

Welcome to the 18th Century Garden of the Amherst Historical Society. Located east of the historic 1700s Strong House Museum and behind the 1927 Jones Public Library, this garden is a flowering oasis in the very heart of Amherst. The Garden Club of Amherst (founded 1915) plants and maintains this delightful space for everyone to enjoy. Visitors may become acquainted with authentic colonial plant material and 1700s garden design, get ideas for their own historic house garden, or think about which plant names have been in New England for three centuries.

Pre-Revolutionary Gardens

The two basic types of *pre-Revolutionary gardens* in New England were the cottage garden and the manor garden, depending on the needs and wealth of the owners.

The *cottage gardens*, modeled after English cottage gardens, were found in more rural agricultural towns, and were laid out between functional walls and informal paths, placed to allow easy maintenance and harvesting. Walls protected plants from harsh weather and some animals. These gardens contained practical vegetables and herbs, and useful flowers, planted neatly and informally side by side with little actual design. They gradually evolved into kitchen gardens.

The *manor gardens*, also copied from England, were developed by more prosperous people. Though more formal, these gardens were informally planted. They were often sited on the east or west side of houses, as the south side might be too hot and harsh and the north not sunny enough. They often had a long central axis path of gravel, sod, or cobblestones, as well as secondary paths. Flower beds were often edged with low clipped hedges of boxwood, ribbon grass, moss pinks, lavender, santolina, or germander.

There were focal points at either end of the central axis: these might include an arbor, summer house, sundial, statue, fence, or even a scenic vista. A tall protective hedge or fence frequently enclosed the manor garden, and its placement close to the house allowed the residents to enjoy the garden's colors and fragrance.

Beds were sometimes dedicated specifically to flowers, or to a flower and herb mix. Useful vegetables might be included or grown on a separate bed. The early manor garden was as complex, ornate, and large as the botanical interests, knowledge, or income of the owners. New England manor gardens were seldom as extensive as some of the gardens of the plantation South due to the climate here and the scarcity of hired or even slave help.

After the American Revolution

The manor garden evolved into the *parlor garden*, which was devoted entirely to flowers. Parlor gardens were usually as wide as the house and about two-thirds as long, were fenced, and had a walk from the parlor door to the garden gate. The garden became a status symbol, in fact, it was a smaller manor garden. The remainder of the grounds maintained a more naturalistic design in the style of Capability Brown, the very influential English landscape architect of the Federal period.

18th Century Garden History

The Amherst Historical Society and the DAR had been meeting at the Strong House since the 1890s. Sarah Emerson and then her daughters owned it, and in 1916 left the house and gardens to the Historical Society. Soon after, Mrs. Mabel Loomis Todd, the main founder of the Historical Society, and the DAR began a correspondence with Mrs. George Churchill (Maybelle), head of the Historical Society's Grounds Committee. They planned an old-fashioned garden as a Memorial to fellow board member Anson D. Morse, a history professor at Amherst College. Mrs. Morse's generous donation allowed planting of the 18th Century Garden in 1918 with a Morse Memorial sundial as its focal point. Mrs. Churchill, a charter member of the Historical Society, guided the work. She was also the head of the Garden Section of the Woman's Club, and had spectacular gardens behind her home on Spring Street (now Five Colleges, Inc.).

Mrs. Churchill and her committee watched over the 18th Century Garden for many years, weeding, maintaining, and replanting annually where needed. She reported faithfully to the Historical Society at its annual meeting every January. In the early 1940s, Mrs. Churchill and Mrs. Civille Pray (Frances, but called Ella), both 1915 charter members of the Garden Club of Amherst, became interested in really replanting the old Strong House garden. Along with several other garden club members they formed the 18th Century Garden Committee of the Club, an ongoing committee that still purchases plants, weeds, and replants where needed each spring, and provides funds for maintenance.

In 1947, Maybelle Churchill bequeathed a then large sum of \$1,000 to the Historical Society for the upkeep of the Garden, and at their annual meeting members voted to use the money to establish and care for an authentic 18th Century Garden at the Strong House.

In 1951 the Historical Society's Garden Club Committee, under the leadership of chairman Mrs. Floyd Thompson (Marion), worked to develop a well-researched 18th Century design. From 1953 until 1956 members of both the Historical Society and the Garden Club of Amherst worked together under the inspired leadership of Lyle L. Blundell, Horticultural Chairman of the Historical Society and professor of Landscape Architecture at Massachusetts Agricultural College (now UMass). Prof. Blundell drew up a plan for a manor garden on the east side the Strong House. Every effort was taken to use only plants authentic to the period around 1750, when the Strong House was built. Blundell had two redwood benches built for the northern edge of the garden, memorials to Mrs. Ella Pray, near the Anson Morse Sundial. At the opposite end of the garden a single redwood garden seat was installed, a memorial to benefactor Mrs. Maybelle Churchill. All three benches were carved by Amherst College retired botany professor Orton Clark, using poetry chosen by Dorothy Galipeau. At the 1956 annual meeting Blundell reported that the "new old Garden was nearly completed."

In 1959 the garden was finally planted to everyone's delight. On May 21, 1961, Lyle Blundell announced that when the stonework around the sundial was completed, work on the garden would at last be finished. In September of 1961 the final stone was laid in place.

