



Elegant Authenticity: Implementing and Interpreting Historic Landscaping

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The webinar will begin at 10:00 a.m. CT.

While you wait:

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www.thc.texas.gov/museumwebinars

- **Developing a Facility Security Plan**
 - Tuesday, March 21, 10:00 a.m. CT
- **How to Keep All Those Donors Your Museum Worked So Hard to Get**
 - Thursday, May 18, 10:00 a.m. CT

Upcoming Free Webinars from Other Orgs

www.thc.texas.gov/museumconnections

- *Leveraging Community Assets to Enhance Your Nonprofit's Impact*, March 2, 1:00 p.m. CT, Candid
- *How Access Influences Preservation in Museum Libraries and Archives*, March 9, 1:00 p.m. CT, NEMA
- *Introduction to Finding Grants*, March 9, 1:00 p.m. CT, Candid
- *Safety and Security for the Performing Arts*, March 14, 1:00 p.m. CT, Lyrasis
- *Fire and Emergency Protection Plan Development*, March 15, 1:00 p.m. CT, Lyrasis
- *Exhibiting Photographs*, March 21, 12:00 p.m. CT, Connecting to Collections Care
- *Create a Future Through Careers in Historic Preservation*, March 22, 2:00 p.m. CT, ACHP
- *Newsletters: Multichannel Impact Reporting for the Modern Era*, March 29, 12:00 p.m. CT, Productive Fundraising
- *Health and Safety for Performing Arts Organizations*, March 30, 1:00 p.m. CT, Lyrasis
- *Why ESG is Important to Your Nonprofit*, March 30, 1:00 p.m. CT, Blue Avocado

Laura Fisher and Nicole Shadle





Elegant Authenticity

Developing a Landscaping Plan for your Historic Site

Nicole Shadle, Iowa Living History Farms and San Felipe de Austin SHS

Laura Fisher, Washington-on-the-Brazos SHS

1. Developing a Plan: What Landscaping Does for Your Site



Improves the visual
image of the site,
even if other
aspects need
attention



Adds Realism –
Interprets Horticultural
History as an Extension
of Victorian Material
Culture



Highlights your Site's
Commitment to
Authenticity



Photos: Barrington Plantation State Historic Site

Benefit: Improving Visual Image

- Adding easy-to-maintain landscaping can improve the overall look of the site, cancelling out the “eyesores” awaiting the funding/time/resources to improve
- “I don’t have the power to fix *this*, but I do have the power to improve other things...



Photo: Dennis Bratland, CC BY-SA 4.0

Text Added



Benefit: Adding Realism

- ▶ Landscaping and gardens can be much more than just for show; gardens are things people have been appreciating and cultivating for centuries
- ▶ Once you know the “how?” you can interpret the “why?”
 - ▶ “What we’re growing here are flowers called ‘zinnias.’ In an 1890s seed catalog, they stated ‘These aren’t your grandmother’s zinnias!’ suggesting exciting new varieties these people might have been interested in planting
- ▶ Create educational programming using the resource
 - ▶ Seed saving, deadheading, weed-pulling, and watering are all hands-on programming that can be used for the benefit of the visitor, site, and you!
 - ▶ Nicole had a grandparents/grandchildren group regularly come out to see garden progress and activities



Photo: Barrington Living History Farm

Benefit: Commitment to Authenticity

- ▶ When it comes to trustworthy historical information, the public places most of its faith in museums and historic sites (American Historical Association, 2021)
- ▶ It's more than planting flowers... be able to answer common questions and interpret why you did what you did!
- ▶ When you are confident in your information, so too is the public
- ▶ Sometimes specific information is hard to find and that's okay!
 - ▶ You may not know the name of the variety of petunias people are planting, but you know the colors that were available
 - ▶ "I haven't been able to track down the exact variety of petunias that were available in 1870, but they did have pink varieties available which is what we have here!"

2. Developing a Plan: Site-Specifics

- Is landscaping appropriate for your site?
- Are there records of landscaping at your site?
- What can your site reasonably maintain?
- What's common in your time period and how can it be adjusted to fit your site specifics?



