COLONIAL DOORYARD GARDEN

The *dooryard garden* in colonial times was built to face the warm southern exposure of the sun. It provided the self-sufficient household with foods, flavorings and herbal medicines.

The *dooryard garden* was also used as a meeting and sitting place for the family similar to our use of porches today. Birdbaths, gazing balls, sundials and statuary were often used in the *dooryard garden*.

The *dooryard garden* was for the immediate use of the housewife and supplemented the larger vegetable gardens located further out in the homestead. In a *dooryard garden*, the beds were raised 6-8 inches above ground so the soil could heat up quickly in the spring and promote an early crop. Stone, logs or sawn boards were used to retain the soil. Fencing was mandatory in order to keep out wild as well as domestic animals. (*The fencing used in this garden conforms to the zoning codes of Norwich in 1701.*) Walkways were kept to three feet wide to allow for maintenance, with entrance paths at least four feet wide. Depending on family wealth, walkways would be of packed earth, stepping stone, gravel, crushed shells or any locally available material. Geometric shaped beds were common in the 1700’s as it was the predominant design in Europe at the time.

This *dooryard garden* is not original to the Leffingwell House/Inn but is representative of a 1700’s garden in New England. It includes eight planting beds divided into three categories containing examples of the types of plants available at that time.

**IMPORTED BEDS:**
The imported plants were brought by the colonists as they resettled to the new world. Some were imported at a later date with the growth of shipping and trade. The plants they brought with them were considered essential to daily living: medicinal, herbal and culinary. Later imports were either decorative flowers or specialty herbs.

“**ESCAPEES**”: Some of the plants that were imported by Colonists “escaped” the gardens and became “Native” and in some cases, invasive. Examples of these “escapees” are: daylily, mullein and Queen Anne’s lace (the ancestor of the cultivated carrot).

**NATIVE BEDS**
These plants are wildflowers native to northeastern America. Some of these were introduced by Native Americans to the early colonists for culinary, herbal or medicinal use. Major native crops such as the 3 sisters (corn, beans, and squash) were grown elsewhere on the homestead. Other native wildflowers used in this *dooryard garden* have become colorful additions to the gardens of today.

**HERBAL BED:**
The four herbal beds contain representative samples of the plantings commonly found in a typical 1700’s *dooryard garden*. These beds contain a mix of herbal, medicinal and flavoring plants with both native and imports mixed together with a few decorative plants for the housewife to enjoy. Currently used as a bird bath, there is a natural stone that was used for grinding and mixing. Two statues flank the entrance to the house.

Information on the garden configuration, origin and use of included plants was obtained from:

1. [www.neuhsa.org/dooryard/htm](http://www.neuhsa.org/dooryard/htm), New England unit of Herb Society of America
2. [www.strawberrybanke.org](http://www.strawberrybanke.org), plants and gardens
3. [www.gundaless.com](http://www.gundaless.com), native plants 1600-1775
4. [www.hortweb.cas.psu.edu](http://www.hortweb.cas.psu.edu), Penn State dept horticulture, “Creating a Colonial Garden”
5. [www.ct-botanical-society.org](http://www.ct-botanical-society.org), native plants of CT
6. [www.arnoldis.arboretum.harvard.edu](http://www.arnoldis.arboretum.harvard.edu), colonial gardens
7. [www.UCONN.ladybug.edu](http://www.UCONN.ladybug.edu), History of Norwich by Frances Caulkins, zoning laws.

This garden was planned and built by Greg Farlow under the auspices of the UCONN Master Gardener Program of CT, and with the help of the 2011 NFA football team and boosters.

Brochure design by Camilla Farlow
The following is a diagram of this dooryard garden. The beds are numbered and labeled. The plant list corresponds to the numbered beds. Plants are identified by common name, botanical name and origin, also Native(N), Import(I), Herb(H), Medicinal(M) or Culinary(C) use. It is interesting to note that many herbs brought here and used by the early colonists were not native to Europe. They migrated to Western Europe following the ancient trade routes between England, Europe and the "Far East", and then migrated again to the Americas.

***1 HERB***
Chives(I,C), Allium schoenoprasum, 300BC China Thyme (I,M,C), Thymus serpyllum, Greece Sage (I,C), Salvia officinalis, E.Mediterranean Sorrel (I,C), Rumex acetosa, NE Europe. Bee balm, (N,M), monarda fistula, N. America Orris root (M), Iris germanica, E.Medit., N. India Tarragon (I,C), Artemisia dracunlus, S. Russia

***2 HERB***
Monkshood (I,M), Aconitum napellus, SW England & W central Europe Butterfly milkweed or pleurisy root (N,M), Asclepias tuberosa, N America Craneshill geranium (N,M), Geranium maculatum, N America Wormwood (I,C), Artemisia absinthium, Europe Ajuga or bugleweed (I,M), Ajuga reptans, Europe Garlic chives (I,C), Allium tuberosum, China Daylily (I,M), Hemerocallis flava, Eurasia Egyptian onion (I,M,H), Allium cepa, travel to England with gypsies from India

***3 HERB***
Spiderwort (N,M), Tradescantia virginiana, North America Mugwort (I,M), Artemisia vulgaris, Europe Mullein (I,M), Verbascum thapsis, England Foxglove (I,M), Digitalis purpurea, SW England, NW Africa Tansy (M)
Flax (I,H), Linum usitatissimum, India, Fertile Fertile Crescent 3000 B.C. Yarrow (I,M), Achilla millefolium, 1000BC Europe Heliopsis (N), Helianthus , Eastern N. America

***4 HERB***
House leek or hens and chickens(I,M,H), Sempervivum arachnoideum, S Europe 1596 Stonecrop (I,M), Sempervivum tectorum, S Europe alpine areas Catmint (I,M), Nepeta cataria, Europe Bugbane (N,H), Cimifuga Americana, N. America Lamb's ears (I,M), Stachya byzantia, Europe Clove pinks (I,M), Dianthus caryophillus, Eurasia Daylily (I,M), Hemerocallis fulva, Eurasia

***5 IMPORT***
Peony, Paeonia, Asia & S Europe Vinca, Vinca minor, S.Central Europe Globe thistle, Echinops ritro, Eurasia Mullein (I,M), Verbascum thapsis, England Queen Anne lace, Dracus carota, Europe Tiger lily, Lilium lancifolium, Asia Lambs ears (M), Ajuga (M) Lavender (I,H), Lavendula officinalis, Medit.

***6 IMPORT***
Fringed rue (I,M,H), Ruta graveolens, Eastern Mediterranean Siberian iris, Iris siberica, N Asia, E Europe Fennel (I,C), Foeniculum vulgare, 490BC Greece Tansy (I,M,H), Tanacetum vulgare, Greece Egyptian onion (C,M); Garlic chives (I,C) Clove pinks or dianthus (M); Foxglove (M) Daffodil, Narcissus, N.Africa,Europe, Asia Grape hyacinth, Muscari racemosa, Turkey

***7 NATIVE WILDFLOWER***
Butterfly milkweed (M) Alum root (H), Heuchera americana False blue indigo (H,M), Baptisia australis Cranesbill geranium (M) Beardtongue (M), Penstemon Blackeyed Susan (M), Rudbekia laciniata

***8 NATIVE WILDFLOWER***
White yarrow(M), Achilla millefolium Tall meadow rue, Thalictrum polyramon Spiderwort (M), Tradescantia virginiana Columbine, Aquilegia Canadensis Heliopsis (C), Helianthus Bee balm, Oswego tea (M), Monarda fistula Bleeding heart, Dicentra Canadensis Joe Pye weed (M), Eupatorium purpurea

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