

**Greens:** Fordhook Swiss Chard; Green Deer Tongue Lettuce;  
New Zealand Spinach (intermingled with onions to deter pests)

**Peas:**

King Tut; (intermixed with garlic  
chives and shallots to deter pests)

**Path**

**Beets:**  
Mangel Wurzel & Gold Ball

**Carrots:** Over the  
Rainbow Mix

**Parsnips:** Hollow Crown  
(saved seed)

**Radishes:** French  
Breakfast; Black Spanish

**Rhubarb**

**Path**





<b>Borage</b>	Sweet Peppers: Bullnose	<b>Tomatoes:</b> Garden Peach; Mark Twain	<b>Corn:</b> Red Broom Corn; Painted Mountain Flint Corn
	Eggplant: Turkish Orange		
	<b>Calendula</b>	Hot Peppers: Fish	
<b>Heart's Ease</b>			







**GILBERT HOUSE KITCHEN GARDEN, 2022**






(not to scale)




# Storrowton Village Museum Kitchen Garden 2022

A 19th-century kitchen garden for a farm family like the Gilberts would have provided them with a year's worth of vegetables, both for fresh eating and for long-term storage (by storing food in bins of sand in the family root cellar or by drying, pickling, or salting). Although much too small to feed a family for an entire year (a typical kitchen garden could have ranged from a quarter acre to two or three acres), our own garden exhibits heirloom vegetable varieties that gardeners have been planting for hundreds of years, or that closely resemble 19th-century varieties. We hope you'll be intrigued to see produce in colors and shapes that we don't often find in modern grocery stores, and that you'll be entertained and enlightened by the stories behind them.

<p><b>Bean: Purple Pod</b></p> 	<p>In addition to the familiar green- and yellow-podded beans, New Englanders grew varieties with purple or multicolored pods. The Purple Pod bean is reminiscent of those types. When cooked, the pods lose their deep purple color and turn green. Tender young pods can be eaten like string beans; as they fill out, the pods grow tough, and beans will need to be shelled. Beans can also be dried for long-term storage and use. We grew these beans using seed saved from our 2021 kitchen garden.</p> <p>Beans are one of the oldest cultivated vegetables in human history; they may have been grown as long ago as 7000 BCE.</p>
<p><b>Beet: Mangel-Wurzel</b></p> 	<p>When full-grown, this enormous beet looks almost prehistoric—some can get as large as 20 pounds. (In 2018, we grew an 8-pound mangel-wurzel in the Gilbert House garden—the largest we've grown so far!)</p> <p>Introduced to England from Germany in the 1780s, the mangel-wurzel was sometimes called "Root of Scarcity" because its productivity and long-storage qualities could help farmers survive long, harsh winters. 19<sup>th</sup>-century New Englanders grew mangels to feed their livestock, although the beets can be eaten by humans as well. Mangels grow so large that in late October, children in southern England and Wales hollowed the beets out and carved them into lanterns called "Punkies."</p>
<p><b>Beet: Golden</b></p> 	<p>Like carrots, beets can be many colors, ranging from white, yellow, and orange, to the more familiar deep red. Also like carrots, they were initially grown for their leaves rather than their roots. The first references to using the roots date from the Middle Ages, but they don't seem to have become commonly used until the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. In English botanist John Gerard's 1597 herbal, he considers them a novelty.</p> <p>This golden variety dates back to at least the 1820s.</p>
<p><b>Borage</b></p> 	<p>Borage is an edible flower that English herbalist John Gerard (1545-1612) recommended using "in salads to exhilarate and make the mind glad. There be also many things made of these used everywhere for the comfort of the heart, for the driving away of sorrow and increasing the joy of the mind. The leaves and flower of Borage put into wine make men and women glad and merry and drive away all sadness, dullness and melancholy...Syrup made of the flowers of Borage comfort the heart, purge melancholy and quiet the frantic and lunatic person." A lot to ask of a tiny flower! Borage's bright blue star-shaped flowers will definitely perk up a salad, a cup of tea, or a cocktail, but we make no promises about purging sadness and melancholy.</p>