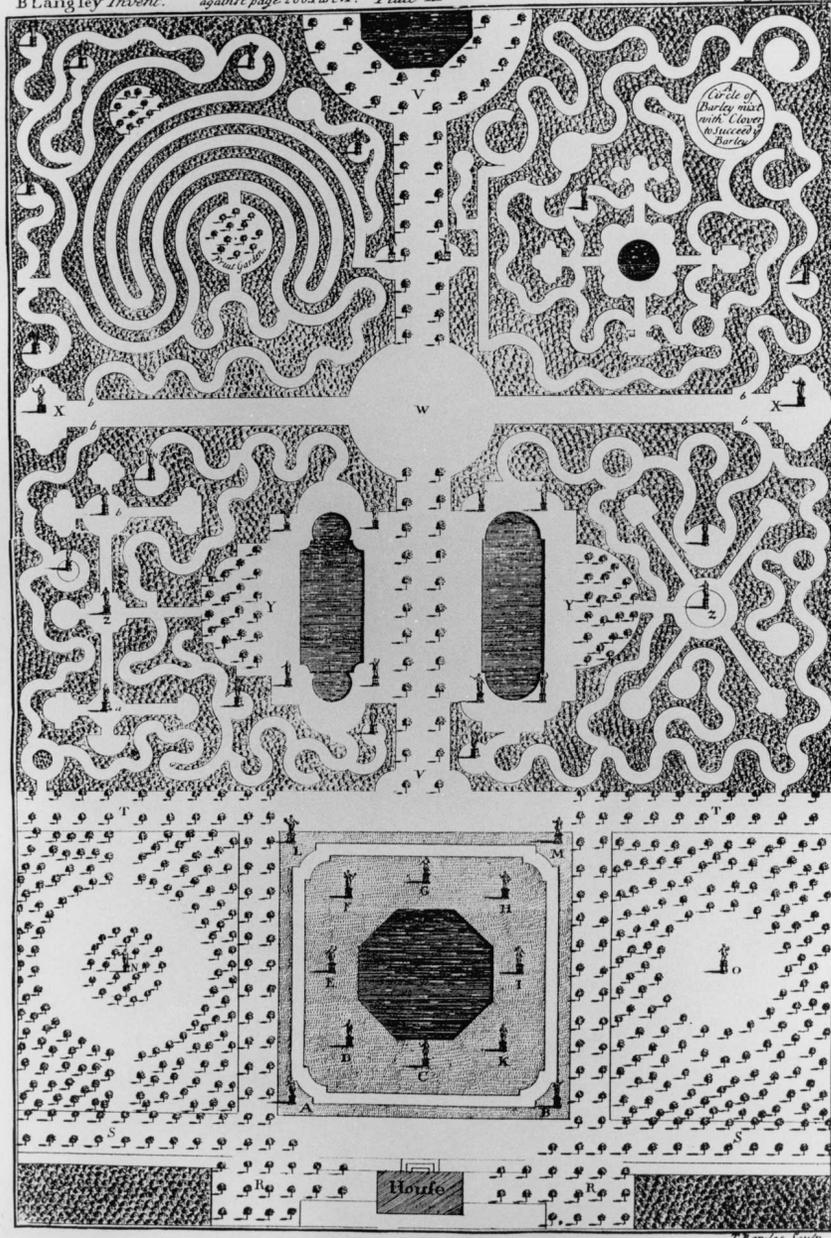
Photo: Barrington Plantation State Historic Site

3. Your Region

- ▶ What do travel narratives, images, or other sources say about landscaping in your region?
- ▶ Are there indications of nurseries in your region? Which seed varieties and brands are available in your area?
 - ▶ This can be more than just specific to your area. Ad says they're getting seeds in your area from Connecticut? See what's available in Connecticut at that time!



