MARY'S GARDENS RESEARCH A Progress Report

John S. Stokes Jr.

Queen of the Missions, March 1955.

Paradoxically, the very literature and book learning which destroyed the oral religious traditions of the Christian countryside during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries took upon themselves to record the disappearing externals of those same traditions in the nineteenth. It is thus secular lexicographers, not religious tradition, that we are to thank for the preservation of many of the centuries-old popular "Mary" names of plants which have come down to us today. For this reason many religious people unfamiliar with the old religious plant names.

Mrs. Lillie Pioneers

However, it was not from secular dictionaries that the Mary Flower tradition took root and found new life in the United States in the early nineteen thirties. It came as an offshoot from the old popular tradition which still survives in the monasteries and countrysides of England. For it was in England that Mrs. Frank R. Lillie, of Chicago, first learned of the Mary-named flowers, and conceived of the idea of planting a number of them in the "Garden of Our Lady" adjacent to the Angelus Tower she had given to St. Joseph's Church, Woods Hole, Cape Cod, Massachusetts in 1929.

Not the Mary names, but the spirit behind them was the important thing to Mrs. Lillie. She saw that in their origin these names were of the heart. She realized that before the invention of printing the people of the countryside had no books telling of Mary. "The flowers were all they had." In their day the Mary named plants may have been more potent than any book of theology. Consider the shamrock. And she believed, as our Mary's Gardens experience has borne out, that they still have such potency today . . . "especially for the children."

Mrs. Emerson Collaborates

In her search for Mary-named plants suitable for use in the Woods Hole Garden of Our Lady, Mrs. Lillie enlisted the assistance of the late Winifred Jelliffe Emerson of Chicago. It was Mrs. Emerson who first tapped the wealth of Mary names of plants lying dormant in secular dictionaries, and it was from her research that the Woods Hole garden was planned by Miss Dorothea L. Harrison, landscape architect, and laid out by Mr. Wilfred Wheeler, distinguished horticulturist, and first Agricultural Commissioner of Massachusetts.

Original Research of Mary's Gardens

As Mrs. Emerson's research papers could not be located for us by Mrs. Lillie, then in her eighties, at the start of Mary's Gardens in 1951, we conducted our own research in the libraries of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the University of Pennsylvania, and also the Philadelphia Public Library, to provide the documentation we considered it prudent to have before we started our public work. It was not until the spring of 1954 that Dr. Emerson came upon the original research while cleaning out the attic of his home. These papers, which he kindly presented to us as a gift, are now part of our Mary's Gardens archives.

After receiving Mrs. Emerson's research we consolidated it with ours in a single documented listing of Mary named flowers, which is first presented below.

Each flower named for Mary is another tribute to her, and another testimony to the everyday recourse to her in reflection and prayer by the people of Christendom. "Of Mary there is never enough." But our primary Mary's Gardens objective is not to accumulate a list of names. It is to discover new Mary-named plants which will contribute horticulturally to the materials available for planting in Mary Gardens today.

Two lists of Mary named plant life are presented below. It is hoped that readers will help build up this list further by sending any names they know of . . . in French, German, Spanish and the Slavic languages, etc., as well as in English.

(1997 Note: See also Mary Flowers in England, Germany, Ireland and Latin America)

PLANTS NAMED FOR OUR LADY

Compiled from research by Winifred Jelliffe Emerson, Chicago, Illinois, 1932, made at the suggestion of Mrs. Frank R. Lillie; and from research by Mary's Gardens, Philadelphia, Pa., 1951 1954.

