

# Biblical Herb Garden



**Noank Baptist Church**

18 Cathedral Heights  
Noank, CT 06340

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Welcome members, friends and visitors to a special garden to rest your senses by the simplicity of rewinding time—to Biblical time!

Sit under the Tamarix; let the coolness of its shade and gentle breeze touch your face just as Jesus and his disciples did during their travels.

As you watch the bees bounce among the Hyssop, imagine the taste of honey they make for you just as they made honey for Jesus.

Enjoy the smell of Juniper sage mint as enjoyed by Jesus as he visited many gardens.

In the sunlit renewal of spring, look upon the colorful bulbs in bloom just as Jesus did when he spoke of the “lilies of the field.” Do this and comfort and joy will come. Or if you need and are seeking a place to rest and not think at all, welcome to the herb garden!

I used several books that I have listed on another page from which I selected the plants for the herb garden and list the information about them. There is interest for everyone; for those who like in-depth discussion and debate—Harold and Alma Moldenke's book is for you. If your interest is to seek out other Biblical gardens, purchase Allan Swenson's book. Or if you just want some simplified information on Biblical plants, Eleanor King's a great book. No matter which book you choose to read, all have a common statement that Bible translations may not identify plants correctly. In Moldenke's book, page 8, the information given by the American Bible Society is that the Bible has been translated into 1,118 different languages and dialects. It's stated that it is humanly impossible to make a translation from one language to another and still express the same meaning. Somer versions of the Bible will not have the same name or sequence.

With this said, as the gardener that designed, formed, gathered information and planted, I did my very best to decipher the material so as to include plants of scripture, size, color and form useable in a small garden, and to seek 90% of scripture plants that are perennials. Some of the bulbs listed were planted the fall of 2004, the remaining ones hopefully in the fall of 2005. A note on perennials—the information given is to replace herb plants every three years for health and appearance. That would be only for the herbs in the center planters of the garden.

**A NOTE OF CAUTION:** The herbs in our garden are NOT to be used for medicinal purpose. Herbs are dangerous to use unless you have reliable training in the medicinal aspect.

# Biblical



A big thank you to Luba Preble for helping with the printing, copying, and construction of this booklet to make the information available for you.

May God bless,

Linda Santoro, gardener  
2005

## TREES OF BIBLICAL TIMES REPRESENTED IN NOANK BAPTIST CHURCH

- 1) Cedar Psalm 104:16  
Garden signs are Cedar wood. The Cedar was held in high esteem for its vigor, beauty, fragrance, and lasting qualities. Used for building, there are some of the opinion that Cedar was used for the crucifixion cross.
  
- 2) Arborvitae Revelation 18:12  
Arborvitae: Thuja occidentalis “smargd”  
Representing the “thyine wood” referring to the wood of the Sandarac tree, tetraclinis articulata, as they are closely related. Highly prized, durable, fragrant wood, often referred to as “priceless.”
  
- 3) Tamarix Genesis 21:15-33  
Tamarix Ramosissima – “Summer Glow”  
The Tamarix grows abundantly, especially in regions troubled with drought providing shade for travelers.
  
- 4) Juniper Jeremiah 17:6  
Juniper Virginiana – “Grey Owl”  
Juniper Creeping – “Blue Pacific”  
Juniper is a very common plant most especially in the dessert and mountain areas. Often referred to as “heath” in the Bible. Heath does not grow in the holyland.
  
- 5) Boxwood Isaiah 60:13  
“Green Mountain” – Sheridan Hybrids  
“Green Velvet” – hardy Northern Box  
A hardy evergreen tree found in the mountainous area of the holyland. Most valued for wood carving and turning. Opinions on the interpretation or translation of words and meanings of Boxwood are many.
  
- 6) Santolina Genesis 6:14  
Santolina Chamaecyparissus – herb  
The species name means “dwarf Cypress.” Santolina was used to represent the Cypress of the holyland. Cypress is a very large common tree of the mountainous areas and very durable. It was a wood of choice for Phoenicians, Cretans, and Greeks for shipbuilding. There are those who believe the Cypress was wood of choice for Noah when he built the Ark.
  
