

Society of the Founders of Norwich, CT

Owners and operators of the Circa 1675

Leffingwell House Museum

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

348 Washington Street, Norwich, CT 06360

Open Every Saturday April through October Noon – 4 PM

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

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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:

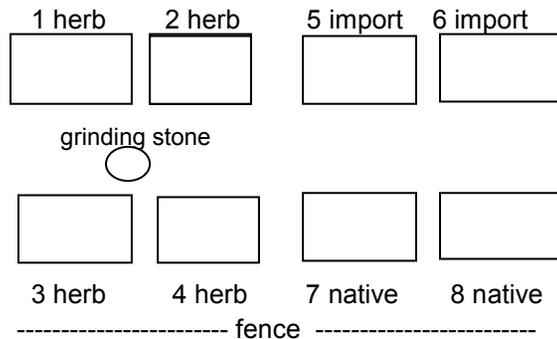
1. www.neuhsa.org/dooryard/htm, New England unit of Herb Society of America
2. www.strawberyanke.org, plants and gardens
3. www.gundaless.com, native plants 1600-1775
4. www.hortweb.cas.psu.edu, Penn State dept horticulture, “Creating a Colonial Garden”
5. www.ct-botanical-society.org, native plants of CT
6. www.arnoldis.arboretum.harvard.edu, colonial gardens
7. www.UCONN.ladybug.edu,
8. 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 were 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.

Front Door of House



*****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 dracunculus, 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
 Cranesbill 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 Europe,
 NW Africa Tansy (M)
 Flax (I,H), Linum usitatissimum, India, 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 arachnoidum,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
 Lambs ears (I,M), Stachya byzantia, Europe
 Clove pinks (I,M), Dianthus caryophyllus,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, Dracuc carota, Europe
 Tiger lily, Lilium lancifolium, Asia
 Lambs ears (M), Ajuga (M)
 Lavender (I,H), Lavendula officinalis, Medit.

*****6 IMPORT*****

Fringed rue (I,,H,M), 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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 Apr 2012**