Photo: Sarah Ann Lillie Hardinge



4. Find a Style

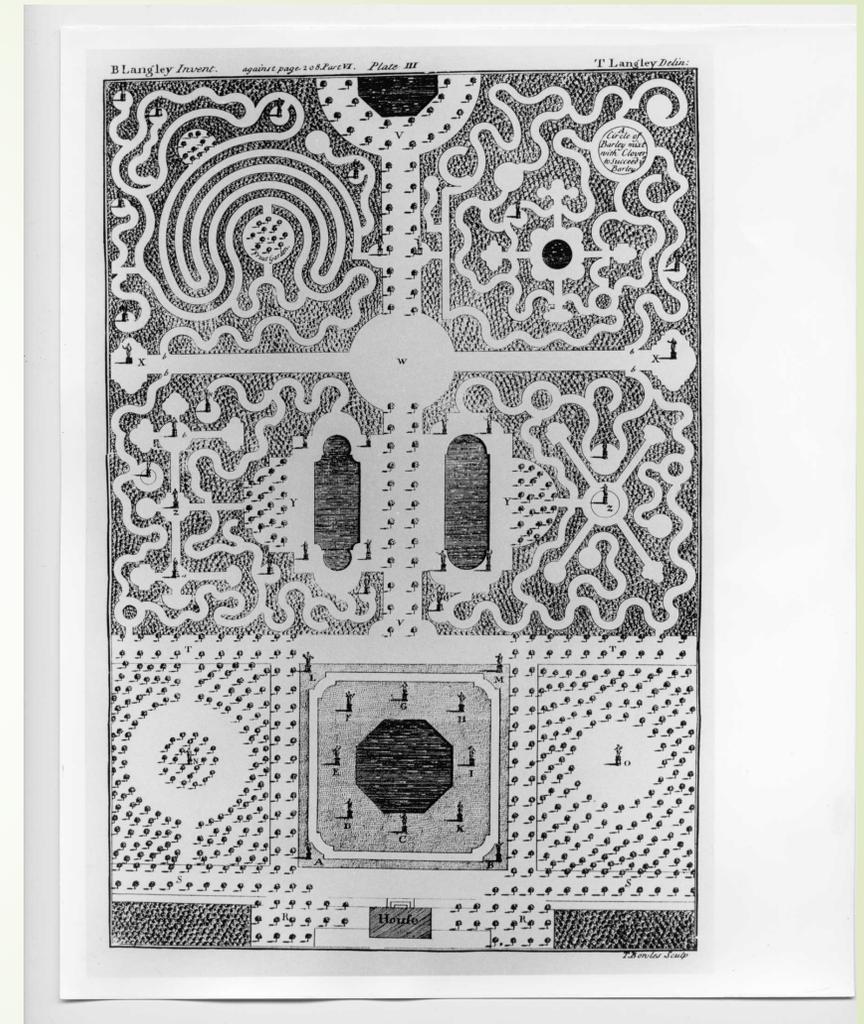
- Popular Styles of the Period- While not everyone followed the styles and landscaping books of their time, everyone was influenced by them, so going with simple elements of known styles and period plans will ensure documentable accuracy
- Many Northern Styles Are OK Too
- Popular Plants of the Period and Region- cross reference period books for varieties of old-fashioned plants that you know will grow in your area
- Ensure you are picking a style and plants that can be maintained with your resources. If you never have time to take care of it, then fragile, finicky plants are probably not best for you

Helpful Secondary Sources

- ▶ *Landscapes and Gardens for Historic Buildings: A Handbook for Reproducing and Creating Authentic Landscape Settings*. Favretti, Rudy J. and Joy Putnam, 1978. **Excellent Starting Place and Reference Guide.**
- ▶ *American Gardens of the Nineteenth Century*. Ann Leighton, 1987. **Good introduction to historic landscape designers.**
- ▶ *Gardens and Plants of the Antebellum South*. James Cothran, 2003. **Good introduction to plants popular in the South.**
- ▶ Monticello: Website and Seed Catalogue and Garden Facebook Group- **Use with a grain of salt, as Jefferson did set trends but also experimented with new or rare plants and may not be a great indication of what was popular in his own time. Good source for seeds.**
- ▶ National Gallery of Art's History of American Landscape Design <https://heald.nga.gov/mediawiki/index.php/Home> - **Lists landscape designers, styles, elements of designs, and period images of landscaping.**
- ▶ Welch, William C. and Greg Grant: *Yesterday's Plants for Today's Gardens: Heirloom Gardening in the South*. Texas A&M University Press, 2011. **Good Introduction to historic plants**

