

With the start of spring just around the corner we thought there was no better time to tell you all about the different gardens we have here at COAM and the hard work of our wonderful gardening volunteers to keep them looking great for our visitors. Our gardens are all linked to the buildings they are next to and reflect the time period of that house or building. Below is a map to show the locations of all the gardens and orchards we have here at COAM.

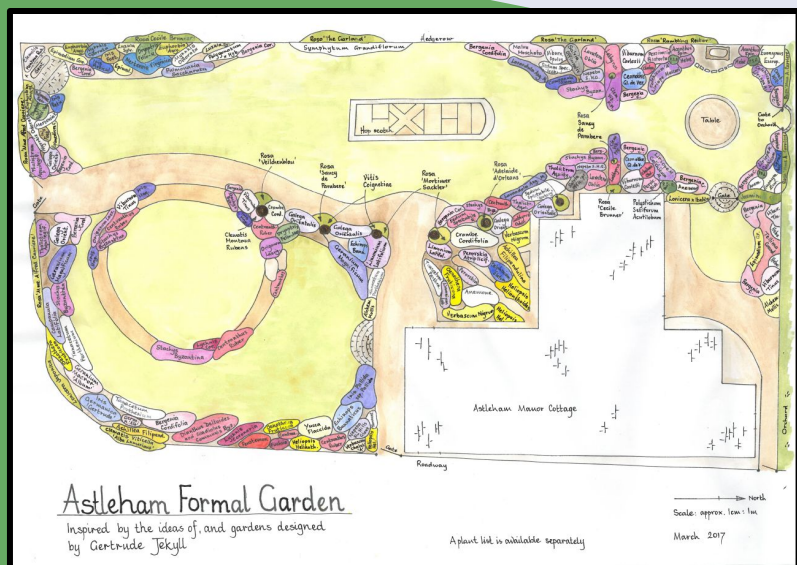
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Astleham Manor Cottage Garden and Orchard

The garden around Astleham Manor Cottage is inspired by the designs of Gertrude Jekyll who was important in shaping garden design during the 20th Century. The plans for this garden are below.



In the summer...



This garden is a formal garden with a geometric layout. It has been planted in a style to reflect an old English cottage garden.

In the winter...



Many of the plants found in this garden are heritage varieties which would have been used by Gertrude Jekyll.

We also have a small apple orchard next to the garden. Each tree in the orchard produces a different variety of apple and they represent the varieties grown in the Chilterns. During harvest time the apples are picked and made into apple juice.

Gardening throughout the year - Astleham Manor Cottage Garden

Our volunteer gardeners work throughout the year to manage our gardens. Even though the gardens may not be as bright and colourful in the winter as in the spring or summer there are still plenty of jobs to keep busy with! Below is a list some of the tasks our volunteers need to do throughout the seasons to keep Astleham Manor Cottage Garden looking its best.

Winter - December, January, February

The big winter job in January is pruning the roses - their stems need cutting back so that they can grow strong again this year.

Manure is collected from the farm and spread around each rose and other big plants to give them a good feed.

The nursery area is tidied and pots are cleaned out ready for new plants.



Small branches are collected from our woodlands to use as plant supports.

Spring - March, April, May

March - the garden is weeded and tidied. Any dead stems are cut down and the soil is dug over to break up the surface. Plant supports are put in ready for new growth.

April and May - general weeding and maintenance of the garden.



Summer - June, July, August

Lots of general jobs including weeding, making sure the plants are well supported and watering (if the weather is very dry).

The gardeners will begin 'deadheading' if needed. This is where the flowers are removed from plants when they are dead or or fading which encourages more blooms.

Autumn - September, October, November

Cuttings are taken from plants to grow and become new plants for next year.

General tidying of dead leaves and stems - this all goes into compost bins to make more for the garden.

Cut back any plants that need trimming.

Seed heads are left for insects and birds over the winter.