- 7) Ilex The Apocrypha “Daniel and Susanna”  
“Sky Pencil Holly”  
The holly in our garden represents the intriguing mystery of Biblical plant identification. According to Moldenke’s book “Plants of the Bible,” in the “Apocrypha” story of Daniel and Susanna, the words “holm tree” are mention. The edition I read of the “Apocrypha” The New English Bible with the Apocrypha, Oxford/Cambridge University Press, 1970, does not have “holm tree.” It uses “clove tree” and “yew tree.” Yet, there is an edition that has “holm.” The early translation of the word “holm” was “Ilex Aquifolium” or “holly.” During

the 1950's, when I believe Moldenkes presented their book, authorities agreed that the "holm tree" really meant evergreen oak, not Ilex or holly. The information on most all plants change often, and in 2005, someone may have a different translation. To add to the confusion, there are many words in scripture that describe what is now referred to as an oak tree. Words such as groves, plain, scarlet, green tree, tree, thick tree, crimson, etc. The "sky pencil holly" of our garden represents how difficult the exact identification of the plants of long ago can be and may always remain a mystery.

There is a Christian legend of the "holm tree" that is interesting. All the trees of the forest rebelled at giving their wood for Jesus' cross except the "holm tree." Yet Jesus forgave it because the "holm tree" was willing to die with him. After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to the saints under the shade of a "holm tree."

## OTHER PLANTINGS

Grass plantings to represent grains:

|                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Hakonechloa macra | "Aureola"       |
| Calamagrostis     | "Karl Foerster" |
| Helictotrechon    | "Blue Oat"      |
| Chasmanthium      | "Wild Oat"      |

The above grasses in our garden are not called out in Scripture. These are just for show and to *represent grains* only, such as in the following Scriptures:

|                           |        |
|---------------------------|--------|
| II Samuel 17-19 and 27-28 | Barley |
| Exodus 22:6               | Corn   |
| Psalms 147:14             | Wheat  |
| Ezekiel 4:9               | Millet |
| Jeremiah 50:11            | Grass  |

Spring bulbs in our garden:

Lilies of the Field all grown in the holyland

|                        |     |   |
|------------------------|-----|---|
| <u>Matthew 6:28-30</u> | and | <u>Song of Solomon</u>                        |
| Aneonone               |     | Hyacinth (blue only; native bulb)             |
| Trumpet Daffodil       |     | Muscari                                       |
| Narcissus              |     | Turks Cap lily (red; grown in abundance)      |
| Crocus                 |     | Cyclamen                                      |
| Star of Bethlehem      |     | Iris (yellow and white)                       |
| Lenton Rose            |     | Tulips (red fusilier; most like native tulip) |

Azalea in our garden: "Joseph Hill" (good name!)

Clematis (autumn flowering) – transplanted from fence area to the herb garden—a beautiful plant, using as a ground cover.

Spirea "Gumball" for show and garden filler only.

Vines on trellis – the vines in Scripture are very large, unruly plants and unable to use in such a small space as ours. Vines are for form and beauty.

## HERBS

- 1) Hyssop John 19:29  
Hyssop officinalis Labiatae  
Member of the mint family, prune to six inches from ground in spring. Remove spent flowers during the season of continued bloom. No spraying for insect control; to the bees, butterflies and hummingbirds hyssop is a treasure pot. Its name comes from the Greek word "hussopos" and the Hebrew word "esob" meaning "holy herb." A strong camphor odor; it's been known as "the cleansing herb" and a very soothing bath.
- 2) Wormwood (CAUTION: unsafe herb) Jeremiah 9:15  
Wormwood lactiflora "Guizho" – a dwarf plant, one out of 400 plants in this family.  
Wormwood Artemisia "absinthium," according to research, is the plant referred to in the Bible. The absinthe oil, used in an alcoholic drink and now illegal, allegedly Vincent van Gogh was under the influence when he cut off his ear. The oil has a numbing effect. Wormwood is one of the "bitter" herbs of the Bible, and was used for punishment. Legend says, "As the serpent's tail slithered out of the Garden of Eden, Wormwood grew up from the soil in the trail left behind."
- 3) Sorrel (native of the Holy Land); a bitter herb  
The specimen in the Herb Garden is an ornamental Sorrel, and not to be used for culinary use.
- 4) Horseradish (grown in the Holy Land); a bitter herb  
Use in the garden for its large foliage and ornamental shape. May become too large, which will have to be removed.
- 5) Spikenard John 12:3-9  
Spikenard officinalis (from the Valiriana family plants)  
The Biblical plant was Nardostachy jatamanse. In Biblical times this was used as a highly-prized perfume, and extremely expensive. Today it is considered very disagreeable.