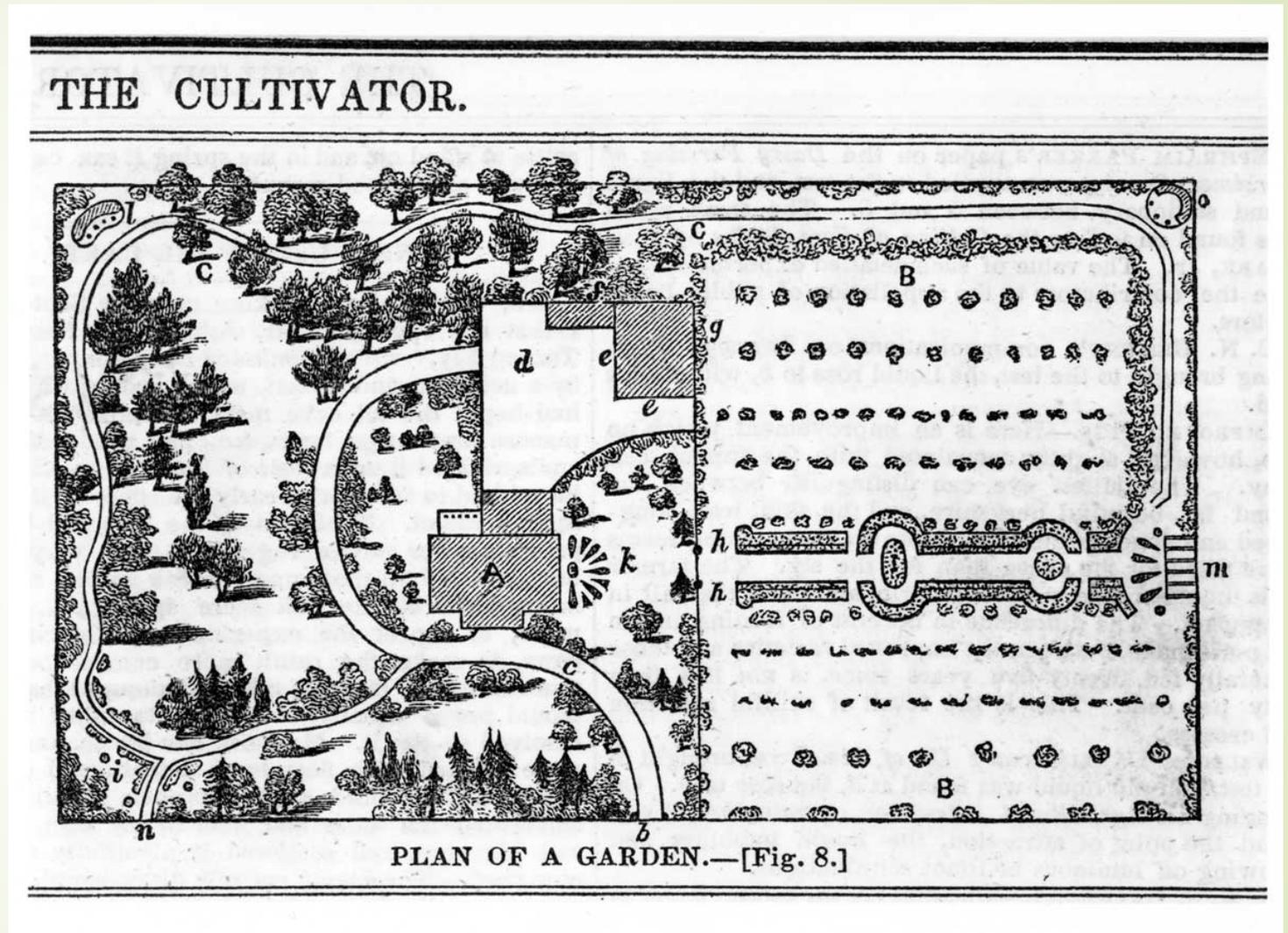
Ancient Style- Man's Control over Nature

- Renaissance and Baroque era into American Colonial Period
- Reflected Architecture with geometric symmetry
- Kitchen gardens retained the geometricity of this style
- Neatly clipped hedges
- Sculpted topiary
- Parterre beds bordered and divided by box, surrounded by gravel
- Stephen Switzer's *Ichnographia Rustica* (1718)
- Batty Langley
- Philip Miller *The Gardeners Dictionary* (1733)
- Charles Marshall (1799)



Modern or Natural Style: Nature-Inspired Order

- ▶ Reflected Nature in a studied natural look with meandering paths winding through trees
- ▶ Late 18th Century-mid-19th
- ▶ Lancelot "Capability Brown" originally popularized the strict natural style for English estates
- ▶ Substyles:
 - ▶ Picturesque, like a landscape painting
 - ▶ Gardenesque, incorporated much of the older Ancient style, blended with the Natural