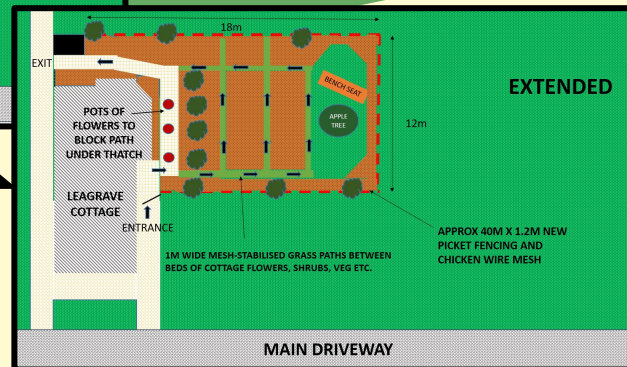
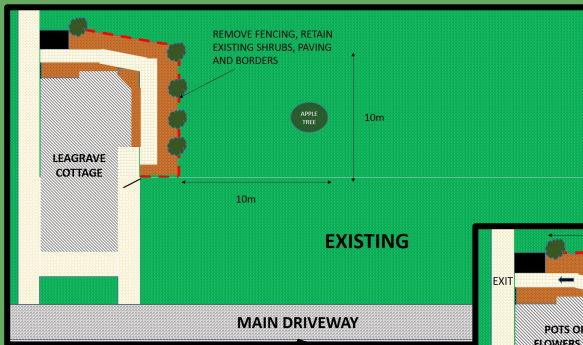


Leagrave Cottages Garden

Leagrave Cottages started life as a small barn which was converted into the two cottages we have today. The garden at Leagrave Cottages is currently being redeveloped with work having started during our closed season. When redesigning our gardens it helps to plan out the space we have and see what can be done with it. You can see the plans for the original garden and the plans for how it is being extended below.

So far in the redevelopment of the garden our volunteers have dug out new beds and put the turf in a pile. This will rot down over the next few years and make good compost which can go back into the garden and help the plants to grow well. Until that compost is ready, the volunteers will top the new beds with compost from our allotment.

There are six new beds in total. This includes four small beds near the cottage. One has been planted with rhubarb and the remaining three will be planted with vegetables and possibly herbs. This will create a 'kitchen garden' which can be used by anyone staying or cooking in Leagrave Cottage. There are then two larger beds which will have flowering plants in.



Plans are made however these can change when the volunteers actually start creating the garden

The volunteers have to be careful about when they put new plants in. Currently, they are waiting for the fence to be erected around the garden before they plant anything or else the local population of muntjac deers will have a tasty meal and all the volunteers hard work will go to waste!

The garden has been extended dramatically from the previous version and now includes a nearby apple tree which will have two benches underneath for visitors to sit and have a rest on.



Haddenham Croft Cottage Garden is another one of our gardens which has been redeveloped recently. In 2020 our volunteers, led by Estate Assistant Rachael, redeveloped this garden completely, starting with just a plain garden of grass.

The aim of the garden redevelopment was to show how the cottage garden would have been used in different ways to benefit the people living in the cottage. One side of the garden reflects how it would have been used to grow plants which could be used in the kitchen such as herbs and vegetables. The other side is a more formal garden with cut grass and flower borders.



Vegetable beds being created



The garden in summer 2020



Some of the plants used in this garden can also be found in other gardens around the museum which helps to make all the gardens feel connected. A full list of the plants used in the garden in 2020 can be found on the final page.

The garden and allotment at the post WW2 Amersham Prefab are laid out to demonstrate a typical garden of the era. This includes neatly mown lawns, formal rose beds and vegetable gardens. You can see the plans for the allotment below.

