

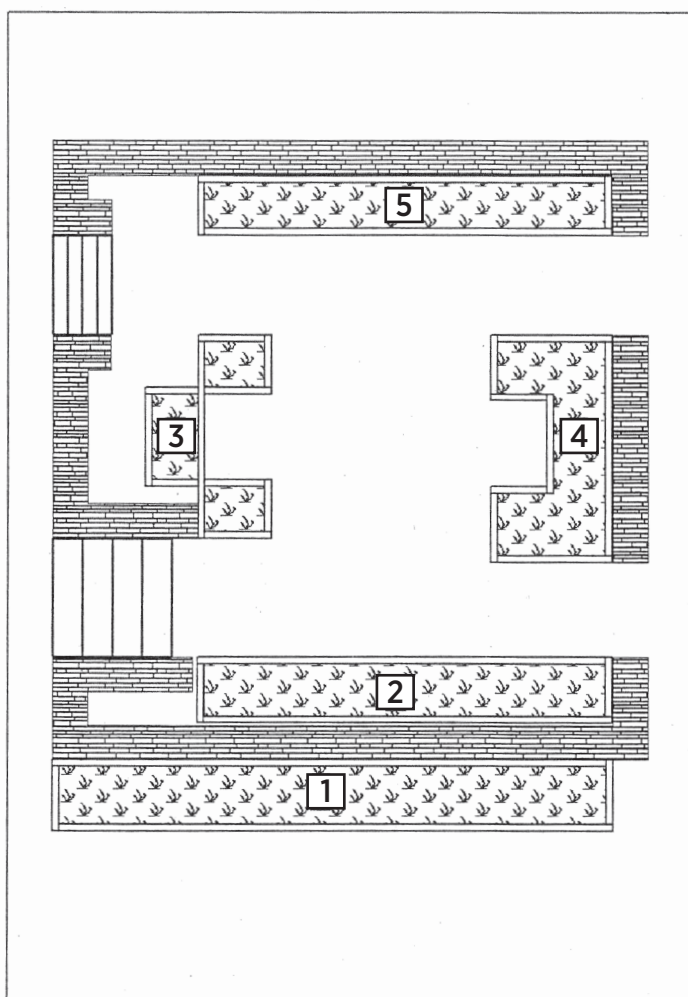
# RUTH SACHIDANANDAN HERB GARDEN

AT RICE CREEK FIELD STATION



STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT OSWEGO  
Oswego, New York





Plan of the Ruth Sachidanandan Herb Garden  
showing the location of beds 1 - 5

The herb garden at Rice Creek Field Station was the inspiration of Ruth Sachidanandan, a member of Rice Creek Associates and chair of the original herb garden committee. Other members included: Norman Gillette, Muriel Harrison, and Joyce Rice. The garden, constructed by Oswego County Conservation Corps members, was planned and executed by the committee. After Ruth's untimely passing, Rice Creek Associates decided to honor her by renaming the garden the Ruth Sachidanandan Herb Garden. It is now maintained by a dedicated group of volunteers from the associates membership.

Herbs are perhaps almost as fascinating to humans as they are attractive to bees. A fairly recent resurgence of interest in herbs is probably the result of society's growing trend to return to nature and to consume foods and medicines that are natural and unadulterated. However, the use of herbs is not new; their use has been documented back to the most ancient of civilizations. Hundreds of herbals have been written over the centuries outlining their history, relating the myths and legends surrounding them, instructing in their cultivation and preservation, and detailing their many applications. In addition to the more romantic uses-as aphrodisiacs, as symbols, and as ingredients in witches' potions-there are numerous practical uses: culinary, medicinal, decorative, aromatic, household, and even industrial.

Because of the multiplicity of uses, it is impossible to cover them adequately in this small booklet. Consequently, it was decided to concentrate exclusively on culinary uses. People interested in pursuing other applications may find them in one or more of the books in the bibliography at the end of this publication.

The herb garden is not static. Annuals are added each year; occasionally perennials are lost to poor weather conditions; and sometimes plants This edition of the guide reflects the garden as it was in the spring of 2007 and includes the more common herbs grown in this area. Scientific nomenclature follows Gleason and Cronquist (1991) and Bailey (1951). For nomenclatural updates refer to the USDA Plants Database at <http://plants.usda.gov/index.html>.

