

= Cottage garden =

The cottage garden is a distinct style that uses informal design , traditional materials , dense plantings , and a mixture of ornamental and edible plants . English in origin , it depends on grace and charm rather than grandeur and formal structure . Homely and functional gardens connected to working @-@ class cottages go back centuries , but their stylized reinvention occurred in 1870s England , as a reaction to the more structured , rigorously maintained estate gardens with their formal designs and mass plantings of greenhouse annuals .

The earliest cottage gardens were more practical than today 's , with emphasis on vegetables and herbs , fruit trees , perhaps a beehive , and even livestock . Flowers , used to fill spaces , gradually became more dominant . The traditional cottage garden was usually enclosed , perhaps with a rose @-@ bowered gateway . Flowers common to early cottage gardens included traditional florists ' flowers such as primroses and violets , along with flowers with household use such as calendula and various herbs . Others were the richly scented old @-@ fashioned roses that bloomed once a year , and simple flowers like daisies . In time , cottage @-@ garden sections were added to some large estate gardens as well .

Modern cottage gardens include countless regional and personal variations and embrace plant materials , such as ornamental grasses or native plants not seen in the rural gardens of cottagers . Traditional roses , with their full fragrance and lush foliage , continue to be a cottage @-@ garden mainstay ? along with modern disease @-@ resistant varieties that retain traditional attributes . Informal climbing plants , whether traditional or modern hybrids , are also common , as are the self @-@ sowing annuals and freely spreading perennials favoured in traditional cottagers ' gardens .

= = History = =

= = = Origins = = =

Cottage gardens , which emerged in Elizabethan times , appear to have originated as a local source for herbs and fruits . One theory is that they arose out of the Black Death of the 1340s , when the death of so many laborers made land available for small cottages with personal gardens . According to the late 19th @-@ century legend of origin , these gardens were originally created by the workers that lived in the cottages of the villages , to provide them with food and herbs , with flowers planted in for decoration . Helen Leach analysed the historical origins of the romanticised cottage garden , subjecting the garden style to rigorous historical analysis , along with the ornamental potager and the herb garden . She concluded that their origins were less in workingmen 's gardens in the 19th century and more in the leisured classes ' discovery of simple hardy plants , in part through the writings of John Claudius Loudon . Loudon helped to design the estate at Great Tew , Oxfordshire , where farm workers were provided with cottages that had architectural quality set in a small garden ? about an acre ? where they could grow food and keep pigs and chickens .

Authentic gardens of the yeoman cottager would have included a beehive and livestock , and frequently a pig and sty , along with a well . The peasant cottager of medieval times was more interested in meat than flowers , with herbs grown for medicinal use and cooking , rather than for their beauty . By Elizabethan times there was more prosperity , and thus more room to grow flowers . Even the early cottage garden flowers typically had their practical use ? violets were spread on the floor (for their pleasant scent and keeping out vermin) ; calendulas and primroses were both attractive and used in cooking . Others , such as sweet william and hollyhocks were grown entirely for their beauty .

= = = Development = = =

The " naturalness " of informal design began to be noticed and developed by the British leisured class . Alexander Pope was an early proponent of less formal gardens , calling in a 1713 article for

gardens with the " amiable simplicity of unadorned nature " . Other writers in the 18th century who encouraged less formal , and more natural , gardens included Joseph Addison and Lord Shaftesbury . The evolution of cottage gardens can be followed in the issues of *The Cottage Gardener* (1848 ? 61) , edited by George William Johnson , where the emphasis is squarely on the " florist 's flowers " , carnations and auriculas in fancy varieties that were originally cultivated as a highly competitive blue @-@ collar hobby .

William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll helped to popularise less formal gardens in their many books and magazine articles . Robinson 's *The Wild Garden* , published in 1870 , contained in the first edition an essay on " The Garden of British Wild Flowers " , which was eliminated from later editions . In his *The English Flower Garden* , illustrated with cottage gardens from Somerset , Kent and Surrey , he remarked , " One lesson of these little gardens , that are so pretty , is that one can get good effects from simple materials . " From the 1890s his lifelong friend Jekyll applied cottage garden principles to more structured designs in even quite large country houses . Her *Colour in the Flower Garden* (1908) is still in print today .

Robinson and Jekyll were part of the Arts and Crafts Movement , a broader movement in art , architecture , and crafts during the late 19th century which advocated a return to the informal planting style derived as much from the Romantic tradition as from the actual English cottage garden . The Arts and Crafts Exhibition of 1888 began a movement toward an idealised natural country garden style . The garden designs of Robinson and Jekyll were often associated with Arts and Crafts style houses . Both were influenced by William Morris , one of the leaders of the Arts and Crafts Movement ? Robinson quoted Morris 's views condemning carpet bedding ; Jekyll shared Morris 's mystical view of nature and drew on the floral designs in his textiles for her gardening style . When Morris built his Red House in Kent , it influenced new ideas in architecture and gardening ? the " old @-@ fashioned " garden suddenly became a fashion accessory among the British artistic middle class , and the cottage garden esthetic began to emigrate to America .

