

# REDEEMER'S BIBLICAL GARDEN



## **DEDICATION**

This Biblical Garden Guide was originally compiled and assembled by Janice Wetters specifically for the use of Redeemer Lutheran Church, located at 3637 Spring Arbor Road in Jackson, Michigan. She not only did the research necessary to create such a garden, but she along with Marvel Jones set out to make the garden a reality at Redeemer. The original pictures and drawings of plants, trees, and various other vegetation used in a Biblical Garden have been updated to add color and visual definition to the descriptions.

With respect and appreciation, Redeemer dedicates this second edition of the Biblical Garden Booklet to Janice and her passion and enthusiasm for this garden project, along with her tenacity and hard work to complete the task.

Then God said,  
Let the land produce vegetation:  
seed-bearing plants and trees  
that bear fruit with seed in it,  
according to their various kinds.  
And it was so. The land produced  
vegetation: plants bearing seeds  
according to their kind and trees  
bearing fruit with seed in it  
according to their kinds. And God  
saw that it was good.

Genesis 1:11-12 (NIV)

## Biblical Plants and Flowers

### **Tulip**

The scarlet mountain tulip flowers in semi-desert areas of the Holy Land during early spring:

*“The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the Turtle Dove is heard in our land.”* Song of Solomon 2:12



### **Crocus**

#### Saffron Crocus



The Song of Solomon is a rich mine for the mention of spices and other plants from the time of Biblical history:

*“Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates with all the choicest fruits, henna with nard, nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes, with all chief spices.”* Song of Solomon 4:13-14

The saffron referred to is a yellow powder obtained by collecting and grinding the styles of the crocus.

*“The desert shall rejoice and the blossoms; like the crocus, it shall blossom abundantly.”* Isaiah 35:1



## Sage

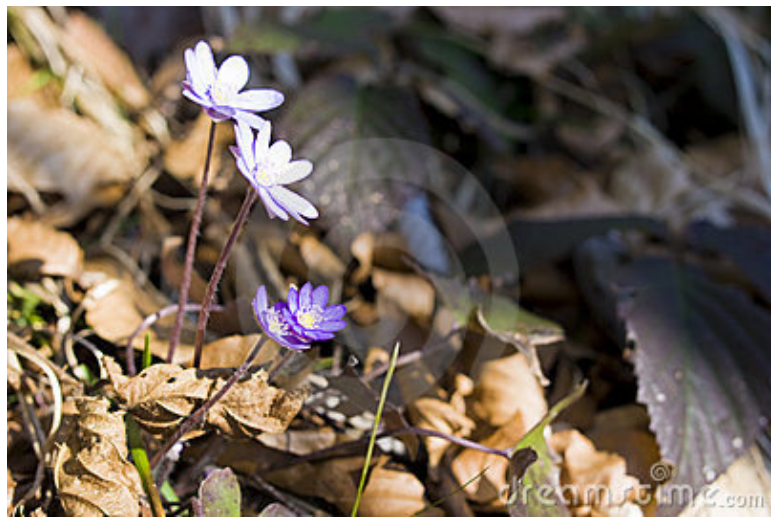
When Moses led the people of Israel through the Sinai Desert, God gave him, not only the Ten Commandments, but also the instructions for construction of the Tabernacle. Included were the detailed specifications for the great lampstand of pure gold, the Menorah. The base and the shaft of the lampstand were made of hammered work; its cups, calyxes, and petals were made of one piece. There were six branches going out of its sides. (See Exodus 37:17-18) This kind of branching is like the plant called wild Judean Sage.

## Anemone

### Wildflower

This is a colorful wild flower in the spring and is a special feature in the Holy Land.

*“Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.”* Luke 12:27-28



## Chicory

### Bitter Herbs

When the people of Israel were about to escape Egypt for the Promised Land, they ate their first Passover Meal: roast lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs as a reminder of the harsh experiences at the hands of the Egyptians. (Exodus 12:8, Numbers 9:11) They would have plucked whatever leaves were available. Today, Jews celebrate their Passover (Seder) meal with bitter herbs such as chicory, lettuce, horseradish, and parsley. Chicory leaves are used as a salad, while the long roots are roasted, ground, and mixed with coffee.



## Lily

There are many references to lilies in the Bible but they do not all refer to the true lily. However, it is quite likely that the white Madonna Lily was the plant in Hosea's prophesy:

*"I will be like the dew to Israel; He shall blossom like the lily."*  
Hosea 14:5

Daylilies are a valuable addition to our Biblical Garden. In Luke 12:27, Jesus encourages us to "*consider the lilies*" because if God clothes them with more beauty than the wealthiest king, how much more beautifully will He care for us?



