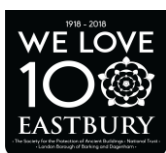
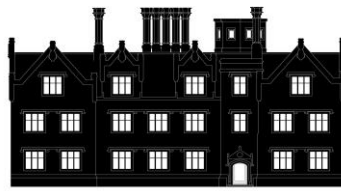




Garden guide and history





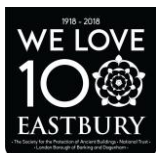
EASTBURY MANOR HOUSE

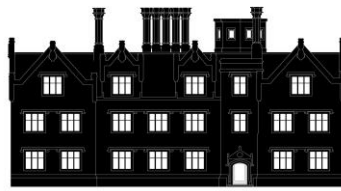
Eastbury Manor House

Eastbury Manor House is an Elizabethan gentry house built by Clement Sysley approximately in 1573. From 1600 - 1900 Eastbury was a farming estate before the land was sold to developers. Now all that remains is the main house and the surrounding gardens which was bought by the National Trust in 1918. Eastbury has two main gardens: an herb garden on the west side and the walled garden on the east side of the house. Tudor gardens were both practical and decorative, providing the house with food and medicine, and gardening even became a fashionable pastime. It was also common to keep bees in skeps or bee-boles and to use their honey as sweetener or their wax for candles. This has provided inspiration for Eastbury's gardens today.

The lawn

In Tudor and Elizabethan times what we would now think of as gardens and lawns were first developed as social and walking areas. During this period meadow plants such as chamomile were popular in lawns. However, close cut lawns like we see today didn't appear until the Jacobean period (1603 – 1625) and became a symbol of gentry, having a lawn showed that the owner had enough land to be able to use some purely for decorative purposes. Before the invention of the lawn mower in 1830 lawns were cut with a scythe.





EASTBURY MANOR HOUSE

The kitchen garden

Tudor herb gardens

Herb gardens were hugely important to the Tudors because before modern medicine and hospitals you had to make your own cures and remedies often made from plants. These remedies were often known as 'simples' and most Tudor women would have known how to make them.

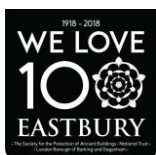
Medieval medicine was based on the notion that the body has four humours and it was the physician's job to work out how to restore a person's humours if they became ill, and so herbs were ascribed properties to redress the balance.

It was believed that plants had been given clues as to how they could be used by Humans; these clues were known as signatures. The doctrine of signatures was based on the idea that every plant (herb) had been placed here on earth by God for our benefit. It was thought that little clues had been left on the leaves, flowers, roots or juice. For example, the shape of ginger root was thought to look like intestines, so it was added to food to cure stomach ailments. These signatures were supposed to show the disease or part of the body which the plant could heal. Sometimes these signs weren't so obvious. The adder's tongue was applied to the bite of an adder because the leaf looked like the bite.

The doctrine of signatures was a popular way of treating illness in the 16th and 17th centuries. The botanist, herbalist and physician Nicholas Culpepper wrote The Complete Herbal, a handbook of herbal remedies which became an essential reference book and his name is still well known to this day.

There wasn't a national health service in Tudor England, so the type of doctor Tudors saw varied according to where they lived and how much money they had. The wealthy were visited by physicians or surgeons. A Tudor apothecary was the Tudor version of a pharmacist, selling medicine and remedies. Poor Tudors would get basic health care from their own family members, the church or by visiting the local wise woman (who would make herbal remedies and potions).

In Tudor times people also believed that disease was caused by bad smells, so strong smelling herbs were used to mask those bad odours.





EASTBURY MANOR HOUSE

The herbs

You can find the below herbs in Eastbury's garden. Many of these herbs are still used today either in herbal remedies or culinary recipes.

Borage

Traditionally, borage has been used in hyperactive gastrointestinal, respiratory and cardiovascular disorders. The leaves and roots of borage were thought to be very good with putrid fevers, to defend the heart and help resist and expel the poison or the venom of creatures.



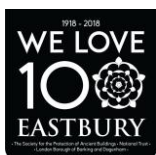
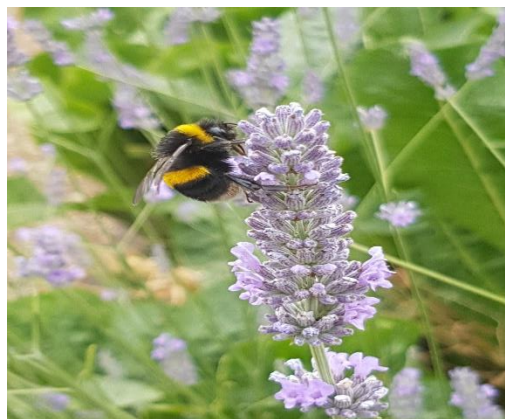
Comfrey

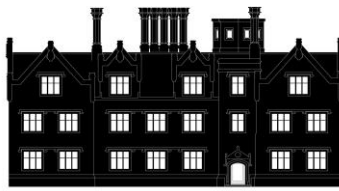
Folk medicine names for comfrey include knitbone and boneset referring to the ancient belief that it could mend broken bones. Comfrey was believed to be so powerful that it could 'knit' severed flesh back onto the body. The roots could be crushed and spread onto leather then laid on joints to ease pain.