- 6) Costmary (Bible leaf plant)  
 Costmary is from the tanacetum Chrysanthemum “Balsamite” family, originally from the orient with a nice balsam-like fragrance. In colonial days Costmary was found in all the Bibles, possibly a bookmark, hence its nickname of “Bible leaf.” During a rather long sermon, if one’s eyes began to droop and the head began to nod, a hardy inhale of the smell of Costmary would perk you right up! It’s said that one could always determine which parish had the most boring clergy by the amount of Costmary grown in the town’s gardens!
- 7) Tansy (repels bad insects and attracts beneficial ones) (CAUTION: uneatable herb)  
 It is in the Biblical Herb Garden for repelling and attraction. Grown by the doorsteps to repel ants, hung in the kitchen to repel flies, it is said, “King James II had royal herb strewers to distribute bushels of Tansey along the path to his throne.” Was it to repel flies caused by a lack of bathing!?
- 8) Sage (grows in the Holy Land)  
 Our garden has the following sage:  
     Berggarten 18”; zone 5  
     Purple 15”; zone 6  
     Clary 3’; zone 5  
 The genus name derives from the Latin for “salvation.” Used in our garden for ornamental purpose and for butterflies and hummers.
- 9) Salvia Exodus 37:17-23  
 Salvia nemorosa (meadow sage)  
 The “meadow sage” of our garden represents the species “judaica” of the Holy Land, which is not grown in our country. This plant was used as inspiration for the design of the seven-branched candlestick used in the tabernacle.
- 10) Rue (CAUTION: unsafe herb) Luke 11:42  
 Ruta graviolins Rutaceae  
 “Herb of Grace” is the common name as it once was used to sprinkle holy water. Rue was subject to tithe—only the cultivated, not the wild plant.
- 11) Mallow (grows in the Holy Land)  
 Malva Alcia fastigage  
 The Mallow Malva Sylvestris is the species in the Holy Land. Although this plant is native, the studiers of plant and Bible have agreed that the Mallow of Job is actually “saltwort.”
- 12) Origanum (grows in the Holy Land)  
 Origanum “Rosenkuppel” (Marjoram and Oregano)  
 This plant represents the wild form grown in the Holy Land. It is not a culinary plant, only ornamental. Beneficial to butterflies.
- 13) Coriander Exodus 16:31  
 Coriander is used for flavoring foods and is quite aromatic. It is an annual here and grows wild in the Holy Land.