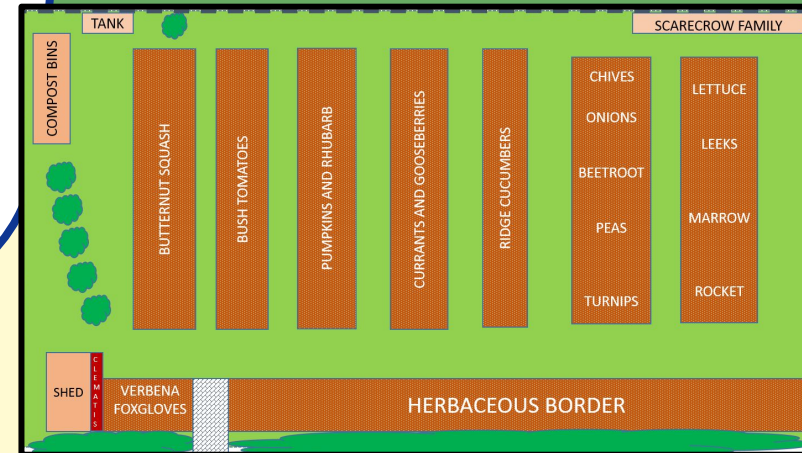
The 'Dig for Victory' allotment at Amersham Prefab contains traditional varieties of vegetables including leeks, beetroot, courgettes and cucumbers. These are used to help supply the museums catering outlets when we are open. There are also fruit bushes, herbs and flowering plants in the allotment.

Which crops are grown each year gets decided each winter and takes into account feedback from the catering outlets and by the crops growing performance from the previous year. We do not grow crops in the winter due to the museum being closed but work continues to ensure everything is prepped and ready for opening seasons.

The most successful crops are: potatoes, onions, peas, cucumbers, tomatoes, lettuce, beetroot, turnips, marrows, squashes, pumpkins and rhubarb. Each year a giant pumpkin is grown which is shown at our annual Harvest Festival and Halloween events (during non-covid times!).



The allotment in summer (above) and winter (right)



What fruit or vegetables would you like to grow if you had an allotment?

High Wycombe Toll House Garden

Originally built in 1826, High Wycombe Toll House has a Victorian style cottage garden with plants that would have been used for culinary, medicinal and cosmetic use.



The herb garden in winter (similar view as the centre photo)



The herb garden has a large variety of plants that would have been used in Victorian times for cooking and medicinal use. This includes fennel, sorrel, sages and chives. The wormwood would have kept moths at bay, 'soap' was made from soapwort, and the lavender used to scent linen.

Iron Age Garden

The Iron Age House has a small area of its compound planted. These plants would have been used for a range of purposes during the Iron Age period. Iron Age people would have also farmed larger fields for growing crops such as wheat and also rearing livestock. Some of the plants we have and their uses are below.



Woad is a plant which can be used to create a blue dye. It is also an antiseptic and may have been used to heal battle wounds.

Madder is another plant which is used to create dye and has been used for thousands of years. The roots of the madder plant produce a red dye.

Weld can also be used to create dye. It produces a yellow dye which can be used to make green when mixed with the dye created from woad.



The leaves and roots of **soapwort** produce a lather in water and can be used for washing. Soapwort has been used for centuries.

Comfrey has been used since at least 400BC. It was commonly used by the Greeks and Romans to stop heavy bleeding and heal wounds and broken bones.

Marjoram is one of the most useful herbs in the garden and can be added to lots of meals. It was used in the Elizabethan period in both food and medicines. It could treat stings, 'sneezing disorders' and toothache. The flowering part of the plant can be used to dye woolen cloth to a purple shade and dyes linen to a reddish brown.



The plants are located here

A March day in Astleham Manor Cottage Garden

I am a volunteer at COAM helping to look after the gardens and one in particular, Astleham Manor Cottage Garden. I will tell you about one day in March when I was working in the garden.



As soon as I arrived I walked all round looking at what had grown, which flowers had come out, whether the moles had made their hills of soil on the grass again, and what I needed to do that day. It is a beautiful garden at all times of the year and there is often a robin which sings and follows me looking for worms I disturb. I found the flowers of a little iris, they are such a pretty purple colour they made me smile.

My first job was to clear 3 mole hills and I save the soil for potting plants, it is very fine and has no stones.