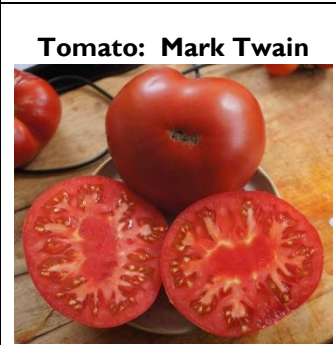
<p><b>Calendula</b></p> 	<p>This year, we've incorporated some edible flowers in the kitchen garden. Also known as "pot marigold," calendula is no relation to the smelly yellow and orange powderpuff-shaped flowers (species <i>Tagetes</i>) most Americans think of as marigolds. Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, though, "calendula" was synonymous with "marigold" for most gardeners. It was used to give flavor and color to a variety of foods, and also provided gold and orange dyes for textiles.</p> <p>Herbalist Nicholas Culpeper (1616-1654) recommended a broth of the flowers "to expel any malignant or pestilential quality which might annoy" the heart and spirits.</p>
<p><b>Carrot: Over the Rainbow Mix</b></p> 	<p>Descendants of Queen Anne's lace (which grows in our herb garden), wild carrots were first used more than 5,000 years ago, primarily for their edible leaves and seeds. Eating the roots seems to have come later; they found their way onto people's tables by the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans. There is an entire website called the "World Carrot Museum" devoted to the history of carrots (see <a href="http://www.carrotmuseum.com">www.carrotmuseum.com</a>). Carrots weren't always orange; they came in purple, red, yellow, and white varieties as well. We've planted a multi-colored mix to illustrate that variety.</p>
<p><b>Chard, Swiss: Fordhook Giant</b></p> 	<p>Swiss chard is a relative of beets but is grown for its leaves rather than its roots. It was often referred to as "leaf beet" in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Varieties with bright red, purple, yellow, and white stems and veins date back to the 1630s. Just like today, chard was not popular with everyone. In 1919, author and historian Frederick Lewis Allen wrote: "The Swiss are a good people...but they should not have invented chard." (Actually, they didn't—chard seems to have originated, not in the Swiss Alps—or even the Swiss lowlands—but along the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts of Europe and North Africa.)</p> <p>This year, we're growing a dark green variety introduced by Burpee in 1934. Some sources claim that seeds of this variety were passed down in families for generations before its official introduction.</p>
<p><b>Corn, Broom: Red Broom Corn</b></p> 	<p>Before the 1790s, New Englanders made their brooms (called "besoms") from bundles of twigs. Then Hadley, MA, farmer Levi Dickinson (1755-1843) experimented with growing broom corn (actually a type of sorghum). His new brooms were such an improvement over the old besoms that Dickinson quickly became successful, and Western Massachusetts became home to a prosperous broom-making industry. During the Big E, you can see broom-makers in action on the Storowton Village green. This year, our broom corn comes from seed saved from our 2021 garden.</p>
<p><b>Corn, Flint: Painted Mountain</b></p> 	<p>This heirloom variety resembles the multicolored corn grown by Native Americans—red, brown, black, orange, yellow, white, and even blue or purple kernels might appear on the cobs. Painted Mountain was developed in the 1970s by a grower trying to replicate varieties that indigenous Americans used for corn meal and flour.</p> <p>Native Americans taught English settlers a method of cultivation known as the "Three Sisters," in which they planted corn, beans, and squash or pumpkins together. The beans would twine around the corn stalks, and the broad squash leaves would cover the ground and shade out weeds. Beans enrich the soil with nitrogen, nourishing both the corn and the squash.</p>
<p><b>Eggplant: Turkish Orange</b></p> 	<p>Also known as scarlet eggplant or Ethiopian eggplant, Turkish eggplant is native to Africa and is believed to be more closely related to wild eggplant species than the traditional purple eggplant from Asia. Turkish eggplant made its way from Africa to the Americas and Europe via the slave trade. In North America, by the early 1900s it was mostly grown as an ornamental. Today, Turkish eggplant can be found in specialty grocers and farmers' markets in South America, Central America, the Caribbean, Africa, the United States, and Europe.</p>