# Ruth Sachidanandan Herb Garden

## Rice Creek Field Station, SUNY Oswego

### Bed #1

Borage (*Borago officinalis*) **A**\* Rough plant, with stiff, prickly hairs. Large leaves are oval and pointed. Flowers are bright blue, star shaped, with black anthers. Flowers and young leaves used in salads. Also gives faint cucumber flavor to cold drinks.

Chervil (*Anthriscus cerefolium*) **A** Lacy leaves resembling parsley are lightly anise flavored; tiny white flowers grow in umbrella-shaped clusters. One of the finest herbs of French cuisine, chervil should be added near the end of cooking to prevent flavor loss. It is used in soups, sauces, vegetables, chicken, white fish, and egg dishes.

Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*) **P** A relative of the onion, the chive has hollow, grass-like leaves and lavender blossoms in small spherical clusters. The leaves, which have a mild onion flavor, may be used to garnish or flavor salads, sandwiches, soups, egg dishes, and butter or cream cheese spreads.

Clary Sage (*Salvia sclarea*) **B** Also known as Eyebright, it differs from other varieties of sage in its very wrinkled leaves. Highly aromatic, strongly balsam-flavored, the leaves are used in fritters, omelets, soups, salads, home-made wine and beer.

Clove pink (*Dianthus caryophyllus*) **P** This small carnation gives color to the herb garden

Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*) **P** Flowers are purple, pink or white and bell-shaped; leaves are very large and hairy. Flavor combines endive and asparagus. Leaves may be cooked like spinach, stems, like asparagus.

**A**-Annual

**B**-Biennial

**P**-Perennial

Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*) **A** Dainty parsley-like foliage with lacy white, pale pink, or lavender flowers; popularly called cilantro today. Seeds and leaves may be used in baking, curries, soups, sauces, and salads. The stem is sometimes chopped and added to bean dishes and soups.

Costmary (*Chrysanthemum balsamita*) **P** Spearmint-scented leaves up to twelve inches long; flowers are insignificant. Once used in brewing beer and ale in place of hops, its bitter taste limits culinary use to small quantities in salads, sauces, and soups.

Curly Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*) **B** Tightly curled, bright green leaves. Leaves may be used fresh or dried in salads and as a garnish for soups, sandwiches, fish, and boiled potatoes.

Dill (*Anethum graveolens*) **A** Aromatic, feathery leaves with umbrella-like clusters of tiny yellow flowers. Leaves are used to flavor soups, potatoes, salads, sauces, and vegetables; seeds, which are pungent and somewhat bitter, are used in sauerkraut dishes, breads, fish dishes, and as an ingredient in pickles.

Garlic Chives (*Allium tuberosum*) **P** Also a member of the onion family, this variety of chives has leaves that are mildly garlic-flavored. It may be used like chives or garlic.

Horseradish (*Armoracia rusticana*) **P** Large, wavy, slightly toothed leaves; small, faintly scented white flowers. Young leaves may be added to salads; the hot, pungent-tasting root is grated and used with roast beef and lamb, in vinegar, coleslaw, and dips.

Italian Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum* var. *latifolium*) **B** Flat, cut, dark green leaves. This has a stronger flavor than other varieties. See Curly Parsley for uses.

Marjoram (*Origanum majorana*) **A** Slightly downy, grey-green leaves; inconspicuous pinkish-white flowers. Fresh or dried leaves flavor sausages, stuffings, egg dishes, cheeses, vinegars and are added to meat dishes just before serving.

Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*) **P** Dark green, peppery-flavored leaves; small purple-pink flowers in spike-like clusters. Often confused with sweet marjoram, this wild marjoram has a sharper flavor and can be used with garlic in tomato sauces, on pizza, and in egg and cheese dishes.

Oswego Tea (*Monarda didyma*) **P** A member of the mint family; orange-scented leaves are oval, pointed, and dark green with reddish veins; shaggy looking flowers are flaming red. Used by Oswego Indians as a tea, the leaves are still used that way and also in lemonade, jams, jellies, salads, stuffing, and with pork.

