

About the Garden

The Ayr Hill Learning Garden is an opportunity for the visitor to learn about 17th and 18th century herbs, like flax, hyssop, tansy and rue, which had culinary, medicinal and bouquet value to settlers. There were no refrigerators or pharmacies. People seldom bathed. Sanitation was poor. Herbs were essential to make food palatable, provide critical vitamins and minerals, restore health and hide offensive odors like today's deodorants and scented candles do. Potpourri (pronounced po-pour-ee) was frequently made by the Colonists.



Herb Garden Design

Nearly every Colonial family planted an herb garden close to the kitchen. This was because herbs were often used as food or to flavor food, treat illnesses, and perfume or protect the house, bedding or clothing. Some herbs which can be poisonous were grown only by the local healer just as today's pharmacist carefully handles some drugs.

The Learning Garden is typical in size of a Colonial herb garden. It is laid out in a trapezoid shape divided according to use into triangles with bricks. Many herbs fit into all categories. Most Colonists would have used logs or wattle (twigs woven into a low fence) to section because brick was expensive.



In the town of Vienna, the first settler was Colonel Charles Broadwater, a prominent colonial soldier and public servant, who owned much of the land in the region and built his home here in 1754. In the 1760's John Hunter, a native of Ayr County in Scotland, married Col. Broadwater's daughter. Partly by marriage and partly by purchase, he succeeded Col. Broadwater as the area's principal landowner. It was John Hunter who built the first house of record within the town in 1767 and called it Ayr Hill after his native land. As the village grew, it assumed the name Ayr Hill, by which it was known for a hundred years, until it was changed to Vienna in or around 1858.

The Ayr Hill Garden Club is the oldest garden club in the National Capital Area Garden Clubs. It was founded in 1929 and named after Ayr Hill, the original name for Vienna. The club also maintains the **Little Library Garden Colonial Herb Collection** at the back of the Little Library, the **Pollinator Garden** at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, the **W&OD Trail Garden** at the intersection of Maple Avenue next to Whole Foods, the **Children's Discovery Garden** by the caboose and the **Salsbury Spring Native Garden**, at the corner of Windover Avenue and Lawyers Road. More information about Ayr Hill Garden Club can be found at www.ayrhillgardenclub.org.

Historic Vienna, Inc. was incorporated in 1976 to preserve the history of the town of Vienna. The Little Library is operated by Historic Vienna, Inc. and is open the first Sunday of the month from March to December and at special events. More information can be found at www.historicviennainc.org.



Little Library Gardens

Colonial Collection



Located behind the
Little Library

At the corner of Church and Mill Street

Guided tours available by appointment at the
Freeman Store and Museum

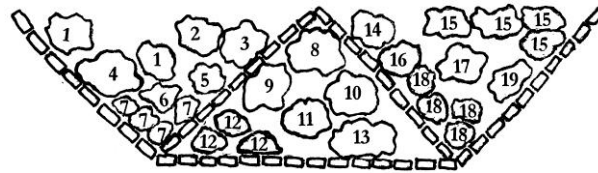
Installed and maintained by



Beautifying Vienna Since 1929

www.ayrhillgardenclub.org

The Herbs Planted in the Learning Garden



Food

1. **Savory** – once as popular as black pepper for seasoning, this herb complements foods that require long cooking times or are mild in flavor. Also relieves gas.
2. **Flax** – is grown for its seeds. 2 varieties include brown and yellow/golden. Both have similar nutritional value and equal amounts of omega fatty acids and linseed oils. The fibers are used to make linen.
3. **Sage** – highly valued for health, aids digestion of fatty foods and is most often used in cooking.
4. **Rosemary** – the essence of the herb garden, this herb has many cooking uses for most dishes. Also relieves gas and aids fat digestion.
5. **Hyssop** – the herb has a minty taste that makes it tasty addition to salads, game, stews and soups. Also aids fat digestion.
6. **Oregano/Marjoram** – is useful in sauces, meats and vegetables. Also used for headaches, coughs, and stomach disorders.
7. **Thyme** – adds distinctive aromatic flavoring to sauces, stews, stuffing, meats, poultry, soups and salads. Also relieves spasms and coughing. Essential oil is a powerful disinfectant; a salve is used for athlete's foot.

Medicine

8. **Tansy** – a natural insect repellent used as a strewing herb on floors and in beds. Tea used for colds, stomach aches and intestinal worms. At Easter, made into 'Tansy' a rich custardy pudding. Believed to arrest decay.
9. **Southernwood** – an effective moth repellent and strewing herb. Also called 'Lad's Love' or 'Maid's Ruin', as it was known to increase men's virility. Used to improve digestion and liver function. Poultice used to treat wounds and frostbite.
10. **Flax** – used by colonialists to regulate the constitution. Poultice used for boils and inflammation.
11. **Echinacea** – traditionally used to treat shock, snakebite, and traumatic pain. Extracts stimulate the immune system to restore normal body functions. Root used as an external antiseptic and sweat producing agent.
12. **Calendula/Marigold** – soothing, healing antiseptic. Use in ointment for leg ulcers, varicose veins, bedsores and bruises. Take as a tea for digestion and to promote bile in the liver. Good for alcoholics.
13. **Hyssop** – often used as a tea for easing coughs, sore throat, and loosening phlegm. Poultice reduces inflammation and heals wounds and bruises. Often called the 'holy herb', as it was used to purify temples and for ritual cleansing of lepers.

Fragrance

14. **Rue** – a strewing and anti-plague herb carried in nosegays to ward off pestilences. Used as a deterrent to cats, who do not like its musty odor. Called 'herb of grace', as it was used to sprinkle holy water before mass.
15. **Lavender** – known for its sedative powers, tranquility and purity are inherent in the unique fragrance. Also a strewing herb, repels insects and the plague. Masks household smells and malodorous streets. Healing powers come from the oil.
16. **Hyssop** – used in potpourri and cologne. The scent is so strong, old women used pressed flowers in their bibles to keep them awake during sermons.
17. **Fennel** – the licorice scented and flavored fennel was in great demand in the middle ages. Every part of the plant is edible including the roots. Roman ladies used it as an appetite suppressant. It was brought with early settlers to Virginia and is used to make absinthe.
18. **Dianthus** – also known as Sweet William, these flowers have a strong scent of cloves and have been used in perfumes for over 2000 years.
19. **Catnip/Catmint** – attracts cats, butterflies and bees while repelling insects that would eat its leaves. Also repels mosquitoes (better than DEET in the air), cockroaches and termites.