<p><b>Lettuce: Green Deer Tongue</b></p> 	<p>Deer Tongue lettuce was introduced to North America around 1740 and was popular in New England until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Named for its distinctive pointy leaves, this loose-leaf variety is slow to bolt in hot summers. But its fragile leaves made it a poor candidate for commercial growers who needed to ship their produce many miles, and it fell out of favor for many years.</p>
<p><b>Parsnip: Hollow Crown</b></p> 	<p>One of the oldest varieties of parsnip now available, Hollow Crown dates to around the 1820s. Parsnip roots keep well over the winter, either in a cellar, or in the garden with minimal protection, making it an ideal New England crop. The root grows sweeter as the weather grows colder. Like many root vegetables, parsnips are a biennial, taking two years to produce flowers and seeds. Our parsnips come from seed saved from our 2021 garden.</p> <p><b>WARNING: Always wear gloves or long sleeves when working with parsnips on hot, sunny days. Gardeners with sensitive skin can suffer from photodermatitis (blisters caused when certain plant juices are exposed to harsh sunlight).</b></p>
<p><b>Pea: King Tut</b></p> 	<p>In the 19th century, Americans went through a craze for all things Egyptian. People sold real and counterfeit mummies as curiosities and even as cures for various ailments. This craze led to the myth of the “mummy seed”; seeds of various crops, from wheat to beans to flowers, were allegedly found in ancient tombs, planted, and germinated after thousands of years in storage. The King Tut pea, which dates from the 1920s, is part of this “mummy seed” myth; archaeologists supposedly found the ancestors of these peas when King Tut’s tomb was opened in 1922. This tale, however, has never been verified. While the King Tut pea’s origins are suspect, there’s no denying that its dark purple pods are an eye-catching and colorful reflection of our continuing fascination with ancient Egypt.</p> <p>We’ve had some problems with critters munching on our peas, so we’ve experimented with planting onions, garlic chives, and shallots alongside the peas as a repellent. So far it seems to be working!</p>
<p><b>Pepper, Hot: Fish</b></p> 	<p>Hot peppers originated in the New World, but very quickly made their way into the diet and medicine chests of Europeans.</p> <p>The Fish pepper that we’re growing this year ranges in color from pale yellow to red to purple when ripe and grows on a plant with eye-catching variegated leaves. This hot pepper’s name reflects its use in seafood dishes by African-American cooks in the Chesapeake Bay area. It’s believed to have originated in the Caribbean. Although popular in African-American kitchens through the late 1800s, the Fish pepper nearly disappeared in the early 1900s. A Black painter named Horace Pippin traded seeds with a neighbor, H. Ralph Weaver, whose grandson eventually reintroduced the Fish pepper into American gardens and cuisine via the Seed Savers Exchange.</p>
<p><b>Pepper, Sweet: Bull Nose</b></p> 	<p>The Bull Nose is one of the first bell-type sweet peppers cultivated in American gardens and was very popular in the 1800s. Thomas Jefferson grew this variety at Monticello, and it’s still planted in the historic kitchen gardens there and at Mount Vernon. Many 19<sup>th</sup>-century sources recommend this variety for pickling.</p>
<p><b>Radish: French Breakfast</b></p> 	<p>This spicy red radish was introduced around 1879. An 1881 seed catalog described it as “the breakfast radish at the hotels and clubs in London and Paris during the winter months.” How does one eat radishes for breakfast? No, you don’t put them on your cereal like strawberries. According to <i>Domestic Economy, and Cookery, for Rich and Poor</i>, an 1827 advice book by “A Lady,” radishes and the early sprouts of hops can be served on toast with melted butter, and there are</p>