Pot Marigold (*Calendula officinalis*) **A** Lance-shaped, dark green leaves; flowers are two to four inches across and bright gold or orange. Flowers are used to give a saffron color to foods like rice, in fish dishes, soups, soft cheeses, yogurt, cakes, and sweet breads; leaves may be sprinkled in salads and stews.

Rue (*Ruta graveolens*) **P** Blue-green, rounded, lobed, small leaves; flowers have greenish-yellow petals and are slipper-shaped and frilled. Rue has some medicinal properties, but should be used only under strict medical supervision. Leaves may cause allergic reactions in some individuals.

Sage (*Salvia officinalis*) **P** Wrinkled, pebbly, spear-shaped grey-green leaves; tiny lilac-blue, tubular flowers. A very versatile herb with a variety of uses including culinary. Leaves are used in stuffings, sausages, with fatty meats, cheeses, and vinegars.

Salad Burnet (*Sanguisorba minor*) **P** Compound leaves are blue-green and consist of toothed leaflets; flowers are green with purple-red stamens. The cucumber-flavored leaves are used as a garnish, on vegetables, and in salads, sauces, and soft cheeses.

Summer Savory (*Satureja hortensis*) **A** Narrow, lance-shaped green leaves turning to red then purple in late summer; tiny pink, blue lavender, or white flowers that grow in whorls. Peppery-tasting, the leaves are frequently used in bean dishes, stuffings, sauces, and with meat.

Tri-color Sage (*Salvia officinalis* var. *tricolor*) **P** Foliage is veined with creamy white and pink. Uses are similar to those of other sages; often grown as a garden ornamental.

## Bed#2

Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) **A** Large, toothed, oval, pointed, bright green leaves have a clove scent; its small flowers are white and form on spikes at the ends of stems. Leaves are highly aromatic and are a favorite flavoring in tomato dishes, sausage, mushroom dishes, and the main ingredient in classic pesto.

Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*) **P** A favorite of bees, it is a shrub-like, semi-evergreen with clusters of white, pink, blue, or purple flowers growing in whorls. Leaves are ingredients in Chartreuse liqueur and may be used in small amounts with gamey meat and fatty fish. Not a favorite of contemporary cooks.

Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla monticola*) **P** Fan-shaped, almost circular leaves which collect dew; small greenish-yellow blossoms growing in clusters. Uses are mainly ornamental and medicinal.

Lamb's Ear (*Stachys byzantina*) **P** Not notable for its flowers; leaves are soft, silky, downy, and strongly resemble the ears of young animals. Cultivated for its ornamental value.

Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) **P** Leaves are grey-green and narrow; flowers are lavender to purple; both are sweetly fragrant. Culinary use is limited to jams and vinegars. Its primary use is in aromatic preparations.

Lemon Basil (*Ocimum x citriodorum*) **A** A hybrid between Basil and African Basil. It has a strong, fragrant lemon scent and leaves slightly narrower than common Basil. Used in cooking and for essential oil.

Lemon Thyme (*Thymus serpyllum* var. *vulgaris*) **P** A creeping thyme with small, oval, strongly lemon-scented green leaves and pink flowers. Its lemon flavor enhances the taste of chicken and fish dishes, hot vegetables, fruit salads, and jams.



Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*) **A** Commonly cultivated tender annual. May grow as a climbing vine, dwarf varieties as a bushy herb. Leaf stalks attach to the center of the underside of the blade. Flowers in a range of yellows, reds, and creamy whites. The partially ripened seeds can be pickled and the flowers and leaves can be added to salads for a unique flavor.

Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*) **P** Dark green, peppery-flavored leaves; small purple-pink flowers in spike-like clusters. Often confused with sweet marjoram, this wild marjoram has a sharper flavor and can be used with garlic in tomato sauces, on pizza, and in egg and cheese dishes.

Rose Geranium (*Pelargonium graveolens*) **A** Rose-scented, much divided, mid-green leaves; deep rose flowers in clusters. Leaves may be used to flavor sauces, jams, sugar syrups, ices, butter, tea, and summer drinks.

