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Gardening in Orange County

A Publication of Cornell Cooperative Extension with the Master Gardener Volunteers

Vol. XII, No. IV May 2005

Colonial Gardens

By Donna Cooke,
Community Horticulture Educator

In early America, many European settlers brought with them the style and grandeur of European garden design, while others, left behind the embellishments of England and brought with them a more practical garden design for the homestead. Many indigenous plant species and cultivation methods were introduced to the colonists by Native Americans. The blend of European styles and attitudes and Native American contributions greatly influenced the homestead plantings of the colonial American garden.

The needs of the colonial family was the deciding factor in the layout and plants of the garden, which was always situated near the house. Raised-bed parlor gardens that contained herbs, flowers and vegetables were typical of the colonial home garden. Placed near the house, these herbs and vegetables were easily accessible from the kitchen door. Because the rocky New England soil was difficult to cultivate, raising planting beds off the ground would help ease the chore of gardening. Gardens were considered healthy, and were designed for convenience, as well as a place for thinking or chatting with friends.

Although Native Americans shared many native plants with the settlers, such as bee-balm, Echinacea, and wintergreen, few American plants found their way into the colonial garden. In spite of this, the Native American contribution of practically all the indigenous species we now use, influenc crop production and the use medicinal herbs in colonial America.

Colonial gardens that in existence today are Ge Washington's Mount Ve Thomas Jefferson's Mo George Washington's M Vernon is an example of Augustan Style, w considered the 'first' landscape garden, insp Roman landscape. Augustan style is a clas a harmonious blending of woods, water, small temples.

Thomas Jefferson was very intereste and was also influenced by the Europe had toured. He called Monticello his " architecture" as he designed and re-de period of 40 years. Monticello includ and vegetable gardens, as well as fru vineyards and ornamental groves. A Garden and Farm Books of Thom Jefferson's gardens consisted of ov fruit trees and 350 vegetable vari simultaneously.

For whatever the purpose o the early American gardener a about it found a beauty and p extend all time. From the Co signers of the Declaration of common thread, a passion passion that would be illus American documents, cor herbals, and literature, all back and re-live, and pos simplicity of the colonia

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