	<p>many 18th- and 19th-century references to eating radishes spread with butter and sometimes sprinkled with salt.</p>
<p><b>Radish: Round Black Spanish</b></p> 	<p>We usually think of radishes as a quick-growing salad vegetable primarily for summer eating. But some, like the Round Black Spanish, will keep well when stored in a root cellar for the winter. Like the summer radishes, these have a hot flavor and can be eaten raw or cooked. Europeans have cultivated black radishes since the 1500s, though they aren't often seen in American grocery stores today</p>
<p><b>Rhubarb</b></p> 	<p>Humans have been using the tart stems of rhubarb for nearly 2,000 years (don't sample the leaves, though—they're toxic!). According to British herbalist Nicholas Culpeper (1616-1654), "...in virtues it also hath the per-eminence." In some towns in Great Britain, rhubarb is traditionally "forced" to sprout early by covering it with soil or pots, or even growing it in special sheds. The result is an earlier, sweeter vegetable. This practice began around the 1810s; forced rhubarb stalks are still often harvested by candlelight. One modern gardener described the result as "champagne rhubarb" (Plews Garden Design website: <a href="https://plewsgardendesign.co.uk/forced-rhubarb-growing-by-candlelight/">https://plewsgardendesign.co.uk/forced-rhubarb-growing-by-candlelight/</a> ).</p> <p>Our own rhubarb is not nearly that genteel!</p>
<p><b>Spinach: New Zealand</b></p> 	<p>When Captain Cook's expedition explored New Zealand in the 1700s, botanist Joseph Banks (1743-1820) saw the indigenous Māori growing this heat-tolerant leafy plant. Banks discovered that the greens, whether eaten fresh or pickled, were an effective preventative for scurvy. Unlike many other greens, New Zealand spinach stands up to heat and drought without bolting or becoming bitter.</p>
<p><b>Squash, Summer: Summer Crookneck</b></p> 	<p>According to the Library of Congress, the word "squash" is derived from the Narragansett word <i>askutasquash</i>, meaning "eaten raw or uncooked." New England Native Americans grew a wide variety of winter and summer squash, eating not only the fruits, but the shoots, leaves, flowers, and seeds.</p> <p>Yellow crookneck squash was cultivated by Native Americans for centuries before being adopted by European settlers. In 1807, a Pennsylvania Quaker named Timothy Matlock gave Thomas Jefferson seeds for a squash whose description matches this variety. It's believed that Matlock obtained the seeds from a family who had been growing the squash in New Jersey since the early 1700s.</p>
<p><b>Squash, Winter: Sibley</b></p> 	<p>Winter squash are one of the easiest vegetables to store. As long as they're in a place that's dry and cool (but not freezing), they can last from harvest in September well into May of the next year. Although we associate winter squash with Halloween and Thanksgiving, they are not frost tolerant, and should be harvested before autumn's first hard frost.</p> <p>The Sibley squash became commercially available around 1887. According to the Fedco Seed Company, its bluish-gray fruit is similar to a variety that the Winnebago Indians cultivated along the Missouri River in the 1830s.</p>
<p><b>Tomato: Garden Peach</b></p> 	<p>The Garden Peach tomato earned its name because ripe fruit sometimes have a pinkish blush and slightly fuzzy skin. But there's no peachy taste: just the mild, low-acid flavor found in many yellow and orange tomatoes. Growers believe that they were introduced to the United States around 1862.</p>

Explorers introduced tomatoes from South and Central America to Europe in the late 15th or early 16th century, when they were quickly adopted in Mediterranean cuisines. They took longer to be accepted in England, partly because they're difficult to grow in climates with short summers, and partly because their relation to deadly nightshade led 16th-century English herbalist John Gerard (1545-1612) to suspect them of being poisonous. British gardeners first raised tomatoes as ornamental curiosities. By the early 1700s, tomato-phobia was fading. The British began using them medicinally, and by the 1750s incorporated them into soups and broths.

