i>O. L. Pincushion</i>	Iris: <i>Emblem of O. L.</i>	Gladiolus: <i>Emblem of Incarnation</i>
Star of Bethlehem: <i>O. L. Tears</i>	Fuchsia*: <i>O. L. Eardrops</i>	Aster: <i>O. L. Birthday Flower</i>
Easter Bells: <i>O. L. Buttons</i>	Red Valerian: <i>O. L. Needlework</i>	Monk's Hood: <i>O. L. Slipper</i>
Garden Pink: <i>Virgin's Pink</i>	Rose Campion: <i>Mary's Rose</i>	Chrysanthemum: <i>Legend of Epiphany</i>
Harebell: <i>O. L. Thimble</i>	Plantain Lily: <i>Assumption Lily</i>	* (take indoors for winter)

## II. Biennial plants replaced each spring (started from seed previous year):

Pansy: <i>O. L. Delight</i>	Sweet William: <i>O. L. Tuft</i>	Foxglove: <i>O. L. Gloves</i>
English Daisy: <i>Mary's Rose</i>	Milk Thistle: <i>O. L. Thistle</i>	Canterbury Bells: <i>O. L. Nightcap</i>
Forget-me-not: <i>Eyes of Mary</i>		Hollyhock: <i>St. Joseph's Staff</i>
		Giant Mullein: <i>O. L. Candle</i>

## III. Annual plants started from seed each spring (easily started indoors):

Virginian Stock: <i>Virgin's Cross</i>	Sweet Wm. Catchfly: <i>Mary's Rose</i>	Giant Marigolds: <i>Mary's Gold</i>
Dwarf Marigolds: <i>Mary's Gold</i>	Calendula: <i>Mary's Bud</i>	Annual Chrysanthemum: <i>Mary's Gold</i>
	Hybrid Marigolds: <i>Mary's Gold</i>	Morning Glory Vine: <i>O. L. Mantle</i>
	Ladyslipper Balsam: <i>O. L. Earrings</i>	Sweet Scabious: <i>O. L. Pincushion</i>

Seeds, bulbs or plants of these and many more Flowers of Our Lady, detailed gardening instructions, outdoor statues and shrines, and further literature on the Mary Garden idea and movement are all available from Mary's Gardens, Philadelphia. For complete information write to:

MARY'S GARDENS  
124 W. Chestnut Hill Ave.  
Philadelphia 18, Pa., U.S.A.

The front cover picture is the reproduction of the group statue of Mary, Queen of All Hearts, in Rome. The picture is a courtesy of QUEEN OF ALL HEARTS magazine, Montfort Fathers, Bay Shore, New York.



## CHAPTER TWO

### ON CONTEMPLATING GOD IN HIS VESTIGES IN THE SENSE WORLD

1. Concerning the mirror of things  
perceived through sensation,  
we can see God  
not only through them as through his vestiges,  
but also in them  
as he is in them  
by his essence, power and presence.  
This type of consideration is higher than the previous one;  
therefore it holds second place  
as the second level of contemplation  
by which we are led to contemplate God  
in all creatures  
which enter our minds through our bodily senses.

11. From the first two stages  
in which we are led to behold God  
in vestiges,  
like the two wings covering the Seraph's feet,<sup>9</sup>  
we can gather that all the creatures of the sense world  
lead the mind

8. Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, 1, 2.

9. Cf. Isa. 6:2.



ST. BONAVENTURE

of the contemplative and wise man  
to the eternal God.

For these creatures are  
shadows, echoes and pictures  
of that first, most powerful, most wise and most perfect  
Principle,

of that eternal Source, Light and Fulness,  
of that efficient, exemplary and ordering Art.

They are  
vestiges, representations, spectacles  
proposed to us  
and signs divinely given  
so that we can see God.

These creatures, I say, are  
exemplars  
or rather exemplifications  
presented to souls still untrained  
and immersed in sensible things  
so that through sensible things  
which they see

they will be carried over to intelligible things  
which they do not see  
as through signs to what is signified.

12. The creatures of the sense world  
signify

*the invisible attributes of God,*<sup>10</sup>

partly because God is  
the origin, exemplar and end  
of every creature,

and every effect is

the sign of its cause, the exemplification of its exemplar  
and the path to the end, to which it leads:

10. Rom. 1:20.



partly by their own proper representation,  
partly from prophetic prefiguration,  
partly from angelic operation,  
partly from additional institution.

For every creature is by its nature  
a kind of effigy and likeness of the eternal Wisdom,  
but especially one  
which in the book of Scripture  
has been elevated through the spirit of prophecy  
to prefigure spiritual things;  
and more especially, those creatures  
in whose likeness God wished to appear  
through the ministry of angels;  
and most especially, a creature  
which God willed to institute  
as a symbol  
and which has the character  
not only of a sign in the general sense  
but also of a sacrament.

13. From all this, one can gather that  
*from the creation of the world*  
*the invisible attributes of God are clearly seen,*  
*being understood*  
*through the things that are made.*<sup>11</sup>

And so those who do not wish to heed these things,  
and to know, bless and love  
God  
in all of them  
*are without excuse;*<sup>11</sup>  
for they are unwilling to be transported  
*out of darkness*  
*into the marvelous light of God.*

11. Rom. 1:20.



*But thanks be to God  
through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has transported us  
out of darkness  
into his marvelous light<sup>12</sup>  
when through these lights exteriorly given  
we are disposed to reenter  
the mirror of our mind  
in which divine realities shine forth.*

12. 1 Cor. 15:57; 1 Pet. 2:9.