

Celebrating Creation through Mary: Mary's Central Place in our everyday life:



(15th cent. Painting by unknown artist (Frankfurt))

Very close to our daily lives and often taken for granted, or perhaps superficially appreciated, are plants and flowers that nurture insects, birds and other creatures and perhaps provide us with food or add flavour to what we eat.

So stop and look at the natural world around you, taking it all in and following the lead of St. Basil the Great who wrote, "I want Creation to penetrate you with so much admiration that everywhere, wherever you may be, the least plant may bring you to the clear remembrance of the Creator."

In this little leaflet we want to take you on a mini pilgrimage round the idea of a Mary Garden.

We hear that the early Church Fathers saw Mary prefigured in the nature imagery of the Old Testament: 'I am a Rose of Sharon, a Lily of the Valley'. (Canticles 2:1)



Later, St Benedict (AD 480-550) planted a Rose Garden or Rosary, at his monastery, as a place of prayer & contemplation. Then an Irish Saint: Fiacc in 670 in Ireland, planted a garden in honour of Our Lady, using many flowers bearing her name. The idea quickly caught on, and until the European Reformation in the 1530's-1560's, Mary Gardens probably with a simple statue, surrounded by flowers and herbs, were a familiar sight where people could spend time in Reflection and Prayer. But, during that time of upheaval, after centuries of placing Mary at the heart of everyday life, Marian symbols disappeared.

Mary Gardens now:

There has recently been a slow revival of interest in celebrating and honouring Mary in this most natural and beautiful way.

Perhaps you already know many or all the herbs & flowers, both cultivated and wild, that celebrate Mary. In any garden there are likely to be at least a few.

Rosemary & Marigold are probably the ones that may spring to mind first.



And then there are the plants that refer to Mary's life and virtues such as, Lily for Purity, and especially the Rose, the Queen of flowers, an ancient symbol of the Incarnation, of Mary, her love of God, her spiritual beauty & fragrance, pleasing to God.





Here is an idea for your own Mary Garden at home. Even children could make one and choose their own plants or decorate a stone.



As you arrive or leave our Church and pass through the garden, perhaps you'll especially notice the beautiful Roses in Mary's honour & the Camellias (Purity) in Spring.



Prayer:

God of Grace, hear our prayer, Bless the gardens of our community, the shelter of families, the fragrance of friendship.

In all our care for one another, make us grow in Wisdom and Love, in Gentleness, Kindness and Truth.

Hail Mary,.....



Can you find these flowers in our Church garden?

For further exploration:

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/flowers-of-the-fairest-how-to-plant-a-mary-garden-44737>

<https://www.catholic.org/news/hf/faith/story.php?id=84723>

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/special/spaces/virgin-mary-garden-ideas.htm>