There's a widespread myth that Americans refused to eat tomatoes until 1820, when Robert Gibbon Johnson dramatically ate a basket of them before a crowd of horrified spectators in front of the Salem, NJ, courthouse. Tomato historians like Andrew F. Smith (author of *The Tomato in America*) have disproven that legend. Long before 1820, people like Thomas Jefferson grew and ate tomatoes and incorporated them into American recipes. New Englanders took a little longer to adopt the tomato than Americans in warmer climates; they don't seem to have grown them much before the 1810s and 1820s.



The Mark Twain tomato's origin story is a bit vague and mysterious. Some tomato growers theorize that this hefty but thin-skinned beefsteak variety got its name from a Mark Twain story, "Hunting the Deceitful Turkey," in which the tomato-hating narrator gets lost during a turkey hunt. Exhausted and hungry, he comes upon a deserted log cabin whose weedy garden is full of ripe tomatoes. The famished narrator gorges on them, having "one of the best meals there that in my life-days I have eaten.... I surfeited myself with them, and did not taste another one until I was in middle life. I can eat them now, but I do not like the look of them."

It would take only a couple of these 8- to 24-ounce tomatoes to provide a tasty feast for an author whose pen could rival a red tomato's flavor for acidity.



This variety is found in seed catalogs as early as 1880, and purple-topped white turnips are mentioned in agricultural publications of the 1840s, though it's not clear what their shape might have been (turnips can range from spherical to carrot shaped). Turnips are an ancient food crop and have been cultivated for nearly 2,000 years. Before pumpkins were introduced to Europe, Irish and Scottish children carved faces into turnips for Halloween.



Native to Europe, this edible flower was often candied as a garnish for sweet dishes. It was also used medicinally as a tea for coughs, colds, and rheumatism. Heartsease had a number of fanciful names, including Johnny Jump Up, Kiss-Her-in-the-Buttery, Come-and-Cuddle-Me, and Love-In-Idleness, and was sometimes considered a love charm.

Some sources for heirloom vegetable seeds:

Annie's Heirloom Seeds: [www.anniesheirloomseeds.com](http://www.anniesheirloomseeds.com)

Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds: [www.rareseeds.com](http://www.rareseeds.com) (Wethersfield, CT store at Comstock Ferre: [www.rareseeds.com/comstock-ferre-co](http://www.rareseeds.com/comstock-ferre-co) )

Fedco Seeds: [www.fedcoseeds.com](http://www.fedcoseeds.com)

Gary Ibsen's Tomatofest: [tomatofest.com](http://tomatofest.com)

Gurney Seed & Nursery Co.: [www.gurneys.com](http://www.gurneys.com)

Harris Seeds: [www.harriseseeds.com](http://www.harriseseeds.com)

Johnny's Selected Seeds: [www.johnnyseeds.com](http://www.johnnyseeds.com)

Maine Potato Lady: [www.mainepotatolady.com](http://www.mainepotatolady.com)

New England Seed Company: [www.neseed.com](http://www.neseed.com)

Pinetree Garden Seeds: [www.superseeds.com](http://www.superseeds.com)

Renee's Garden: [www.reneesgarden.com](http://www.reneesgarden.com)

Seed Savers Exchange: [www.seedsavers.org](http://www.seedsavers.org)

Select Seeds: [www.selectseeds.com](http://www.selectseeds.com)

R.H. Shumway: [www.rhshumway.com](http://www.rhshumway.com)

Territorial Seed Co.: [www.territorialseed.com/Abundant\\_Life\\_Seeds](http://www.territorialseed.com/Abundant_Life_Seeds)

Tomato Growers Supply Co.: [www.tomatogrowers.com](http://www.tomatogrowers.com)

Vermont Bean Seed Co. (not just beans!): [www.vermontbean.com](http://www.vermontbean.com)