

Medieval Physic Garden

Monastic gardens enabled religious establishments to be self-sufficient by providing food for the monks and for the local community.

Many monasteries also developed physic gardens for the production of herbal remedies to treat a range of illnesses. Additionally, herbs were used for flavouring and dye plants were grown for colouring garments.

Planting Plan



4. Seats

5. Scented Herber

6. Coughs, Colds and Flu

7. Headaches and Restorative Tonics

8. Digestion

9. Liver, Bladder and Kidneys

Dye Plants

Weld (*Reseda luteola*) – yellow, the flowering tops yield a good yellow dye.

Woad (*Isatis tinctoria*) – blue, if mixed with weld, an excellent green is achieved.

Onion Skins – orange/ yellow.

Dyers chamomile (*Anthemis tinctoria*) – yellow.

Lady's bedstraw (*Galium verum*) – yellow.



Woad

Flowery Mead

Ox-eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) – these were used to treat madness, smallpox and tumours.

Corn Poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*) – used as a colouring matter for old ink.

Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) – pestilential fevers.

Heartsease (*Viola tricolor*).

Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*) – diuretic, rheumatism and a cure for gout.



Corn Poppy

Scented Herber

Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*) – was used to reduce stress and anxiety, promote sleep, improve appetite and ease pain and discomfort from indigestion. Even before the Middle Ages, lemon balm was steeped in wine to lift the spirits, help to heal wounds, and treat venomous insect bites and stings.

Lavender (*Lavendula angustifolia*) – for washing and bathing.

Sweet Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*) – it used to be hung and strewn in churches on St. Peter's and St. Barnabas' Day. Bunches of box, woodruff, lavender and rose added sweet fragrance. It was also used for stuffing mattresses.



Lemon Balm

Coughs, Colds and Flu

Elecampane (*Inula helenium*) – coughs, catarrh and asthma.

Mallow (*Malva sylvestris*) – calms irritated bronchial tissue and is still used in cough medicine today.

Sage (*Salvia officinalis*) – antibacterial gargle for tonsillitis, laryngitis.

Apothecary's Rose (*Rosa gallica*) – rose hip high in Vitamin C.

Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*) – anti-catarrhal & expectorant.



Mallow

Headaches and Restorative Tonics

Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) – to aid sleep in medieval times.

St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) – neuralgia, calming.

Lavender (*Lavendula angustifolia*) – calming, insomnia and anti-depressive.

Valerian (*Valerian officinalis*) – nervous tension headaches.

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) – restorative tonic, warning: harmful during pregnancy.



Lavender

Digestion

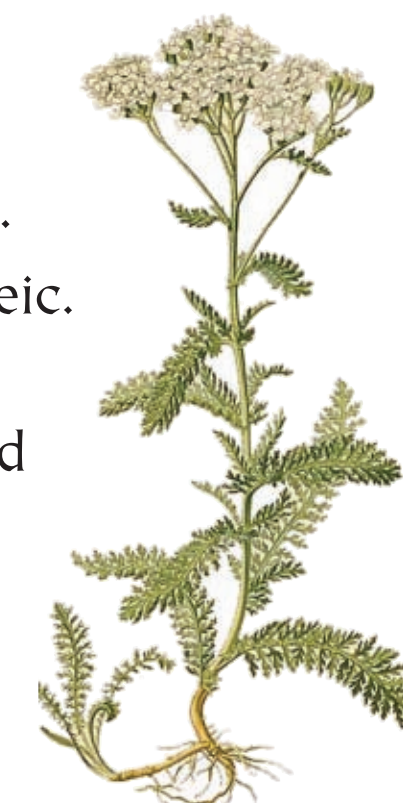
Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) – diarrhoea, biliary colic, has many uses. Achilles staunched the bleeding wounds of soldiers.

Vervain (*Verbena officinalis*) – anti-diarrhoeic.

Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) – improves digestion, relieves stomach cramps and bad odour from the intestines.

Pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium*) – antispasmodic, was used to settle an upset stomach in medieval times!

Viola (*Viola tricolor*) – used for indigestion.



Yarrow

Liver, Bladder and Kidneys

Lovage (*Levisticum officinale*) – cystitis and kidney stones, also improves the health of other plants.

Vervain (*Verbena officinalis*) – liver jaundice.

Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*) – kidney stones and urine infections.

Mallow (*Malva sylvestris*) – soothes irritation of the urinary tract.

Heartsease (*Viola Tricolor*) – diuretic, cystitis and urinary disorders.

The information provided here is a sample of the plants grown and their uses.

For a full list of the plants and more details about their use, please obtain a leaflet from the Priory House Heritage Centre.

Garden design by
Deborah Anne Bird
info@gardensinharmony.co.uk



Heartsease