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<th>Religious Name</th>
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<td>Aconitum nepellus</td>
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Digitalis purpurea
Digitalis sanguin.
Dipsacus fullonum
Echium fastuosum
Erodium ciratorum
Filipendula hexa.
Filipendula ulmar.
Fissipes acaulis
Fuchsia speciosa
Galanthus nivalis
Galanthus nivalis
Galega lutea
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Galiun verum
Gernanium maculatum
Golanthus nivalus
Hibiscus syriacus
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Hosta plantaginea
Hypericum calycinum
Impatiens balsam.
Impatiens biflora
Impatiens capensis
Ipomea purpurea
Iris barn. mariae
Ladyslipper Orchid
Lamicum purpureum
Lathyrus praetensis
Lilium candidum
Lilium candidum
Linaria cymbalaria
Lonicer caprifol.
Lotus corniculatus
Lotus corniculatus
Lotus corniculatus
Lotus corniculatus
Lotus corniculatus
Lotus corniculatus
Lotus corniculatus
Lychis dioica
Lycnhis alba
Lycnhis coronaria
Lycopsis arvensis
Malcomia maritima
Malus var.
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Melissa officinalis
Mentha pulegium
Mentha spicata
Mentha viridis
Mesembryanthemum
Myosotis scporidi.
Myosotis scporidi.
Neottia nidus avis
Nepeta hederacea
Olea europaea
Ononis arvensis
Ononis arvensis
Orchis maculata
Orchis maculata
Orchis maculata
Orchis mascula
Ornithogalum umbel
Ornithogalum umbel
Oxalis acetosella
Oxalis acetosella

Foxglove
Virgin's Glove
Skin 23

Crab Grass
Lady's Grass

Fuller's Teasel
Our Lady's Basin

Bugloss
Our Lady's Flannel

Stork Bill
Madonna's Pins

Meadow Sweet
Our Lady's Ruffles

Lady's Slipper
Britt 296

Fuchsia
Lady's Eardrop

Virgin Flower

Goat's Rue
Our Lady's Cowslip

Yellow Bedstraw
Our Lady's Beds

Yellow Bedstraw
Our Lady's Bedstraw

Wild Geranium
Madonna's Pins

Snowdrop
Candlemas Bells

Virgin Flower

Lady's Eardrop

Touch me not
Lady's Pocket

Balsam
Lady's Earrings

Morning Glory
Lady's Mantle

Iris variety
Mary Iris

Lady's Slipper
Britt 296

Reed Dead Nettle
Madonna's Milk

Everlasting Pea
Lady's Fingers

Modonna Lily
Annunciation Lily

Madonna Lily
Madonna Lily

Madonna Lily
Mary Lily

Mother of Thous.
Madonna's Herb

Honeysuckle
Our Lady's Fingers

Bird's foot Trefoil
Our Lady's Boots

Bird's foot Trefoil
Our Lady's Cushion

Bird's foot Trefoil
Lady's Finger

Bird's foot Trefoil
Lady's Glove

Bird's foot Trefoil
Lady's Shoes & Stkg

Bird's foot Trefoil
Lady's Slipper

Red Campion
Mary's Pink

Evening Candles
Our Lady's Candles

Rose Campion
Mary's Rose

Small Bugloss
Our Lady's Flannel

Virginian Stock
Virgin Stock

Lady Apple
Lady Apple

Lemon Balm
Sweet Mary

Pennyroyal
Our Lady's Mint

Spearmint St.
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Spearmint Our
Lady's Mint

Fig Marigold
Marygold

Forget me not
Our Lady's Eyes

Forget me not
Mary's Eye

Birds Nest Orch.
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Ground Ivy
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Olive
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Spotted Orchid
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Spotted Orchis
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Orchis
Lady Fingers

Star of Bethlm
Lady Eleven o'clock

Star of Bethlem
Lady Ten O'Clock

Star of Bethlm
Mary's Tears

Wood Sorrel
Lady's Clover

Wood Sorrel
Lady's Meat
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RESEARCH REFERENCES

EMERSON RESEARCH REFERENCES, CHICAGO 1932

From longhand notes of Winifred Jelliffe Emerson. Original in Mary's Gardens files.

