

Welcome to the Selly Manor period garden

Tudor garden design changed noticeably over the course of the 16th century.

The garden here at Selly Manor reflects a lot of the developments as well as the timelessness of garden usage and design.

Look out for:

- ❖ Kitchen Garden
- ❖ Lime Trees
- ❖ Medlar Tree
- ❖ Artichokes
- ❖ Teasels
- ❖ Fig Tree
- ❖ Privy (Tudor toilet)
- ❖ Bug Hotel
- ❖ Erratic Boulders
- ❖ Hops on the chimney

If you're visiting on a sunny day, you are welcome to enjoy a picnic in the grounds.

Water and biscuits are available for dogs. We also have games to play with and magnifying glasses for you to explore nature.



Teasel



Privy (Tudor toilet)



Bug Hotel



Kitchen Garden



Hops on the chimney

The Parterre

A major legacy of Tudor garden design first created in the 1550s, during the reign of Elizabeth I. Designed for wealthier homes, parterres or knot gardens were measured with square arrangements of herbs and flowers. This contrasted earlier customs of leaving gardens wilder.

The example you see here is split into four quadrants. The idea of this was to separate plants and herbs which had distinct uses for ease when picking. However, this practical concern later became an aesthetic feature as people found the neat and highly visible arrangement was great for showcasing plants.

The knot garden was designed to be viewed from an upstairs window, imitating decorative aspects of embroidery and tapestries.

Scan here to learn more about Knot Gardens →



You will find rosemary,
germander, sage and bay.
Do you think they're fragrant?

Spiral and Topiary

Design and layout of the gardens of the rich were increasingly thought of as an extension of the house.

As such there was a desire to bring nature into the domestic world by mastering it. Gardens could entertain different functions; they became a much more open and walkable space, and places of entertainment and beauty.



SONG

Divorced, beheaded, and died
Divorced, beheaded, survived
I'm Henry the 8th
I had 6 sorry wives
Some might say I ruined their lives!

Topiary is the practice of clipping shrubs or trees into ornamental shapes. They were used to add volume and height to the garden. It was common for topiaries to be shaped into a heraldic symbol or the Tudor rose. Mazes were also popular and were referred to as wilderness (meaning a place to wander) where members of the royal court could enjoy some privacy.

There are examples of topiary throughout the garden, including the spiral (left) and Henry VIII, his six wives, and the catholic church symbolised as a mitre with a cross medallion (above). **Did you notice that two of the wives have lost their heads?**

The Kitchen Garden

Gardens like Selly Manor's would have served a practical purpose, growing a range of different plants including fruits, vegetables, and herbs. Herbs were grown for food and medicinal purposes and would have been picked when aromatic – there are some hung in the Manor.

Trees such as medlar, apple, plum, and damsons produced fruit from mid-summer to November and so the best time to appreciate our garden is in early September. Fruit would be eaten raw, cooked, or preserved. Eating raw fruit was not believed to yield any nutritional benefits, however physicians did not advise against eating raw fruit, as is commonly thought.



James Grieve
apple



Chives



Sempervivum



Rue

People in Tudor times believed God had placed every plant on earth for their benefit and left clues to show how they should be used. Plants could solve problems and treat ailments and diseases.

The leaves of **Lungwort** resemble lungs, and were used to treat whooping cough.

The pot of **Sempervivum** at the kitchen door was a magical protection against witches as well as lightning and storms which were common in midsummer.

Rosemary was believed to increase memory and concentration.

Yellow marigold was used to treat jaundice.

Juice made from **Teasel** was believed to cure worms if poured down the ear canal.

Rue could cure nosebleeds, act as an antidote to poisons, and when eaten by a weasel, could become a formidable deterrent to fend off a snake.

Want to know more about what Tudors ate? Scan here →



The Woodland

This part of the garden is more representative of the Tudors who lived in Selly Manor. They would have been country folk, surrounded by woodland and fields. Ninety percent of the population lived in the countryside in the 16th century, with many working on farms.