In the early 20th century the term " cottage garden " might be applied even to as large and sophisticated a garden as Hidcote Manor , which Vita Sackville @-@ West described as " a cottage garden on the most glorified scale " but where the colour harmonies were carefully contrived and controlled , as in the famous " Red Borders " . Sackville @-@ West had taken similar models for her own " cottage garden " , one of many " garden rooms " at Sissinghurst Castle ? her idea of a cottage garden was a place where " the plants grow in a jumble , flowering shrubs mingled with Roses , herbaceous plants with bulbous subjects , climbers scrambling over hedges , seedlings coming up wherever they have chosen to sow themselves " . The cottage garden ideal was also spread by artists such as water @-@ colourist Helen Allingham (1848 ? 1926) . Another influence was Margery Fish (1892 ? 1969) , whose garden survives at East Lambrook Manor .

The cottage garden in France is a development of the early 20th century . Monet 's garden at Giverny is a prominent example , a sprawling garden full of varied plantings , rich colors , and water gardens . In modern times , the term ' cottage garden ' is used to describe any number of informal garden styles , using design and plants very different from their traditional English cottage garden origins . Examples include regional variations using a grass prairie scheme (in the American midwest) and California chaparral cottage gardens .

= = Design = =

While the classic cottage garden is built around a cottage , many cottage @-@ style gardens are created around houses and even estates such as Hidcote Manor , with its more intimate " garden rooms " . The cottage garden design is based more on principles than formulae : it has an informal look , with a seemingly casual mixture of flowers , herbs , and vegetables often packed into a small area . In spite of their appearances , cottage gardens have a design and formality that help give them their grace and charm . Due to space limitations , they are often in small rectangular plots , with practical functioning paths and hedges or fences . The plants , layout , and materials are chosen to give the impression of casualness and a country feel . Modern cottage gardens frequently use local flowers and materials , rather than those of the traditional cottage garden . What they

share with the tradition is the unstudied look , the use of every square inch , and a rich variety of flowers , herbs , and vegetables .

The cottage garden is designed to appear artless , rather than contrived or pretentious . Instead of artistic curves , or grand geometry , there is an artfully designed irregularity . Borders can go right up to the house , lawns are replaced with tufts of grass or flowers , and beds can be as wide as needed . Instead of the discipline of large scale color schemes , there is the simplicity of harmonious color combinations between neighbouring plants . The overall appearance can be of " a vegetable garden that has been taken over by flowers . " The method of planting closely packed plants was supposed to reduce the amount of weeding and watering required , but planted stone pathways or turf paths , and clipped hedges overgrown with wayward vines , are cottage garden features requiring well @-@ timed maintenance .

= = = Materials = = =

Paths , arbors , and fences use traditional or antique looking materials . Wooden fences and gates , paths covered with locally made bricks or stone , and arbors using natural materials all give a more casual ? and less formal ? look and feel to a cottage garden . Pots , ornaments , and furniture also use natural looking materials with traditional finishes ? everything is chosen to give the impression of an old @-@ fashioned country garden .

= = Plants = =

= = = Overview = = =

Until the late 19th century , cottage gardens mainly grew vegetables for household consumption . Typically half the garden would be used for cultivating potatoes and half for a mix of other vegetables . John Claudius Loudon wrote extensively on cottage gardens in his book *An Encyclopædia of Gardening* (1822) and in *Gardener 's Magazine* from 1826 . In 1838 he wrote " I seldom observe any thing in a cottage garden but potatoes , cabbages , beans , and French beans ; in a few instances onions and parsneps , and very seldom a few peas " . An 1865 issue of *The Farmer 's Magazine* noted that in " Ireland and much of the Highlands of Scotland , potatoes are the only thing grown in the cottage @-@ garden " .

Modern cottage garden plants are typically flowers chosen for their old @-@ fashioned and informal appeal . Many modern day gardeners use heirloom or ' old @-@ fashioned ' plants and varieties ? even though these may not have been authentic or traditional cottage garden plants . In addition , there are modern varieties of flowers that fit into the cottage garden look . For example , modern roses developed by David Austin have been chosen for cottage gardens because of their old @-@ fashioned look (multi @-@ petaled form and rosette @-@ shaped flowers) and fragrance ? combined with modern virtues of hardiness , repeat blooming , and disease @-@ resistance . Modern cottage gardens often use native plants and those adapted to the local climate , rather than trying to force traditional English plants to grow in an incompatible environment ? though many of the old favorites thrive in cottage gardens throughout the world .