EMER Recorded, but source not clear (9/7/54)

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S.P.N "Standardized Plant Names, American Joint Committee on Horticultural Nomenclature, Mount Pleasant Press, Salem, MA, 1923"

SKIN "Skinner, Charles M., Myths and Legends of Flowers, Trees, Fruits and Plants, Lippincott, Philadelphia, PA, 1925"

THOMAS "Thomas, H. H., The Book of Hardy Flowers, Funk & Wagnalls, New York"

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W S.G, "Wayside Gardens Catalog, Wayside Gardens, Mentor, Ohio, 1932" I, II,III Recorded as volumes I, II and III, but source not clear (9/7/54)

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GYGER Gyger, Thor E, Printer, Adelboden, Switzerland, Flower Post Card


M.C. Smith, Judith, The Mary Calendar, Ditchling, England, 1930

MOLD Moldenke, Harold N., Flowers of Madonna, Horticulture, Horticultural Hall, Boston, MA, December, 1953, pp 274


PA HORT Unidentified (9/7/54) reference, 1951 Penna Horticultural Society research

PERS Personal report in conversation or correspondence in Mary's Gardens files


WILDER - Wilder, Louise Beebe, Color in My Garden, Doubleday Page & Co., Garden City, 1918

WOODS Our Lady in Her Garden, St Joseph's Church, Woods Hole, 1932; Revised, 1937