Over the winter I had cut some small branches from the woods and hedges and I use those to make plant supports. I collected some from the nursery where I store them and took them to the bit of garden where a plant called goats rue grows. This plant gets very big and can flop down if it doesn't have supports. I made a circle of branches round where I could see the new shoots starting to grow. In 2 or 3 months it will be as tall as me!

Rabbits – they had been in the garden. How did I know? The sedums, had just started to grow and their leaves are soft and delicious to a rabbit. Yes, they thought so too and had nibbled off the tops of most of the plants which later in the summer should be ½metre tall with pretty pink and white flowers. So I put twiggy sticks around the sedums and hoped that would stop the rabbits eating any more.

In the apple orchard are ferns and different iris, called stinking iris – they don't smell awful at all and have the most beautiful flower. I had some horse manure left in a compost bin so that was my next job, to spread some round each plant to give it a real treat and help it grow strong.

Time was moving on and I had one last job that day, to do some weeding in another iris bed. We have some very beautiful tall iris, or they will be later in the spring, and they have the most wonderful pale blue flowers. the moment the leaves are just a few centimetres tall and so it was easy to get in between and take all the weeds, dandelions, buttercups, daisies, all lovely plants but not in amongst the iris.

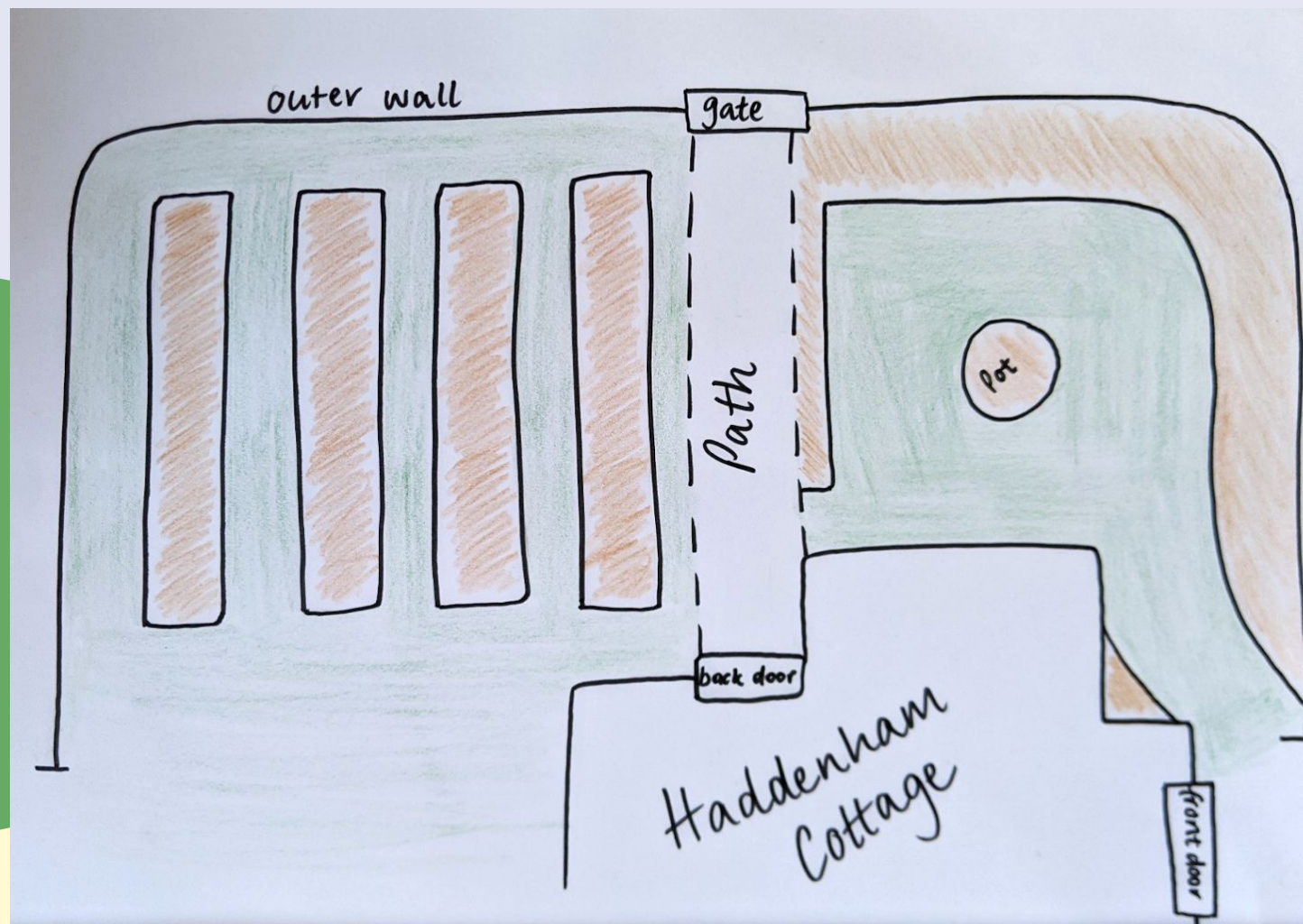
That was the last job that day, phew, what a lot I had done. You may well ask, was the robin there yes, and singing too.