The Garden Club of Amherst

In 1959 the Historical Society asked the Garden Club of Amherst to manage the 18th Century Garden as their own project. The Garden Club agreed to do so for a five year trial period. Funding for plant purchases and any hired help came from the Club's annual May plant sale on the town common, begun in 1951. This event continues today, still supporting this garden as well as town beautification, local libraries, environmental groups, and a UMass scholarship.

The Garden Club has managed the 18th Century Garden for more than 60 years. Each spring, current members hold a work bee, joining forces to buy and plant new and replacement plants, pick up winter trash, clean up, rake, trim, and weed the area, and edge the garden.

The garden at the historic old Strong House has long been cared for by dedicated gardeners, even by a casual summer visitor who picks up litter or pulls a weed. The success of this garden is a memorial to each of them.

Plants in the 18th Century Garden

The following is a list of plant material found in the garden. Sometimes material may be lost or unavailable; if a plant is missing, Garden Club members will replace it in the future.

Scientific Name

Achillea millefolium
 Achillea ptarmica
 Aconitum napellus
 Alchemilla mollis
 Althea rosea
 Amaranthus caudatus
 Amaranthus tricolor
 Angelica archangelica
 Antirrhinum majus
 Aquilegia Canadensis
 Aquilegia vulgaris
 Artemisia arbrotanum
 Artemisia vulgaris
 Asclepias tuberosa
 Baptisia australis
 Buxus sempervirens
 Calendula officianalis
 Campanula persicifolia
 Chelone glabra
 Chrysanthemum maximum
 Chrysanthemum motifolium
 Chrysanthemum parthenium
 Cimicifuga racemosa
 Clematis paniculata
 Cleome sp.
 Convallaria majalis
 Coreopsis lanceolata
 Coreopsis verticillata
 Delphinium elatum
 Dianthus plumarius
 Dictamnus alba
 Digitalis purpurea
 Echinacea purpurea
 Echinops retro
 Eryngium maritimum
 Filipendula hexipetala
 Gomphrena globosa
 Gypsophila paniculata
 Helenium autumnale
 Hemerocallis fulva

Common Name

Yarrow
 Sneezeweed
 Monkshood
 Lady's mantle
 Hollyhock
 Love lies bleeding
 Joseph's coat
 Angelica
 Snapdragon
 American columbine
 European columbine
 Southernwood
 Mugwort
 Butterfly weed
 False indigo
 English box
 Pot marigold
 Peachleaf bell flower
 Turtlehead
 hasta daisy
 Florist chrysanthemum
 Feverfew
 Bugbane
 Sweet autumn clematis
 Cleome
 Lily of the valley
 Tickseed coreopsis
 Threadleaf coreopsis
 Candle larkspur
 Grass pink
 Gas plant
 Common foxglove
 Purple coneflower
 Small globe flower
 Sea holly
 Dropwort
 Globe amaranth
 Baby's breath
 Common sneezeweed
 Tawny day lily

Hosta sp.
 Hyssopus officianalis
 Iberis sempervirens
 Ilex glabra
 Iris germanica
 Iris pumila
 Iris sibirica
 Kalmia latifolia
 Lilium tigrinum
 Lupinus perennis
 Malus sp.
 Mirabilis dichotoma
 Monarda didyma
 Myosotis sylvatica
 Narcissus sp.
 Nicotiana glauca
 Nigella damascena
 Oenothera fruticosa
 Ornithogalum umbellatum
 Paeonia officinalis
 Papaver orientale
 Philadelphus coronarius
 Phlox divaricata
 Phlox paniculata
 Physostegia virginiana
 Platycodon grandiflorum
 Polemonium reptans
 Primula polyantha
 Pulmonaria angustifolia
 Rosa sp.
 Rudbeckia hirta
 Sanguisorba officianalis
 Tagetes patula
 Tanacetum vulgare
 Thalictrum flavum
 Thuja occidentalis
 Tradescantia virginiana
 Trollius europaeus
 Tropaeolum majus
 Tsuga Canadensis
 Valeriana officianalis
 Veronica longifolia

Plantain lily
 Hyssop
 Candytuft
 Inkberry
 German iris
 Dwarf iris
 Siberian iris
 Mountain laurel
 Tiger lily
 Lupine
 Apple
 Four o'clocks
 Oswego tea
 Forget me not
 Daffodil
 Flowering tobacco
 Nigella or fennel flower
 Sundrops
 Star of Bethlehem
 Common peony
 Oriental poppy
 Mock orange
 Blue phlox
 Summer phlox
 False dragon head
 Balloon flower
 Greek valerian
 Primrose
 Lungwort
 Old fashion climbing rose
 Black eyed susan
 Burnett
 French marigold
 Curly tansy
 Meadow rue
 Arbor vitae
 Spiderwort
 European globe flower
 Nasturtium
 Common hemlock
 Garden heliotrope
 Clump speed well

The 18th Century Garden



Amherst History Museum
 The Strong House
 67 Amity Street, Amherst, MA 01002

Managed by
 The Garden Club of Amherst

This is a facsimile garden. Its design suggests the manor garden of a family of better than moderate means in a rural community in the middle of the eighteenth century. Plant materials are as accurate to the period as is possible today.