Lavender

As well as being used to fragrance polish, soap, potpourri and linen bags, dried lavender was brewed to provide a relaxing tea, and lavender's oil's medicinal property was one of few defences against lice and fleas. It was also used to cure headaches, cramps, convulsions and fainting.





EASTBURY MANOR HOUSE

Lemon balm

The leaves are used as an herb, in teas, and as a flavouring. The plant is used to attract bees for honey production. Lemon balm was a popular herb for curing weak stomachs, digestion, liver and spleen. The leaves of lemon balm dipped in wine was thought to cure scorpion stings and the bites of a mad dog.



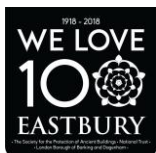
Marigold

Marigold was a popular herb found in most gardens and was believed to strengthen the heart. The leaves of the marigold would be mixed with vinegar and bathed in would reduce and ease swelling.



Mint

In medieval times mint was distilled in water or boiled to cure stomach aches, ear aches or just sniffed to clear the head. It would also be added to vinegar to get rid of dandruff. It was even used to cure bad breath!





Rosemary

Rosemary was thought to have many uses both physical and civil. In the Middle Ages, rosemary was associated with wedding ceremonies. The bride would wear a rosemary headpiece and the groom and wedding guests would all wear a sprig of rosemary. From this association with weddings, rosemary was thought to be a love charm. In herbal remedies it was used to cure all cold diseases of the head, stomach, liver and belly. Distilled in wine it would help with drowsiness or dullness of the mind. Rosemary also has the added benefit of pest control.



Roses

Roses were not only cultivated for their beauty but were commonly used for flavouring and for use in herbal remedies. Rose leaves, frankincense and egg white would be applied to swollen eyes and mixed with devil's bit then gargled was the cure for a swollen throat.





EASTBURY MANOR HOUSE

Rue

The root of the rue herb was used boiled in water and applied to areas troubled with lice to kill them.



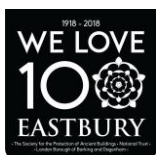
Soapwort

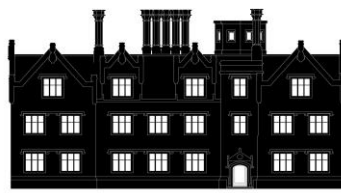
Soapwort has long been used to make soap. It contains saponins, and a liquid soap could be produced by soaking the leaves in water. This soap is still used to clean delicate antique tapestries.



Yarrow

In the Hebrides a yarrow leaf held against the eyes was believed to give second sight. An ointment made of yarrow cures wounds and inflammation, and the leaves were chewed to ease tooth ache. People would even bathe in yarrow to prevent hair loss!





EASTBURY MANOR HOUSE

Fruits and vegetables

It wasn't just herbs that were grown in the garden, the Tudors also grew their own fruits and veg. They included runner beans, lettuce, carrots, parsnip, potato, turnips, fennel, asparagus, artichokes, skirret and many more. This gave them easy access to fresh food as there were no supermarkets and no refrigeration to keep food from spoiling. These vegetables would have been tended to by servants and used in their cooking of meals. Therefore, the kitchen garden is on the west side of the house to give the cooks easy access to the garden.

The Walled Garden

The shelter provided by enclosing walls can raise the ambient temperature within a garden by several degrees, creating a microclimate that permits plants to be grown that would not survive in the unmodified local climate.

Most walls are constructed from stone or brick, which absorb and retain solar heat and then slowly release it, raising the temperature against the wall.

The bee-boles

A bee bole is a cavity or alcove in a wall (the Scots word bole means a recess in a wall). A skep (a straw or wicker beehive.) is placed in the bee bole. Before the development of modern bee hives, the use of bee boles was a practical way of keeping bees in some parts of Britain, although most beekeepers kept their skeps in the open covered by old pots or sacking. The bee bole helped to keep the wind and rain away from the skep and the bees living inside.

Bee keeping was a very common activity in the past before sugar became plentiful and affordable as a sweetener. Demand was also a high for beeswax for candles, especially from the pre-reformation churches, cathedrals, and abbeys; tithes and rents were often paid in honey and/or beeswax, or even bee swarms. You can buy a beeswax candle from our shop. Valence House still keeps bees if you would like to get a bit closer.

Take a look at the recreation in the attic to see what the gardens might have looked like.