Heather



We hope that the information about all our gardens has given you some inspiration! On this page we have given you a blank plan for Haddenham Garden. Why don't you try and figure out what you might plant in the brown beds? You can find some inspiration of the plants we used last year on the next page.

Or, maybe you might like to draw your own garden or outside area and make a plan for that instead! You could think about how you might use the space and what you could grow. Do you want to eat what you grow like our allotments or do you just want it to look colourful? Think about how you would use the garden and the space you need between plants or objects to move around. Would you add anything else into your garden as well as plants? Do you see any interesting gardens or parks on your walks? Maybe you could take inspiration from them!



We would love to see any of the garden plans you come up with. Be sure to share them with us via social media!

Haddenham Garden Planting List (2020)

Flower border: **False Sunflower** (*Heliopsis helianthoides*), **Sedum** (*Hylotelephium spectabile*). **Rose Campion** (*Lychnis coronaria*), **Avens** (*Geum 'Borisii'*), **Catnip** (*Nepeta cataria*), **Garden Lady's Mantle** (*Alchemilla mollis*), **Maiden Pink** (*Dianthus deltoides*), **Yarrow** (*Achillea fillipendula 'Cloth of Gold'*), **Rosemary** (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), **Bloody Cranesbill** (*Geranium sanguineum*), **Dark Mullein** (*Verbascum nigrum*), **Montbretia** (*Crococsmia x crocosmiiiflora*), **Broad-leaved Bellflower** (*Campanula latifolia*), **Pale Yellow-eyed Grass** (*Sisyrinchium striatum*), **Ox-eye Daisy** (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), **Foxglove** (*Digitalis* spp.), **Penstemon 'Garnet'**

Pot: **Marigold** (*Calendula officinalis*)

Lavender Border: *Lavandula angustifolia 'Munstead'*

Herb Border: **Feverfew** (*Tanacetum parthenium*), **Lemon Balm** (*Melissa officinalis*), **Salad Burnet** (*Sanguisorba minor*), **Golden Marjoram** (*Origanum vulgare 'Aureum'*), **Marjoram** (*Origanum vulgare*), **Sage** (*Salvia officinalis*), **Everlasting Onion** (*Allium cepa perutile*), **Chives** (*Allium schoenoprasum*), **Thyme** (*Thymus vulgaris*), **Rosemary** (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

Dolly Tubs/ Metal tubs: Parsley, Mint, Carrots

Vegetable Beds: Runner bean, Marrow, Tomato, Cucumber, Potato, Lettuce, Rocket, Carrot, Beetroot, Cabbage, Spring Onion, Turnip