Culinary and Fragrant Herbs of Religious Symbolism

Most of our culinary and fragrant herbs were grown at one time in medieval-monastery gardens or used by missionaries, in this way they came to have popular names reflecting religious life and thought.

Some of the names came from the liturgical feasts in the Church calendar for which plants normally were in bloom or fruit. Others came from striking plant shapes which brought to mind events of the Bible or thoughts about the life of the Holy Family. Many fragrant, soothing and healing herbs were associated especially with Mary, the mother of Jesus, because they suggested her sweetness and maternal solicitude.

The following religious names of herbs have been gleaned from dictionaries and floras of the old and new worlds. It is hoped they will contribute to the lore of herbs and to the religious sense of herb gardening.

A summary of herb growth and uses has also been included. Further details are available from the many excellent herb books and nurseries.

The following abbreviations are used:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Botanical Name</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Religious Name</th>
<th>Gr</th>
<th>Ht</th>
<th>Parts</th>
<th>Uses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achellea millefol.</td>
<td>Yarrow</td>
<td>Our Lord's Back</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>AT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allium schoenopras.</td>
<td>Chives</td>
<td>Our Lady's Garleek</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>FP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Althea officinalis</td>
<td>Marshmallow</td>
<td>Our Lady's Cheeses</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>P</td>
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<td>Anethium graveolens</td>
<td>Dill</td>
<td>Devil-Away</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>AFP</td>
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<td>Angelica archangel</td>
<td>Angelica</td>
<td>Angel's Plant</td>
<td>BF</td>
<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apium graveolens</td>
<td>Celery</td>
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<td>36</td>
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<td>PFST</td>
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<td>Artemisia abrotanum</td>
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<td>Our Lord's Wood</td>
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<td>Artemisia absinth.</td>
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<td>Mary's Tree P 48 l</td>
<td>P</td>
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<td>Rom. Wormwood</td>
<td>Our Lady's Needle</td>
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<td>Bellis perennis</td>
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<td>Cichorium intybus</td>
<td>Chicory</td>
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<td>Cross-Cummin</td>
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<td>Dianthus plumarius</td>
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<td>Foeniculum vulgare</td>
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<td>Hierochloe odorata</td>
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<td>Hypericum perforatus</td>
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Botanical Name | Common Name | Religious Name | Gr | Ht | Parts | Uses |
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<td>Hyssopos officinal.</td>
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<td>St. Bridget's Flower</td>
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<td>Levisticum officin.</td>
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<td><em>Rosmarinus offic.</em>*</td>
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<td>Herb O'Grace</td>
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<td>Christ's Eye</td>
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<td>Our Lady's Delight AB</td>
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