## Mint

A Biblical Garden is not complete without mint. This was true of gardens in Old Testament times as well, since it was one of the herbs mentioned by Jesus: "Woe to you Pharisees because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone." Luke 11:4

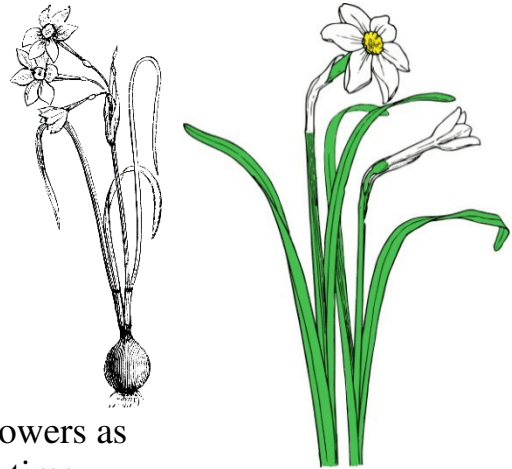


## Narcissus

Some authors have come to different conclusions about the polyanthus narcissus which is mentioned by Solomon:

*“I am a Rose of Sharon, a Lily of the Valley. As a lily among brambles, so is my love among maidens.”* Song of Solomon 2:1-2

This is a beautiful bulb which grows wild in moist valleys and hills of the Holy Land where it flowers as early as November in the cool, rainy winter. By the time spring comes, the narrow leaves have stored up enough food in the bulb and wither away before summer begins.



## Lily of the Valley

The Lily of the Valley is named in the Bible several times in the Song of Solomon. In the Song of Solomon 6:2-4, he refers to his bride who has gone *“to browse in the gardens and to gather lilies.”*



## Star of Bethlehem or Dove’s Dung

There is a curious and puzzling Biblical reference to Dove’s Dung being sold for a high price in Samaria during a famine when Behadad, King of



Syria, was besieging the city (2 Kings 6:25). Some authors consider the Dove’s Dung to be the bulb of a small plant now called *Star of Bethlehem*. It grows so profusely on the hills of Samaria that the white flowers look like bird droppings on the ground.



### **Mallows or Hollyhocks**

There is an obscure item of tasteless food mentioned in Job 6:6 and translated “white of egg.” Professor Michael Zohary considered it on linguistic grounds to be a Mallow or a Hollyhock. One of the mallows of the Holy Land is the common Mallow. It is a roadside perennial with

lateral branches. The leaves may be collected and cooked as a spinach or soup thickener, or used as for skin ointments and cough medicines.



*“In the brush they gathered salt herbs, and their food was the root of the broom tree.”* Job 30:4

### **Dill**

Of several herbs mentioned by Jesus as being tithed by the Scribes and Pharisees who neglected more important matters, one was dill. *“Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith.”* Matthew 23:23





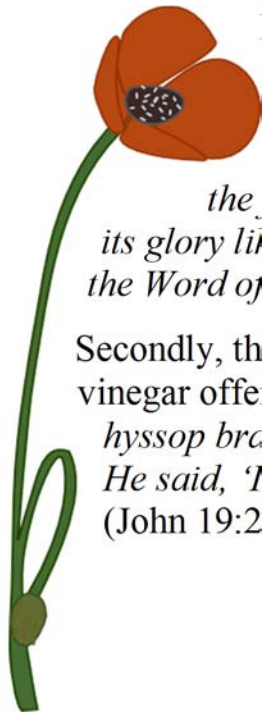


## Thistles and Nettles

Thistles, thorns, and nettles are mentioned throughout the Bible. In Genesis 3:17-18, we read “*Cursed is the ground because of you...thorns and thistles it shall bring forth*” (Isaiah 34:13). “*Thorns shall grow over its strongholds, nettles and thistles in its fortresses.*” In the parable of the Sower, “*Other seeds fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them*” (Matthew 13:7).

Many gardeners choose not to have thistles and nettles in a Biblical Garden, but they are indeed Biblical plants. We have the Globe Thistle in the Redeemer Biblical Garden which does not spread like many thistles do.

## Poppy



Poppies are included in the Biblical Garden for two reasons: One is that scarlet field poppies are such a feature of the Mediterranean springtime that they are undoubtedly included in such passages from the Bible as “*All people are grass, their constancy is like the flowers of the field*” (Isaiah 40:6) and “*All flesh is like grass and its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the Word of the Lord endures forever*” (1 Peter 1:24-25).

Secondly, the opium poppy may have provided the anodyne (gall) in the vinegar offered to Jesus on the cross. “*They put a sponge full of wine on a hyssop branch and held it to His mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, He said, ‘It is finished’ then He bowed His head and gave up His spirit*” (John 19:29-30; Matthew 27:34).

## Rose

### Joseph of Coats Rose

No one is sure whether the true rose is mentioned in the Bible, although most translations include the name as in “*I am a Rose of Sharon*” as in Song of Solomon 2:1. It is more likely that the crocus, narcissus, or tulip was meant. But both the Dog Rose and the Phoenician Rose grow in the Holy Land.