“Gardenesque”

- Term Coined by English Landscape Designer J. C. Loudon- blended Ancient and Natural styles
- Features: elaborate to simple mounded beds, color contrast, showy exotics, curved lines, clipped topiary and natural shrubs, circular and oblong beds as specimen beds or “herbaceous borders”
- Geometrically designed Parterres are now set in lawns instead of gravel backgrounds and called “Arabesque Beds” per Downing

Photos: Simple Arabesque Bed and Herbaceous Border, Barrington Plantation State Historic Site



Photos: Parterre beds, Andrew Jackson's The Hermitage, Tennessee; Herbaceous Border, Garvin Gardens, Arkansas



Primary Sources for Gardenesque 1800-1850



- ▶ Affleck, Thomas
 - ▶ *Southern Rural Almanac and Plantation and Garden Calendar* from 1851 to 1861
- ▶ Beecher, Catharine Esther.
 - ▶ *A Treatise on Domestic Economy: For the Use of Young Ladies at Home, and at School*, 1843- **Good Beginner Book with Simple Design**
- ▶ Bridgeman, Thomas
 - ▶ *The Young Gardener's Assistant*, 1847- **Good Beginner Book**
- ▶ Buist, Robert
 - ▶ *The Family Kitchen-Gardener*, 1847- **Good Beginner Book**
- ▶ Downing, Andrew Jackson
 - ▶ *Landscape Gardening: The Horticulturist Magazine*
- ▶ Loudon, John Claudius
 - ▶ *An Encyclopedia of Gardening*, 1835
 - ▶ *Suburban Gardener*, 1838
- ▶ Loudon, Jane Wells Webb
 - ▶ *Gardening for Ladies*, 1840- **Good Beginner Book**
- ▶ McMahon, Bernard
 - ▶ *The American Gardener's Calendar*, 1806



Garden Styles 1870-1900

- ▶ Victorians had a love of nature that is only heightened in the high- and late-Victorian periods
- ▶ Don't forget about houseplants or fake flowers! Great for bringing in color and life if garden space is limited outdoors. Cuttings from planted gardens are also a great resource
- ▶ Also see more "ornaments" in gardens during this time – benches, statues, etc.
- ▶ Gardens and flowers are typically planted away from homes and structures in intricate designs or patterns
- ▶ Plays on height were also common (tallest plants in center or back)
- ▶ Front-yard gardens (especially in towns) are going to be your prettiest, and just for hobby... no veggies/herbs/crops here unless ornamental

Persian Carpet Bedding

- ▶ Very fashionable and high-class, but doable for middle class families
- ▶ Idea is to make the garden look like a large carpet with the ground invisible from above, often center-raised
- ▶ However, *Every Woman Her Own Flower Gardener* advises against this; a more practical take on a fashionable trend!



