

St. Nicholas Biblical/Mary Garden

The flower garden at our beautiful St. Nicholas campus began many years ago as a celebration of the 30th anniversary of the school consolidation between the parishes of Lonsdale, Veseli and New Market. Some plants have not thrived over the years due to shade and other factors so the renovated garden incorporated some new plants in 2014 that added more color and diversity.

The first priority was to research and include as many Biblically based plants as possible. With our harsh Minnesota weather this eliminated a lot of choices that would not be considered perennial plants here or simply are not available for purchase. Thus the perennials and annuals represented that can be traced to Biblical origin are Grapevine, Roses, Anemone, Narcissus, Tulips, Sage, Dill, Marjoram, Lilies, Flax, Arborvitae, Lilac shrubs, Mint, Crocus, poppies, wormwood and thistle. These would have been flowers, shrubs and herbs that our Savior would have walked by in the fields as he traveled across the Holy land or in gardens he often prayed at. Many more herbs could be added to this list that were popular in Christ's time but some are not easily available in the Midwest. We have thus included herbs that are easy to seed or purchase annually.

Research also added many choices when the garden included flowers that honor Mary. The first recorded Mary garden was created by the Irish St. Fiacre in the 7th century. When the "Age of Faith" ascended and superseded the pagan era, many flowers that were associated with pagan deities were then 'christened' and re-dedicated to Christian themes. Each is symbolic and some overlap with the Biblical flower list. This list includes the following:

Bleeding heart=Mary's heart, Dianthus=Mary's love of God, Mums=All saints flowers, Columbine= our Lady's shoes, Daffodil=Mary's Star, English daisy=Mary's love, Forsythia bush=Easter bush Foxglove=Our Lady's gloves, Geraniums=Lady beautiful, Iris (yet to be added) = Mary's sword of sorrow, Hosta=Assumption lily, Impatiens=Our Lady's Earrings, Delphinium= Mary's tears. Larkspur=Mary's Tears, Lavender= Flight into Egypt, Lilac=Ascension flower, Oriental poppy=Christ's blood, Peony=Pentecost Rose, Petunia=Lady's Praise, Yellow rose=Mary's glory, Red rose=Mary's sorrow and the Blood of Christ. Scabiosa=Mary's pincushion, Summer Phlox=Christ's Cross Flower, Tulip=Mary's prayer, Zinnia=The Virgin,

Parsley=Our Lady's little vine, Sage=Mary's shawl, Thyme=The Virgin's Humility, Basil=Holy Communion, Dill=Devil away, Marjoram=Mary's bedstraw.

In the future more additions honoring Mary can be added. Visit often to enjoy the colors throughout the growing season as they change a bit each month. But most of all remember that scripture is full of references to gardens that were an intricate part of Jesus's time on earth. Tending a garden is often the same as tending to our inner lives. There is weeding to be done in the garden as we should also weed out the sins in our lives thru confession. The fertilizing we do for our plants to flourish is like our search to enrich our lives learning and praying to our God to make our love for him grow. Spending time on our knees as we take care of our garden is like our time kneeling in prayer to show our love and care of the Lord. The watering we do which is critical to the life of each plant reflects the water of life we receive in baptism. And finally, taking time in a garden helps remind us to praise God for the beauty and color he created for mankind.

Matthew 26:36 "Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." Jesus not only was speaking to his apostles but to you as well. Reflect, pray and find peace here while you take time with our Lord.