

grow your garden tour

Jefferson + his gardens

"No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden...But though an old man, I am but a young gardener." – Jefferson, 1811

At Monticello:

- Flower gardens a "botanic laboratory or ornamental and useful plants from around the world" (Monticello website)
 - o Collected seeds during his travels
 - o Kept a garden journal from 1766-1824 carefully cataloging all that went on at Monticello
 - o Garden I reflects the layout of Monticello
- Vegetable Garden
 - o 1,000 feet long!!
 - o 330 varieties of veggies cycled through
 - o Figs from France, beans from the Lewis and Clark expedition (wow)
 - o Favorite vegetable? The English pea
 - o Salads were an important part of his diet
- Fruit Garden aka the "Fruiterie"
 - o 8 acres
 - o orchards and vineyards

The gardens at UVA

Non-plant ornaments:

- Garden I, III: attempts at the capitals with Virginia stone
- Garden VII: cast iron capital from the Annex
- Garden VI: Merton Spire – 1451, Oxford's Merton College Chapel and was given to the University in 1928 to "honor Jefferson's educational ideals"

Important plants:

- Garden V: Two Albemarle Pippin apple trees are in the hotel garden, one of Jefferson's favorite
 - o Pavilion garden has some of the most BEAUTIFUL daffodils and tulips in the spring!
- Garden IX: the McGuffey Ash (died in 1989, at ~150 years old, but it's descendent is there)
- Garden VI: a small white flower called *Jeffersonia Diphylla* (which means twin leaf)
 - o It was named for Jefferson due to his achievements in botany
 - o And it blooms right around the time of his birthday

Historical notes

(from a garden tour with Mary Hughes, Office of the Architect and Dominic Puzio, scribe)

- Gardens were originally private spaces
 - o You could only enter from the back of a Pavilion or Hotel
 - The gardens used to connect to the back of the Hotels
- Each professor was give 5 acres of the surrounding farmland for vegetable gardening and 10 acres for livestock
 - o So they didn't need the gardens for food; it was more for their personal convenience
 - o Students complained of the smell of rotting vegetables from the acres of gardens that were often tended poorly
- Jefferson didn't leave plans for plantings or pathways

- So the Garden Club, when restoring the gardens, didn't have an original design off of which to base the layout
 - So they used historical gardens from around Virginia
- During the restoration of the gardens, it was the first time that they were made public
- Alden Hopkins, who helped to design the new gardens, brought inspiration from his home city of Williamsburg
 - The East gardens were handled by his protégé since he unfortunately died young
- The Garden Club assumed that the Maverick Engraving showed the University "as built"
- Serpentine walls did save brick, but were actually very structurally weak
 - They have been rebuilt countless times
 - You can actually break one by hitting it on your bicycle
 - They were also not Jefferson's original idea
 - He saw them during his time in Europe ("kringle-krangle" walls)
- The walls create a micro-climate within the gardens, allowing plants to grow there that can't grow outside of them
 - Jefferson knew this, placing plants that need more heat along the brick walls that would retain warmth for longer
- Buildings were cropping up and falling down in the gardens constantly
 - There were 40-50 outbuildings in the West gardens alone
- The lower gardens are simpler since they were kitchen gardens for the Hotels
- When the Garden Club restored the gardens, we had to promise to maintain them and to refrain from changing any of their designs
 - They come in every two years to check on this
 - Apparently they have strange political power that makes the school really scared to upset them, even though they've already restored the gardens so we could totally go back on the deal
 - Almost every state legislator's wife is in the Garden Club
- The road of the alleyways between the gardens were some of the first paved roads in the United States
 - Jefferson saw a technique in Europe where they put down loose rock onto a dirt path and then the carriage wheels eventually smooth it into a paved surface
 - Enslaved laborers had to crush the rock for this process
- An ash in Garden IX was originally planted by Professor Tucker, but it became known for the next resident of the pavilion, Professor McGuffey
 - The McGuffey Ash was a place where children gathered to hear stories from the [McGuffey Reader](#)
 - However, it died and was replaced with a tree made from the tissue of its predecessor
- The area where we now have the East gardens used to have a road running through it, so the topography is quite different

More resources:

<http://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/famous-jefferson-quotes>

<http://www.masshist.org/thomasjeffersonpapers/garden/>

<http://www.monticello.org/site/house-and-gardens/jefferson-scientist-and-gardener>

Pamphlet in Peabody Hall (online here:

<http://www.virginia.edu/uvatours/gardens/gardensExplore.html>)

<http://www.officearchitect.virginia.edu/memorialtree/index.html>

<http://www.virginia.edu/uvatours/gardens/>

<http://www.virginia.edu/uvatours/gardens/gardensOther.html>