Photo: Living History Farms

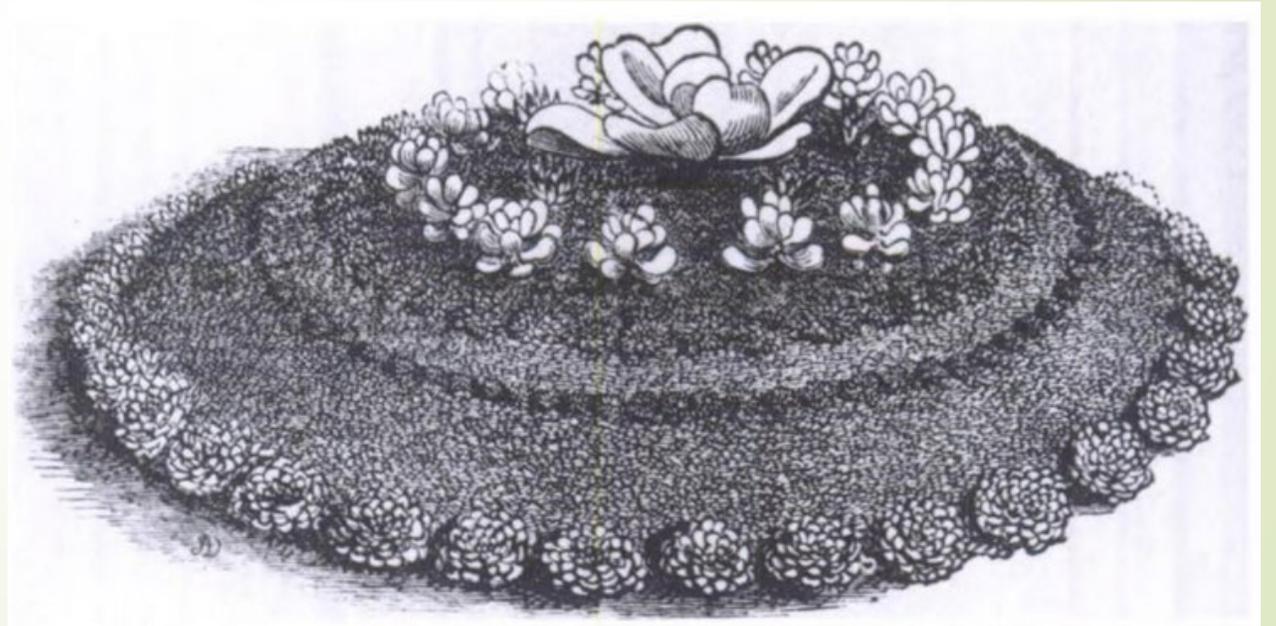
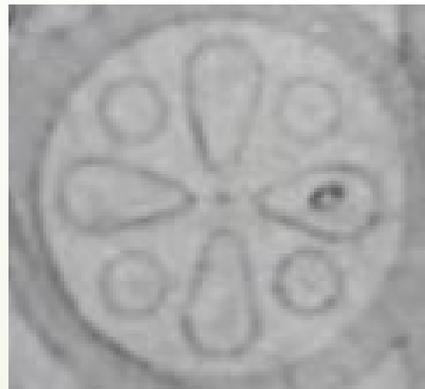
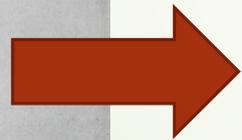


Photo: Landscapes and Gardens for Historic Buildings

Using Intricate Designs

- ▶ Many design illustrations can be found in primary and secondary sources
- ▶ While they look complex, they can be simplified for typical use or to fit your site's story

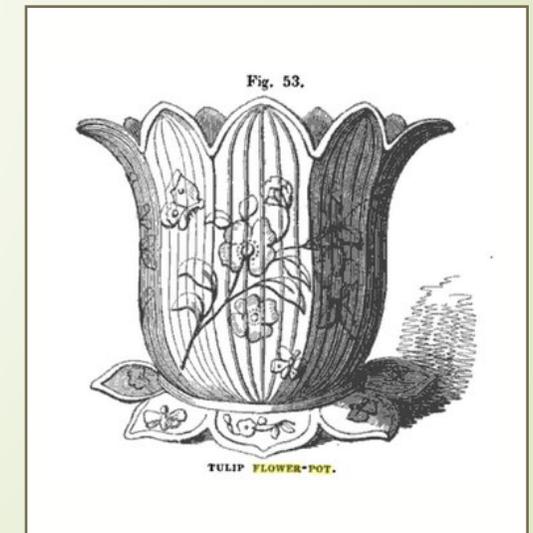
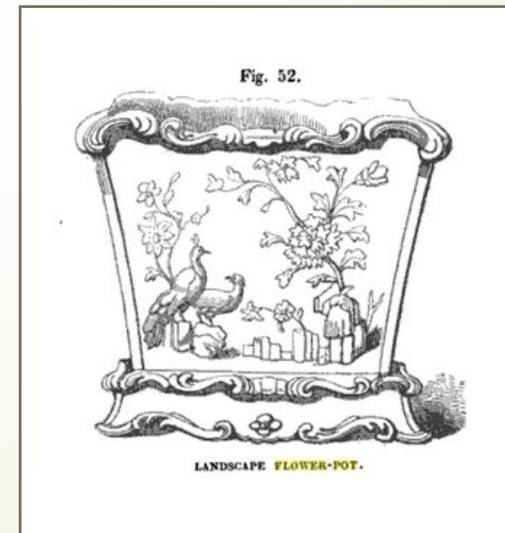
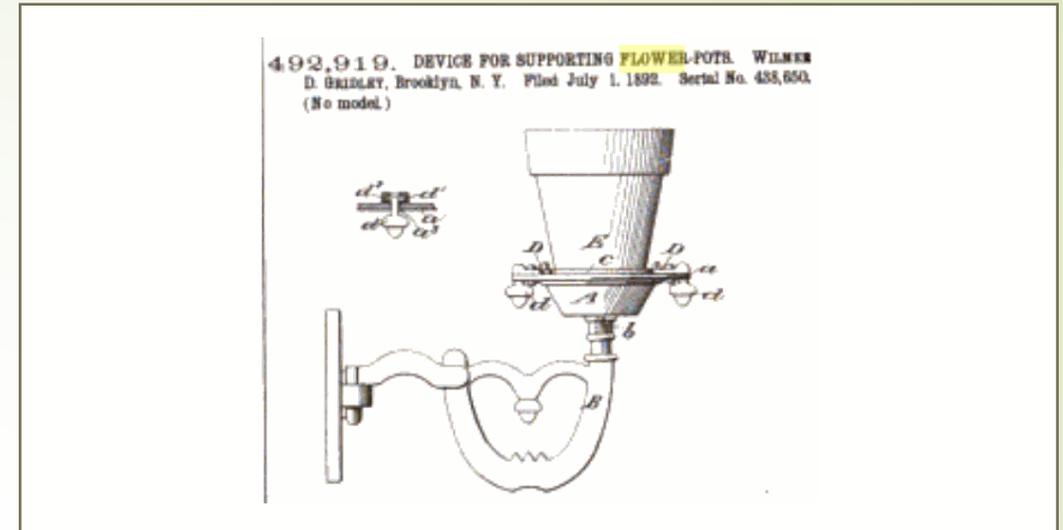