= = = Roses = = =

Cottage gardens are always associated with roses : shrub roses , climbing roses , and old garden roses with lush foliage , in contrast to the gangly modern hybrid tea roses . Old cottage garden roses include cultivated forms of *Rosa gallica* , which form dense mounded shrubs 3 ? 4 ft high and wide , with pale pink to purple flowers ? with single form to full double form blooms . They are also very fragrant , and include the ancient Apothecary 's rose (*R. gallica* ' *Officinalis* ') , whose magenta flowers were preserved solely for their fragrance . Another old fragrant cottage garden rose is the Damask rose , which is still grown in Europe for use in perfumes . Cultivated forms of this grow 4 to

6 ft or higher , with gently arching canes that help give an informal look to a garden . Even taller generally are the Alba roses , which are not always white , and which bloom well even in partial shade .

The Provence rose or *Rosa centifolia* is the full and fat " cabbage rose " made famous by Dutch masters in their 17th @-@ century paintings . These very fragrant shrub roses grow 5 ft tall and wide , with a floppy habit that is aided by training on an arch or pillar . The centifolia roses have produced many descendants that are also cottage garden favorites , including varieties of moss rose (roses with attractive ' mossy ' growth on their flower stalks and flower buds) . Unlike most modern hybrids , the older roses bloom on the previous year 's wood , so they aren 't pruned back severely each year . Also as they don 't bloom continuously , they can share their branches with later @-@ flowering climbers such as Clematis vines , which use the rose branches for support . A rose in the cottage garden is not segregated with other roses , with bare earth or mulch underneath ' , but is casually blended with other flowers , vines , and groundcover .

With the introduction of China roses (derived from *Rosa chinensis*) late in the 18th century , many hybrids were introduced that had the remontant (repeat @-@ blooming) nature of the China roses , but maintained the informal old rose shape and flower . These included the Bourbon rose and the Noisette rose , which were added to the rose repertoire of the cottage garden , and , more recently , hybrid " English " roses introduced by David Austin .

= = = Climbing plants = = =

Many of the old roses had cultivars that grew very long canes , which could be tied to trellises or against walls . These older varieties are called " ramblers " , rather than " climbers " . Climbing plants in the traditional cottage garden included European honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) and Traveller 's Joy (*Clematis vitalba*) . The modern cottage garden includes many Clematis hybrids that have the old appeal , with sparse foliage that allows them to grow through roses and trees , and along fences and arbors . There are also many Clematis species used in the modern cottage garden , including *Clematis armandii* , *Clematis chrysocoma* , and *Clematis flammula* . Popular honeysuckles for cottage gardens include Japanese honeysuckle and *Lonicera tragophylla* .

= = = Hedging plants = = =

In the traditional cottage garden , hedges served as fences on the perimeter to keep out marauding livestock and for privacy , along with other practical uses . Hawthorn leaves made a tasty snack or tea , while the flowers were used for making wine . The fast @-@ growing Elderberry , in addition to creating a hedge , provided berries for food and wine , with the flowers being fried in batter or made into lotions and ointments . The wood had many uses , including toys , pegs , skewers , and fishing poles . Holly was another hedge plant , useful because it quickly spread and self @-@ seeded . Privet was also a convenient and fast @-@ growing hedge . Over time , more ornamental and less utilitarian plants became popular cottage garden hedges , including laurel , lilac , snowberry , japonica , and others .

= = = Flowers and herbs = = =

Popular flowers in the traditional cottage garden included florist 's flowers which were grown by enthusiasts ? such as violets , pinks , and primroses ? and those grown with a more practical purpose . For example , the calendula , grown today almost entirely for its bright orange flowers , was primarily valued for eating , for adding color to butter and cheese , for adding smoothness to soups and stews , and for all kinds of healing salves and preparations . Like many old cottage garden annuals and herbs , it freely self @-@ sowed , making it easier to grow and share . Other popular cottage garden annuals included violets , pansies , stocks , and mignonette .

Perennials were the largest group of traditional cottage garden flowers ? those with a long cottage

garden history include hollyhocks , carnations , sweet williams , marguerites , marigolds , lilies , peonies , tulips , crocus , daisies , foxglove , monkshood , lavender , campanulas , Solomon 's seal , evening primrose , lily @-@ of @-@ the @-@ valley , primrose , cowslips , and many varieties of roses .

Today herbs are typically thought of as culinary plants , but in the traditional cottage garden they were considered to be any plant with household uses . Herbs were used for medicine , toiletries , and cleaning products . Scented herbs would be spread on the floor along with rushes to cover odors . Some herbs were used for dyeing fabrics . Traditional cottage garden herbs included sage , thyme , southernwood , wormwood , catmint , feverfew , lungwort , soapwort , hyssop , sweet woodruff , and lavender .

= = = Fruits = = =

Fruit in the traditional cottage garden would have included an apple and a pear , for cider and perry , gooseberries and raspberries . The modern cottage garden includes many varieties of ornamental fruit and nut trees , such as crabapple and hazel , along with non @-@ traditional trees like dogwood .