



Photo: Jim Meyers

WHAT IS AN HERB GARDEN?

Herbs are plants with properties that ward off predation by animals and insects. Some of the same chemicals that protect the plants were found to be useful to humans. Over time, these plants have been selectively cultivated in gardens. Herbs have been used since early recorded history to heal and delight the senses—as medicines, fragrances, dyes, cosmetics, insecticides, decorations and flavorings for food.

HISTORY OF THE HERB WALL

Carl and Mary Krippendorf purchased the property now known as Rowe Woods in 1898. They planted thousands of cultivated plants, including an extensive collection of daffodils. They also built the rock walls of the Herb Wall and used this area for planting herbs and flowers.

Cincinnati Nature Center purchased the property in 1965 and strives to maintain what the Krippendorfs began by managing the site for biodiversity. In the 1970s, the area where the current Herb Wall sits was overgrown with bush honeysuckle, weeds and small trees. A group of young men completing an Eagle Scout project helped clean it out and dedicated volunteers have kept it weeded and maintained over the years.

The Herb Wall area is a work in progress. Over the last few years, volunteers have uncovered new paths and stone walls that were built in Mr. Krippendorf's time. Our volunteers have discovered perhaps, yet another layer of stone walls and/or steps that lead to multiple cold frames. If you sit on the stone bench at the end of the flagstones, you can look down and see this new "archaeological dig." Are there other stone walls? To be continued! Visit and see!

We can always use help maintaining the Herb Wall! To volunteer, contact the Nature Center's volunteer department at (513) 965-3348 or email volunteer@cincynature.org.



Front and back cover photos: Jan Doherty



Rowe Woods, 4949 Tealtown Road, Milford, OH 45150 • (513) 831-1711
Long Branch Farm & Trails (*members only*), 6926 Gaynor Road, Goshen, OH 45122



rowe woods
HERB WALL



welcome to the HERB WALL

As you walk down the stone steps, past the original rusted water pump, on the Upland Trail to the Herb Wall, you are greeted with the fragrance of herbs and the sighting of butterflies flitting throughout the gardens.

On the left as you go through the clematis covered pergola, you will find a Fairie Realm. Its magic draws children both young and old to walk through it and notice the plants that attract fairies to the garden such as Thyme, Alyssum and Columbine. Your child may even see the tiny box of magical gems and is invited to take one. There are colorful fairies throughout this garden and sometimes new ones just appear after a moonlit night!

There are a variety of themed gardens spread out over the multiple tiers of the actual herb wall area. You will find: a scented garden, a zoo garden, woodland gardens, a pizza garden, butterfly and hummingbird gardens, tea/medicinal and a bug repellent garden. They are identified by painted flower pots within these garden spaces. You are invited to touch and smell. Bruising the herbs releases their wonderful fragrances. But remember not all herbs are edible! Herbs in the bug repellent garden should be handled with care as some people may be sensitive to the aromatic oils. Is that a gnome home on the bottom garden tier?

INSECT REPELLENT GARDEN

Our forefathers relied heavily on the use of “strewing herbs” since they had dirt floors in the homes. In between cleaning, debris and insects would collect in the botanical “carpeting.” Therefore they “strewed” herbs over their floors to repel insects and rodents and also to keep their home smelling pleasant! The plants in this garden produce oils that repel a variety of insects: Lavender—fleas and moths; Scented geranium (Citronella plant)—mosquitoes; Silver King Artemisia—fleas; Tansy—flies and moths; Wormwood moths; Lemon Grass and Lemon Balm—mosquitoes and chiggers; Rosemary—moths; Marigolds—aphids.

THE FRAGRANCE GARDEN

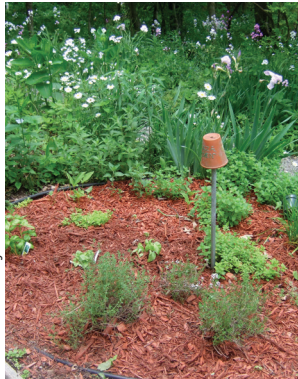
The oils and dried leaves of these plants are used in perfumes, sachets, cooking and potpourri. Some also add flavor and give medicinal benefits to teas. These plants include: Sweet Alyssum, mint varieties, Bergamot, Lavender and Sweet Annie Artemisia.



BERGAMOT



FAIRIE GARDEN



PIZZA GARDEN



BUTTERFLY MILKWEED

Photo: Jan Doherty

Photo: Jan Doherty

Photo: Dan Pater

WOODLAND AND FERN GARDENS

The Herb Wall becomes more shady year after year and because of that we have beautiful shade-loving plants such as The Lenten Rose (Hellebores) and a variety of lush ferns growing there. Early in the spring you will see the dainty flowers of the Epimidium, Lungwort (Pulmonaria) and Rue plants.

There is a mound of soil to the left of the steps going down to the second tier of gardens, with a flowerpot marking it as The Heirloom Daffodil Garden. The dirt came from the lowest stone path as we unearthed it and discovered the original flagstones that Mr. Krippendorf had placed there. The daffodils that bloom on it have been transplanted from the woods around the Krippendorf Lodge. They had been part of an identification project.

ZOO GARDEN

Lions and tigers and...zebras? Oh my! Dandelions, Tiger Lilies and Zebra Grass are just a few of the animal-named plants in our zoo garden to the left of the steps on the top level. Elephant Ears, Snapdragons, Hens and Chicks, Monkey Grass and Foxglove are also at our zoo! Come visit!

PIZZA GARDEN

This garden is planted in a circular, pizza shape. The slices of the pizza are oregano, thyme, basil, garlic chives, onion chives, marjoram and parsley. These herbs are used to spice up pizza sauce. No, there is no pepperoni plant!

BUTTERFLY/HUMMINGBIRD GARDENS

This garden is the largest and most colorful on the Herb Wall. It contains plants that attract beautiful visitors.

Monarch caterpillars feed on leaves of Butterfly Milkweed, the most colorful of the species. Milkweed makes caterpillars toxic to birds and most predators, so this diet aids in their survival.

Adult butterflies feed on the nectar of colorful blooms. They often get thirsty after feeding, so a water source such as a birdbath is essential in any butterfly garden. Hummingbirds are attracted to many of the same nectar-producing plants and favor brightly colored, tubular or funnel-shaped flowers, including Black-eyed Susan, Butterfly Milkweed, Cleome, Coreopsis, Dill, Echinacea, Fennel, Iris, Ironweed, Joe Pye Weed, Liriope, Parsley, Perilla, Queen Anne's Lace, Sage, Sedum, Shasta Daisy, Turtlehead, Verbena and Yarrow.

TEA AND MEDICINAL GARDENS

These gardens are on the right of the steps going to the second gardening level. Here you will find a variety of mints, Bergamot, Chamomile, Comfrey, Feverfew, Foxglove, Rosemary, Thyme, Rattlesnake Master and Lavender.

COLD FRAMES

At the very bottom of the steps to the right of the gardens, you will see the remains of Mr. Krippendorf's cold frames. There is an inscribed 1938 date on the first one. They were covered in the winter and contained pots of daffodils. In the springtime when guests visited him, they would always go home with a pot of blooming daffodils! In the spring he would start seeds of plants and vegetables in these cold frames so that when our frost date is past, they would be ready to transplant to their garden space.