Photos: Landscapes and Gardens for Historic Buildings

Photo: Nicole Shadle

Potted Plants are Possible!

- Terracotta is SUPER cheap, easy, and appropriate!
- But there are many examples of flowerpots as ornate and unique as the Victorians
- Indoor terrariums also fashionable
- Great option for places with little outdoor space or little maintenance ability





Helpful Primary Sources

- ▶ *Every Woman Her Own Flower Gardener* - S.O. Johnson, 1874
- ▶ *American Woman's Home* – Catherine Beecher Stowe, 1869
 - ▶ Great info about indoor gardening as well as outdoor tips
- ▶ *The Ladies' Magazine for Gardening*- Jane Wells Webb Loudon, 1842
- ▶ *Hovey & Co.'s Illustrated Guide to the Flower and Vegetable Garden*, 1874
 - ▶ Awesome itemized list of flowers available from this company! Includes many variety names and/or color descriptions



Helpful Secondary Sources

- ▶ Landscapes and Gardens for Historic Buildings: A Handbook for Reproducing and Creating Authentic Landscape Settings - Favretti, Rudy J. and Joy Putnam, 1978
- ▶ The Victorian Garden - Allison Leopold, 1995
- ▶ Restoring American Gardens - Denise Adams, 2009
 - ▶ Good overview of gardens from 1600 to 1940s
- ▶ Gardening with Heirloom Seeds - Lynn Coultier, 2006
 - ▶ Good list of flower varieties and historical information about them