Trees were important to everyday Tudor life – Selly Manor itself is made from Oak. Hazel sticks would form the wattle for the insides of the walls, with daub mix (mud, straw, horsehair, and animal poo) on top. You will find several trees in the garden, including Beech, Oak, Medlar, Fig, and Lime – can you identify which is which? The Lime hedge in front of you has been interwoven and is best viewed in the winter/early spring before leaves appear.

How many of these different leaves can you find?



Beech



Fig



Lime



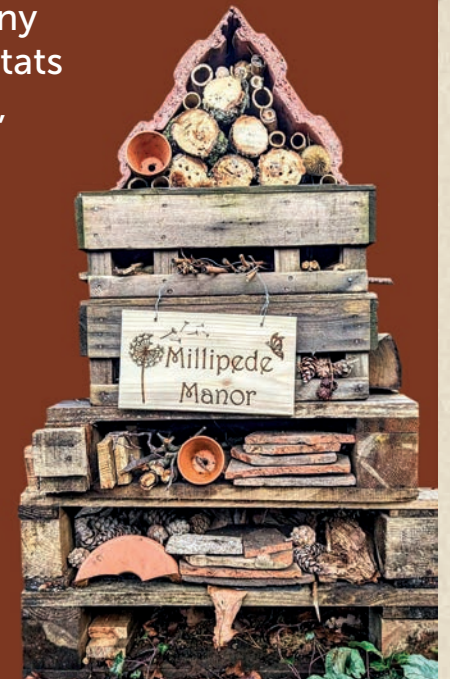
Medlar



Oak

There are many different habitats in the garden, to encourage wildlife and biodiversity.

How many different creatures can you see in the Millipede Manor?



Want to see the Lime hedge in the winter? Scan here →



The Privy

In 1592 Sir John Harrington (godson of Elizabeth I) invented the flushing toilet. Unfortunately, it would be over three hundred years before this type of toilet was commonplace.

In Tudor society your toilet was defined by your status. Henry VIII enjoyed an indoor toilet and a 'Groom of the Stool' – someone who was paid to wipe his bottom. They were a most important and trusted servant, with influence and sway in the Royal court.

In the countryside, people would have privies which would be situated away from their home, and a hole dug in the ground for hygiene reasons. Tudor houses had no running water and people drank a lot of beer, which might have affected the smell even more. Beer is made from brewing hops – you will see hops growing on Selly Manor's chimney.

Their options for toilet paper were straw, moss, and leaves from the Mullein plant. Wealthy people used linen and cotton blankets which would be washed by a servant. Tudors would also use chamber pots, like the one in the Manor. Collected urine was used for cleaning laundry because of its high quantity of ammonia, and to soften leather.



Mullein plant



Chamber pot

Erratic Boulders



The Bournville Boulder in the Girls' Recreation Ground, October 1911

The erratic boulders in south and west Birmingham are mostly volcanic rocks from the Arenig area of north Wales and originate from an ice age around 450,000 years ago. They were moved by a glacier and left where the ice melted. The weathered surface of the rock is cream-coloured, but if this were to be chipped away a dark green colour would emerge.

For several years from 1908, excavations around the Bournville Works and Cotteridge Park unearthed numerous glacial boulders. Louis Barrow, Chief Engineer at the Cadbury Factory, led this project with the assistance of his former teacher, Charles Lapworth.

Lapworth was the first Professor of Geology at Mason College, the forerunner of the University of Birmingham, and one of the most important and influential geologists in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Visit the Lapworth Museum at the University of Birmingham to learn more.

Today you will find erratic boulders in Northfield, Kings Norton, Frankley, Quinton, Illey, and Bromsgrove. And Cotteridge, Selly Oak, Cannon Hill, and Woodgate Valley parks. **There is one more boulder in the Selly Manor garden – can you spot it?**

Scan here
for more
information
about Erratic
Boulders →