- 14) Flax John 19:40  
 Flax *Linum usitatissimum*  
 In Biblical times Flax was one of the most important crops and the oldest known of textile fibers; still grown today. Flax capsules (fruit size of a pea) are called “bolls” and when mature, the plant is harvested and tied into sheaves. Immersed in water for several weeks causes them to “ret,” meaning the fibers separate from the non-fibrous portion of stems. They are set out to dry on rooftops and “hackled” (combed) to remove fibers for linen making. The seeds are expressed for linseed oil. The practice is still done today.
- 15) Calendula (grows in the Holy Land); annual  
 Calendula “pot Marigold” is native to the Holy Land and the plant of past literature.
- 16) Nigella Isaiah 28:25-27  
 Nigella damascena or “love-in-a-mist” used in our herb garden  
 Nigella sativa is the “fitches” of Isaiah and grows in the Holy Land. Sometimes referred to as the nutmeg flower” has no relation at all to the nutmeg. It’s part of the ranuncu/aceac family (buttercup). Seeds are used for breads and cakes, often called the “blessed seed.” These seeds are still gathered to day the same way as the prophet Isaiah described in 725 B.C.
- 17) Alluim Numbers 11:5  
 Alluim hollandicum (“purple sensation”) in our garden represents the following, all grown in the Holy Land:
- |                    |         |
|--------------------|---------|
| Allium ascalanicum | shallot |
| Allium sativum     | garlic  |
| Allium cepa        | onions  |
| Allium porrum      | leek    |
- 18) Horesmint Luke 11:42  
 Horesmint *monarda punctata*  
 A lot of mints grow in the Holy Land, but this species grows wild in abundance.
- 19) Purple Cone (beneficial to butterflies)  
 Purple cone – *Echinacea purpurea*  
 Grown in our herb garden because of its beauty, but mainly for butterflies.
- 20) Our Lady’s Bedstraw (associated with the life of Jesus)  
*Galium verum*  
 According to traditional stories, the combination of bracken and lady’s bedstraw was used for cattle bedding in the stables. Making fragrant bedding for the Christ Child, it is said that upon his birth the hay burst into fresh bloom, the flowers of bedstraw turning from white to gold, from the celestial rays streaming from the Holy Child.
- 21) Dianths (beneficial to butterflies)  
*Dianths caryophyllaceae* – *pinks*  
 With the nickname of “gilly flower” it belongs in every garden.

- 22) Christmas Rose (associated with the life of Jesus)  
 Helleborus niger  
 According to traditional story, a little shepherdess, upon seeing the Wise Men kneeling before the manger, offering their precious gifts to the infant, Jesus, wept for she had no gift to offer. Where every tear fell to the ground, there blossomed up a white flower with a crown of gold. Such a flower had never bloomed before—it was the Christmas rose.
- 23) Globe Thistle Proverbs 24:30-31  
 Echinops viscosus  
 also the *Sea Holly*, Eryngiumx Zabelii  
 These two plants represent the thorns and thistle of the Bible.
- 24) “Spices” Song of Solomon 6:2  
 The references to “spice”, “spicery” and “precious things” in the Song of Solomon refers to many sweet smelling plants. The ones in our garden are: lavender, thyme, rosemary, and basil.
- 25) Catmint Matthew 23:23  
 Nepeta foassenii  
 Spearmint – mentha spicata  
 These plants grow in our garden to represent the many herbs that grow in the Holy Land. Mint was used to tithe; however, only the cultivated, not the wild.
- 26) St John’s Wort (CAUTION: unsafe herb) – a traditional story  
 St. John’s Wort – hypericum  
 The traditional story is that St. John’s Wort was named after St. John, the Baptist. The red pigment, hypericin, which exudes from the crushed flowers, signifies his blood.

Information gathered from the following books:

1. The Living Bible
2. Woman of Faith Study Bible
3. Plants of the Bible Harold and Alma Moldenke\*
4. Bible Plants for American Gardens Eleanor Anthony King
5. Flowers of the Bible and How to Grow Them Allan A. Swenson\*\*
6. Herbs in Bloom JoAnn Gardner
7. Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs Rodale's\*\*\*
8. Encyclopedia of Herb Gardening Consultant Editor, Frances Hutchison
9. The New English Bible with the Apocrypha

\*Moldenke – excellent Biblical plant information

\*\*Swenson – lists many churches that have Biblical Gardens, addresses, web sites, and phone numbers along with how to grow, etc.

\*\*\*Rodale's – excellent herb information

Mail order catalogs – excellent varieties and helpful people:

1. The Sandy Mush Herb Nursery (828-682-2014; Thursday, Fridays, and Saturdays only)
2. Goodwin Creek Gardens (800-846-7359)
3. Well-Sweep Herb Farm – extensive selection (908-852-5390)