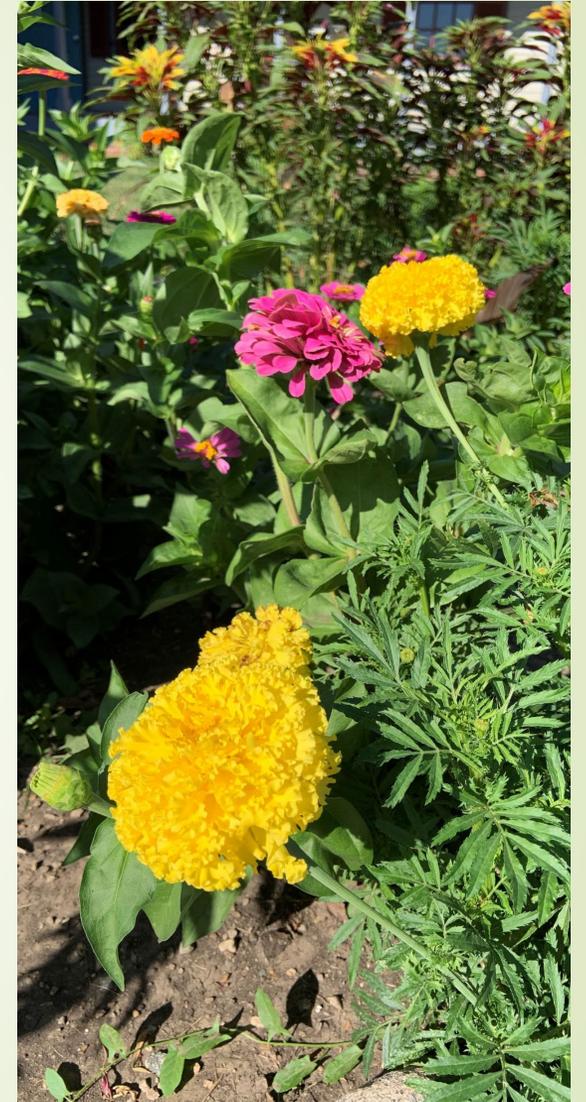


5. Selecting Plants

- ▶ Showy Exotics in South- invasives, many of which are hardy and heat tolerant
- ▶ Use Natives With Caution- Natives were sometimes recommended in Northern primary sources such as Breck, along with flowers he says are out of fashion, but secondary sources say that showy exotics were more popular in the South
- ▶ MacFarland and Beecher do use many native shrubs and shade trees.
- ▶ What was fashionable in your time period? What alternatives might have people used if fashionable varieties were unavailable?
- ▶ Keep in mind shade/sun needs as well as critters nearby... there are many deer and rabbit resistant plants!
- ▶ Your county extension office, Mater Gardeners, local garden clubs, etc. can help you determine what will grow well in your area and perhaps help you find funding

Starter Ideas and Plants

- **Peonies:** beautiful, fragrant blooms, can stand alone as a bush without landscaping, only bloom for a few weeks but require little to no maintenance, only zone 3 to zones 7/8
- **Marigolds:** durable, bloom all season, deer/bunny resistant, little maintenance required, can be purchased anywhere flowers are sold or grown from seed
- **Zinnias:** beautiful bloomers, many color varieties, deer resistant, up to 3-5 feet tall, great cut flowers, seeds easy to sow, great for pollinators (post-1860)
- **Hollyhocks:** easy to grow, visitors love them and recognize them, require staking or tying at a certain height but multiple plants ensure continuous blooms, seeds easy to find, biannual but can be planted to have blooms every year after first year
- **Four O'Clocks:** easy to grow, full-sized plants are fairly heat tolerant and tolerate full sun
- **Roses:** The Antique Rose Emporium has many varieties with their dates of popularity that are hard to kill, even in Texas heat and full sun
- **Annuals:** Heart's Ease (Johnny Jump-Up), Poppies, Nasturtium, Sweet Pea
- **Perennials:** Oxalis, Chrysanthemums, Sweet William, Rudbeckia (Black-Eyed Susan)
- **Bulbs:** Narcissus, Daffodils, Crinums, Hyacinths, White or Light Blue Irises, Tiger Lillies, Oxblood Lilies (after 1870)
- **Hardy Vines:** Cypress Vine (Can Take Over), Purple Hyacinth Bean, Honeysuckle, Passion Flower (Native- But Takes Over)
- **Period Terminology:** Pride of India, Shrub Althea vs Althea, Hearts Ease, China Trees, Viola, etc.



Photos: Nicole Shadle

6. Maintaining Period Landscaping:

- Plants and Historic Structures- Trellising instead of letting plants grow on or too close to structures.
- Lawn Mowers- Many options for period edging
- Maintenance- Watering, Mulching
- Maintenance- protect from Mowers, String Trimmers, etc. Get everyone on board, and check sources for edging material
- Exotic and Native Invasives- period, but use with discretion and supervision





7. Writing Your Plan

- Make one concise document that you can present and leave to allow others to build on your work in the future

Include:

- Benefits of Landscaping
- Site-specific, regional, and broader documentation for styles, plans, plants, and varieties that you use and why
- Things that worked and things that didn't
- Lists of donors who donated plants, money, or equipment
- Plans and maps of what you plant and intend to plant, and their cost



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