## Myrtle

This lovely evergreen bush grows on the hillsides in the Holy Land and was one of the leafy plants used by the Jews for making booths (or tabernacles) at the Feast of Tabernacles, as a reminder of their exodus from Egypt (Leviticus 23:40-43; Nehemiah 8:15).



## Crown Daisy

### Chrysanthemum

Many roadsides, fields, and unused spaces in the Holy Land are wreathed with these beautiful flowers and are just some of the spectacular weeds and wild flowers characteristic of the Mediterranean spring. They are the “flowers of the field” or “grass” mentioned frequently in the Scriptures (Isaiah 40:6; James 1:10; 1 Peter 1:24-25).



## Fennel

One of the unusual spices used in the Old Testament rites was galbanum, a constituent of the Holy Incense which was burnt as a perfume in the Tabernacle (Exodus 30:34). Today, it is not used at all and the plant grows on the dry hillsides of Iran.



## Grapevine

The grapevine is one of the most important plants/fruits of the Holy Land. So it is not surprising that it is frequently mentioned in the Bible. The first reference to it is that unfortunate occurrence when Noah became drunk with wine (Genesis 9:21). But many happier incidents are included in both the Old and New Testaments. "*Wine gladdens the heart*" (Psalm 104:15). Wine was used at symbolic occasions such as the Passover and Last Supper (Matthew 26:27-29). Israel was likened to a vineyard (Isaiah 5:1-10), and Jesus said, "*I am the true vine*" (John 15:1).

## Trees and Shrubs

### **Judas Tree or Rosebud Tree**

It was Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus twelve disciples, who betrayed his Master to be crucified. When he realized what he had done, he gave the blood-money back to the priests saying, “*I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.*” *Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; he went out and hanged himself*” (Matthew 27:4-5). The Judas Tree, also called Redbud Tree, has numerous purple-red, pea-sized flowers along its branches in spring, before the heart-shaped leaves develop.



### **Apple Tree-Flowering Crab Apple**

There has been a great deal of discussion as to whether the apple or the apricot is the fruit mentioned in the two Biblical passages: “*Sustain me with raisins, refresh me with apples; for I am faint with love*” (Song of Solomon 2:5) and “*The vine withers, the fig tree droops. Pomegranates, palm, and apple—all trees of the field have dried up; surely, joy withers away among the people*” (Joel 1:12). At one time it was thought that apples would not grow successfully in the Holy Land, but that is not so. Neither tree is native to the Holy

Land. Both fruit trees would have had to be introduced to the area from countries to the north and east.



### **Almond Tree— Flowering Almond**

Almond nuts were carried to Egypt by Joseph's brothers (Genesis 43:11); twigs



of almond budded and fruited overnight to prove that Aaron was God's man to assist Moses (Numbers 17:8), and the holy

lampstand had cups shaped like almond flowers (Exodus 25:33; 37:19).

### **Juniper**

When Solomon became King of Israel, he planned to build a temple in Jerusalem. He asked the King of Tyre for timber from the great forests of the mountains of Lebanon and the men were sent to cut down the trees (1 Kings 5:3-6; 9:11). These were not only the famous cedars of Lebanon, but included cypress, fir, pine, and juniper; all conifers.





## Cypress

The cypress tree is native to the Holy Land and surrounding countries and is mentioned several times in Scripture. It was one of the timbers used for the construction of King Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem (1 Kings 9:11). Its pleasant evergreen appearance attracted Isaiah's attention as he prophesied about cypress growing in the desert (Isaiah

41:19). Some commentators even consider that the "gopher wood" used by Noah was cypress (Genesis 6:4).

## Cedar

For thousands of years, Lebanon has been a rich source of timber for countries around it. King Solomon made arrangements with Hiram, King of Tyre, on the coast of Lebanon (ancient Phoenicia), for the felling and transport of cedars and other timber to Jerusalem (1 Kings 5:6-8, 10: 2 Chronicles 2). It was there that Solomon built his great temple to the



Lord which endured for over three hundred years until it was destroyed in 586 B.C. Cedar was used for making many other objects, such as furniture and ships. There are several references to the beauty and strength of these trees (Amos 2:9).

## Other Plant with Biblical Names

Butterfly Bush

Lambs Ear

Burning Bush

### **SPRING**

I went to walk with God across the fields,  
Nodding in the breeze were the yellow daffodils.

I clasped God's hand as we walked along;  
My heart was so merry and filled with song.

The earth was alive, kissed by the breath of spring,  
And there in great splendor was everything.  
Forsythia, crocus, primrose, tulips, all in a row,  
Only God could create such beauty and make it grow.

If the wrong side of Heaven could be like this,  
Then the right side of Heaven will be filled with bliss.  
Spring is such a wondrous time of year,  
That's when the yellow daffodils appear.

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