ADDITIONAL PLANTS NAMED FOR OUR LADY


(G) Translation from the German

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Apoecynum andros.  Fly Trap  Mary's Rose (G)  Grimm 583
Arnica montana  Mountain Tobac  Mary's Drink (G)  Grimm 1628
Arnico montana  Mountain Tobac  Mary's Plant (G)  Grimm 1627
Arum maculatum  Cuckoo Pint  Lady's Knife  Wright 3 500
Arum maculatum  Cuckoo Pint  Lady's Smock  Wright 3 500
Bells  Daisy  Mary's Rose (G)  Grimm 1628
Bells perennis  Daisy  Mary's Flower (G)  Grimm 1626
Betula  Weeping Birch  Lady's Birch (G)  Grieb 312
Briza media  Quaking Grass  Lady's Flax (G)  Grimm 78
Briza media  Quaking Grass  Lady shake  Wright 3 500
Calendula officinal.  Pot Marigold  Lady Gold  Wright 3 500
Campanula medium  Canterbury Bel  Marian's Violet  Oxford 6 162
Campanula medium  Canterbury Bel  Mary's Violet (G)  Grimm 1628
Campanula medium  Canterbury Bel  Mariet  Oxford 1206
Cardamine pratensis  Cuckoo Flower  Lady Flock  Wright 3 500
Cardamine pratensis  Cuckoo Flower  Lady's Glove  Wright 3 500
Centauria nigra  Knaphweed  Lady's Bells  Wright 3 500
Centranthus ruber  Jupiter's Brd  Lady's Needlework  Wright 3 500
Chrysanthemum bals  Costmary  Lady's Flax (G)  Grieb 312
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Coix lacryma  Job's Tears  Mary's Tears (G)  Grimm 1628
Confervia rivularis  Crow Silk alg  Lady's Soap  Wright 3 500
Crateagus  Hawthorn  Lady's Berry (G)  Grimm 77
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Cuscuta  Dodder  Mary's Flax (G)  Grimm 583
Cypripedium  Lady slipper  Mary's Slipper (G)  Grimm 1628
Dianthus barbatus  Sweet William  Lady's Tuft  Wright 3 500
Dicentra spectabilis  Bleeding Heart  Lady's Heart (G)  Gyger P
Foeniculum dulce  Sweet Fennel  Lady's Fennel (G)  Grieb 312
Fumaria officinal.  Fumitory  Lady's Shoe  Wright 3 500
Galium verum  Yellow Bedstaw  L. Golden Bedstraw  Wright 3 500
Hippocrepis como.  Horsehoe Vtch  Lady s Fingers  Wright 3 500
Hippocrepis com.  Horsehoe Vtch  Lady's Slipper  Wright 3 500
Holcus odoratus  Holcus Grass  Lady's Grass (G)  Grimm 78
Inula conyza  Fleawort  Lady's Glove  Oxford 6 25
Iychnis vis.spl.  Pink Campion  Mary's Rose (G)  Grimm 1628
Lithospermum offic.  Gromwell  Mary's Tears (G)  Grimm 1628
Lonicera xilostegum  Honeysuckle  Lady's Stick (G)  Grimm 79
Lotus corniculatus  Bird's foot Tr  L. Fingers & Thumbs  Grieb 500
Lynchnis coronaria  Rose Campion  Lady's Rose (G)  Grimm 81
Lynchnis githago  Corn Cockle  Mary's Rose (G)  Grimm 1628
Lycopodium clavat.  Club Moss L.  Knives and Forks  Wright 3 500
Malva sylvestris  Marsh Mallow  Lady's Cheeses  Wright 3 500
Malve rotundifolia  Common Mallow  Lady's Mantle  Grimm 80
Marrubium vulgare  Horehound  Mary's Nettle (G)  Grimm 1627
Matricaria  Wild Chamomile  Mary's Mantle (G)  Grimm 1627
Mentha veridis  Spearmint  Lady's Leaf (G)  Grimm 77
Mentha viridis  Spearmint  Mary's Mint (G)  Grimm 1627
Mentha viridis  Spearmint  Mary's Leaf (G)  Grimm 1626
Myosotis palustris  Forget me not  Mary and Joseph  Wright 4 45
Myospermum tolu.  Tolu Tree  Mary's Tree  Oxford 6 162
Narcissus Dbl White  Narcis Narc.  Lady's Ruffles  Wright 3 500
Narcissus pseudon.  Daffodil  Lady's Ruffles  Wright 3 500
Nepeta cataria  Catnip  Mary's Plant (G)  Grimm 1627
Nigella damascena  Love in a Mist  Lady in the Shade  Wright 3 500
Orchis purpurea  Orchid  Lady Orchid  Wright 3 500
Paeonia officinal.  Peony  Mary's Rose (G)  Grimm 1628
Pastinaca sativa  Parsnip  Mary's Root (G)  Grieb 583
Phalaris arun.pict  Ribbon Grass  Mary's Grass (G)  Grimm 1626
Phlox  Early Phlox  Lady's Wedding  Wright 3 500
Pyrus  Pear variety  Lady Pear  Oxford 6 23
Pyrus  Apple variety  Lady Crab  Wright 3 500
Pyruš  Apple variety  Lady's Fingers  Wright 3 500
Pyruš malus  Apple  Lady Buddick  Wright 3 500
Pyruš malus  Hasting Apple  Mary’s Apple (G)  Wright 4 45
Rosa canina  Dog Rose  Mary’s Rose (G)  Grimm 1628
Rosa canina  Dog Rose  Mary’s Thorn (G)  Grimm 1628
Rosa rubiginosa  Eglantine  Mary’s Rose (G)  Grieb 583
Rosa rubiginosa  Eglantine  Mary’s Thorn (G)  Grieb 583
Rosa spinossimina  Scotch Rose  Lady’s Rose (G)  Grimm 81
Sagina  Pear Wort  Mary’s Grass (G)  Grieb 583
Saxifraga granul.  Meadow Saxif  Lady’s Feather beds  Wright 3 500
Saxifraga umbrosa  London Pride  Lady’s Needlework  Wright 3 500
Saxifraga umbrosa  London Pride  Lady in White  Wright 3 500
Saxifraga var.  Saxifraga  Lady’s Smock  Wright 3 500
Scabiosa arvensis  Field Scabious  Lady’s Cushion  Wright 3 500
Silene armería  Sw Wm Cach fly  Mary’s Rose (G)  Grimm 1628
Spergula arvensis  Spurry  Mary’s Grass (G)  Grimm 1626
Stachys  Woundwort  Lady’s Fingers (G)  Grieb 583
Stachys  Woundwort  Mary’s Rose (G)  Grieb 583
Stellaria holostia  Easter Bell  L. White Petticoat  Wright 3 500
Tanacetum balsam.  Tansy  Mary’s Root (G)  Grimm 1628
Tanacetum balsam.  Tansy  Lady’s Mint (G)  Grimm 81
Trifolium agrarium  Yellow Clover  Lady’s Hop (G)  Grimm 79
Violo alba  While Violet  Mary’s Delight (G)  Grimm 1626

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