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) **P** Leaves are leathery, resinous, needle-like and evergreen; its pale blue and tubular flowers bloom in spring and early summer. Leaves are used in meat dishes, particularly lamb and pork, baked potatoes, and herb butter for vegetable and fish dishes.

Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) **P** Leaves are highly aromatic, small, pointed, oval, and mid-green; flowers, tiny and tubular, pale purple to lilac. It is used in bouquet garni and added to stocks, marinades, stuffings, sauces, and soups; flowers are an ingredient in Benedictine liqueur.

### Bed#3

Bronze Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare var. nigra*) **A** Feathery leaves, coppery, bronze, or pink in color. Leaves and seeds are anise flavored and highly valued in fish cookery, but may also be used in sauces, breads, salads, and cooked vegetables. Sometimes, a short-lived perennial

Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*) **P** Whorls of lavender or white flowers attractive to bees; mint-flavored leaves blissful to cats. Culinary use is limited to leaves which are sometimes brewed in teas.

Germander (*Teucrium chamaedrys*) **P** Shiny, evergreen leaves, creeping roots; tubular purplish-pink flowers that grow in whorls. Uses are mainly decorative and medicinal.

Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*) **B** Leaves are wrinkled, heartshaped, and green; flowers are tiny white blossoms that circle the stem at intervals. Used as a flavoring for candy and for medicinal purposes. Sometimes, a short-lived perennial.

Johnny-jump-up (*Viola tricolor*) **A** A wild ancestor of the garden Pansy. The flowers may be added to salads for color and flavor. There are also medicinal uses. Sometimes, a short-lived perennial

Lavender Cotton (*Santolina chamaecyparissus*) **P** Silver-grey, evergreen foliage; button-shaped, bright yellow flowers. Cultivated for its fragrance, decorative uses, and as an insect repellent.

Silver King Artemesia (*Artemisia ludoviciana*) **P** Willow-like, very silvery leaves. Primary use is ornamental.

Southernwood (*Artemisia abrotanum*) **P** Feathery, grey-green leaves; tiny, inconspicuous, dull yellow flowers in loose clusters. While its main use is as an insect repellent, it can be used in stuffings for poultry dishes.

Wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*) **P** Leaves are deeply cut and silvery grey; flowers are small greenish-yellow blossoms. The most bitter herb except rue, wormwood is not used in cooking. It is considered moderately toxic.

## Bed #4

Clove pink (*Dianthus caryophyllus*) **P** This small carnation gives color to the herb garden

Feverfew (*Chrysanthemum parthenium*) **B** Fragrant leaves, divided and yellow-green; small, daisy-like flowers with flat, yellow centers. Primary use is medicinal.

Garlic (*Allium sativum*) **P** A member of the onion family with sparse, flat leaves and white or pinkish flowers in small spherical clusters. The pungent bulbs, divided into cloves, are widely used throughout the world to flavor tomato-based sauces, pasta dishes, meat, fish, salad dressings, and vegetables.

Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) **B** Grows three to six feet tall; greygreen leaves are six to eighteen inches long and flowers are bright yellow, have orange stamens, and are stemless. While mullein has been associated with magic and also used to flavor liqueurs, its main use is medicinal.

Pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium*) **P** Creeping stems; small, slightly downy, peppermint-scented, bright green leaves; tiny tiers of lavender, blue, or pink flowers. Since its flavor is bitter, it should be used sparingly in same way as other mints: in sauces, jellies, and summer drinks.

Roman chamomile (*Anthemis nobilis*) **P** Stems lie flat and creep along the ground; leaves are apple-scented, finely cut, and feathery; flowers are like daisies. Used in making medicinal tea and in other medicinal preparations.

Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) **P** Deeply cut, fern-like leaves; flowers, button-shaped, yellow, in clusters. Tansy was formerly used in cooking and in medicine, but it is now considered to be a powerful herb that should be avoided or used only under strict medical supervision.

Tarragon (*Artemisia dracunculus*) **P** Leaves are long, narrow, and dark green; flowers are tiny, greenish-white, and bell shaped . One of the essential herbs in French cooking, tarragon, with its subtle anise flavor, complements beef, veal, chicken, fish, and is used to make tarragon vinegar.

Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) **P** Scent is variously likened to ancient leather, horseradish, and stale perspiration; leaves are feathery, narrow, toothed, and dark green; flowers are tiny, lilac-pink and grow in clusters. The plant is very attractive to cats, rats, and earth-

worms, but is no longer valued by humans as a flavoring agent. It has limited medicinal use.

Winter Savory (*Satureja montana*) **P** A slightly smaller and wider plant than summer savory with shiny, smooth leaves and deeper hued flowers. Peppery-tasting, the leaves are frequently used in bean dishes, stuffings, sauces, and with meat.

Woad (*Isatis tinctoria*) **B** A member of the mustard family that grows to four feet tall; leaves are blue-green and lance-shaped; flowers are bright yellow and grow in panicles up to two feet wide. Now an ornamental, it was formerly grown for the blue dye extracted from its leaves.

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) **P** Fern-like, grey-green leaves; tiny, dull white or pink flowers growing in flat-topped umbels. Not widely used in cooking, but the leaves may be used fresh in salads.

## Bed #6

Applemint (*Mentha suaveolens*) **P** Apple-scented member of the mint family with downy, bright green leaves. These may be used in teas, jellies and may be added to new potatoes, peas, and fruit salads.

Blue False Indigo (*Baptisia australis*) **P** Leaves are blue-green and clover like; flowers grow on nine to twelve inch spikes and are purplish-blue. It produces a blue dye similar to that obtained from the true indigo (*Indigofera tinctoria*). It has no culinary use.

Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) **B** Flowers are reddish, tubular, bell-like, and borne on long spikes; leaves are large, downy, mid-green and have indented edges. Leaves are toxic and should not be eaten; their use is exclusively medicinal.

Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*) **P** Lemon-scented, green, hemishaped leaves; tubular, inconspicuous white flowers in clusters. Leaves are most commonly used in cool summer drinks and tea, but also in jams, salad dressings, sauerkraut, and poultry and pork dishes.

Lovage (*Levisticum officinale*) **P** Can reach a height of three to seven feet; leaves are dark green, deeply toothed, and wedge-shaped; tiny yellow flowers grow in umbels. A strong celery flavor makes this herb's seeds and leaves useful as celery substitutes in casseroles, soups, salads, vegetables; seeds are also used in breads and cordials.

Oswego Tea (*Monarda didyma*) **P** A member of the mint family; orange-scented leaves are oval, pointed, and dark green with reddish veins; shaggy looking flowers are flaming red. Used by Oswego Indians as a tea, the leaves are still used that way and also in lemonade, jams, jellies, salads, stuffing, and with pork.

Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*) **P** Fragrant, bright green, pointed leaves and red stems; pale violet flowers grow on spikes. Leaves, fresh or dried, are used in teas, summer drinks, sauces, and jellies used to accompany roast meat.

Soapwort (*Saponaria officinalis*) **P** Oval, pointed, pale green leaves; sap contains saponin, a lathering substance; sweet, fruit-scented flowers are single and pale pink. Primary use is household.

Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*) **P** Another of the mints, leaves are practically hairless and deeply veined, about two inches long; violet or pink blossoms grow in spikes along a central stem. The classic ingredient in mint juleps, it is also used in sauces, jellies, salads, with vegetables, and on meats.

Sweet Cicely (*Myrrhis odorata*) **P** Anise-scented leaves are fern-like and light green; tiny white flowers grow in umbels. The seeds, root, and leaves are all used in cooking: the seeds in fruit salads, ice cream, apple pie, and Chartreuse liqueur; the leaves in salad dressings, omelets, and herb butters; the root, raw or cooked as a vegetable.

Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*) **P** Leaves are deeply veined, three lobed, and bright green; eaten fresh and used in jams, cakes, pies, syrups or to flavor liqueurs and cordials.

Woodruff (*Asperula odorata*) **P** Leaves are shiny, green, and grow in circular spokes; flowers are brilliant white and star-shaped. Used to flavor wine punches, especially May wine, and in herb teas.

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This guide was created by Ruth Sachidanandan.

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The current version was reviewed by Diann Jackson.

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