

### *the trees*

The total area of the garden extends from the parking lot down the hill toward the lake. Each tree here was chosen for its literary reference.

In Chinese mythology the source of immortality was a peach from the "Heavenly Peach Orchard." Our Peach Orchard contains many kinds of fruit trees which figure in literature: the apricot, plum, olive, fig, mulberry and, of course, apple.

West of the garden and down the slope are other trees such as the linden, ash, oaks and a Cedar of Lebanon.

### *the hedge*

The stately cypress trees delineate the circular pattern of the garden. They, and the double hedge of myrtle and rosemary, will offer protection from the prevailing wind. Myrtle, which was dedicated to Aphrodite in ancient Greece, is the symbol of love. Rosemary, one of the plants mentioned most frequently in literature, is the symbol of remembrance.

### *the path*

One must enter the garden by way of the Primrose Path. Though a path of pleasure, it is not the one Ophelia is referring to when she speaks of ". . . the puff'd and reckless libertine, Himself the path of dalliance treads."

Sharing the path border with the primroses are pansies, symbol of both thoughts and memories.

The rose has been the most celebrated flower of literature. Writers from our ancient past down to modern times have used it for comparisons and metaphors. We have many of the ancient species roses on either side of the path; the autumn damask, praised by Ovid and Virgil, the moss rose so beloved by Victorians, and the "flower of poets," the briar or eglantine rose.

At the entrance to the garden itself, we have placed boxwood, considered by Oliver Wendell Holmes as the most memory-stirring of all scents. He called it, "the fragrance of eternity; which carries us out of time into the abysses of the unbeginning past."

Miles and John Hadfield in their book, Gardens of Delight, write, "The gardener looks back to Paradise or looks forward to Heaven. Both states are ideal and, despite the vagaries of the weather, the indiscipline of weeds, and the deprivations of slugs and aphides, all gardens aim at the ideal."

We are constantly striving to make our garden "ideal." In spite of the best of care, plants do succumb to disease, insect damage, a hostile environment or the completion of their life cycle and need to be replaced. New plants with literary mention are added as they are discovered. Amendments and fertilizers need to be added to the soil periodically.

This unique garden is supported solely by individual contributions. Be a friend to the garden and help it by sending your donation in any amount to

#### LITERATURE GARDEN

% American Association of University Women  
Box 2313  
Huntington Beach, CA 92647

If you would like to learn more about these plants and their lore, ask for our bibliography at the library reference desk.

Guided tours of the garden are given on the fourth Sunday of the month at 2:00. Programs on the garden and its plants are available for clubs or classes.

If you would like to work with us in the very pleasant task of caring for the garden, join us on the first and third Tuesday mornings at 10:00.

The  
Huntington Beach Branch  
of the  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION  
of UNIVERSITY  
WOMEN

welcomes you

to a



LITERARY HERITAGE  
GARDEN

purposes

- \* To bring the informational and cultural opportunities of the library through the walls of the building and into the landscape surrounding it.
- \* To underscore the very real and strong bond which has always existed between man and the plants in his environment.
- \* To present close at hand, by species and varieties whenever possible, the very plants and trees which have figured so prominently in our literary heritage, which will remind or acquaint the visitor with the timeless and beautiful tales loved by other peoples in other times as well as our own.

## *english literature*

Upon entering the garden we approach first and foremost the English Literature section. Sharing the same language with our mother country England, we inherit all of her great treasures of literature. Included here are plants referred to by, among others, Herrick, Chaucer, Byron, Milton, Keats, and, the Bard himself, who reflected his fellow Elizabethans' love of plants and plant lore in all of his works. Shakespeare used the rose in more than sixty similes.

At the southern end of the bed are the "kettle herbs." These are plants frequently employed in cookery. At the northern end of the bed are the "cauldron herbs." These are plants formerly associated with magic, witchcraft or superstition.

In the center of the bed is the bay or laurel tree which was used to crown poets or other men of prominence. From this custom we get the term "poet laureate." A laurel crown with berries (bacca) wreathed the heads of learned men in Greece. A baccalaureate today is still attained, but not worn.

## *children's literature*

Laid out along the lines of the "Garden of Talking Flowers" in Alice Through the Looking Glass, this bed contains many plants featured in both the old fairy tales and recent books so popular with children.

From A.A. Milne's "The Doctor and the "Dormouse" are the "geraniums red and delphiniums blue." (One must go to the Oriental Bed to see the "Chrysanthemums yellow and white.")

To keep order here, we don't have what Lew Sarett described, "a regiment of hollyhocks marching around them, To curb their mischief, to discipline and bound them." But we do have two red French ones to stand at attention on either side of the lovely rose-gold pussy willow.

At the west end of the bed are, in season, the many vegetable plants found in the old folk tales: the turnip, potatoe, parsley, cabbages, carrot, bean and pumpkin.

## *classical mythology*

The myths of ancient Greece and Rome offered to the people of that day a comprehensive and understandable accounting for the mysteries of the universe and for man's role within it. But to writers and artists ever since, the myths have offered an inexhaustible fund of inspiration.

These peoples' lives were closely involved with nature, so it is not unusual to find a close association with plants in all of their tales. Many plants' "origins" came as a direct result of the transformation of the life-force of either a god or mortal. This endowed the plant with an aura of reverence reserved for that person.

So many plants were associated with the goddess of love, we grouped them together in the northern end of the bed and call that section "Venus' Bower."

## *the bible*

Many of the exact species of the plants mentioned in the Bible are difficult to obtain. In some cases, we have substituted a related species until we can locate the exact one referred to.

One plant located in the center of the bed is the papyrus, considered to be the bulrushes which protected the infant Moses. It also provided the material for his waterproofed basket. The fibers of this plant were used for mats, sandals, sailcloths and an early form of paper.

The *Arundo donax*, the very tall, bamboo-like plant behind the papyrus, was the type of reed used for measuring rods in the visions of Ezekiel and John.

There are three groupings of plants we call your attention to. First is the "Memories of Egypt" wherein are planted the vegetables referred to in Numbers 11:5--"We remember the . . . cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, the onions and the garlic."

Next are the "Bitter Herbs" --endive, dandelion and chicory, grouped together.

Then there are the "Titheing Herbs" from Luke 11:42 and Matthew 23:23--mint, anise, dill, cumin and rue.

## *oriental literature*

Included here are plants which figured in stories and legends from both the Middle and Far East.

The tulip, a favorite of artists throughout the years, is the symbol of perfect love. It figures in a lovely Persian tale of an anguished lover, Farhad, and his beloved Shirin.

## *american folklore*

Stories told by both the native Americans of the Western Hemisphere and the early settlers include many of our indigenous plants. Some of the larger plants are located in the outlying areas of the garden. Within this bed are the colorful tagetes marigolds which, though sometimes called French or African, are, in fact, native to Mexico. However, according to an old tale, they were unknown there until Cortes and his men slew the natives. They sprung from the blood of the slain warriors to remind their descendants to avenge their deaths.

## *american literature*

Here are placed the plants which have been mentioned in our own country's literature. Writers represented here are William Cullen Bryant, Emily Dickenson, Bret Harte, Edgar Allen Poe, and Amy Lowell, among others.

The lilac, mentioned in Whitman's tribute to Lincoln, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," is one specially bred to be grown in Southern California.

## *miscellaneous*

Here may be found many of the plants which became national emblems, such as the shamrock, the leek, and the iris which inspired France's fleur de lis.

Norse legends, European folk tales and literature and African folklore are some of the sources we've included or are working on.