

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HERBACEOUS
PLANTING IN BRITAIN AND GERMANY FROM
THE NINETEENTH TO EARLY TWENTIETH
CENTURY

Volume I
of
2 Volumes

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Summer by the Sea (Beatrice Parsons)

The Development of Herbaceous Planting in Britain and Germany from the Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Century.

(Original in Colour)

Frontispiece: Summer by the Sea

This border reflects the changes which had affected herbaceous borders during the latter part of the nineteenth century: plants were arranged less formally, in large clumps with low plants weaving into the back of the border. The border was planted according to a distinct colour scheme of blue, white, silver and a hint of pink. The many cultivars used reflect the increasing range of plants available.

(Beatrice Parsons (1870-1955), undated, courtesy of Christopher Wood)

*To my parents,
without whose support
I would never have been able
to indulge in this research.*

The Development of Herbaceous Planting in Britain and Germany from the Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Century.

ABSTRACT

At a time where British designers are just discovering the German approach to using perennials, and the German gardening public is crying out for English herbaceous borders, it seems appropriate to carry out an in-depth study of how two countries, which had very similar design ideas during much of the nineteenth century, came to develop such distinctively different planting styles in the course of the twentieth century. This thesis carries out an unprecedented comparative analysis of the development of hardy herbaceous perennial plant-use in British and German gardens during the nineteenth century and examines how late-nineteenth century developments have influenced the international gardening scene.

Despite the great popularity of bedding schemes and tender plants, perennials were never completely banished from the garden. Perennials were not only planted in kitchen garden borders, they could be found in formal flower gardens where they were used as part of bedding displays, or planted in borders along the edge of flower gardens. Alternatively they were used in the more informal settings of the pleasure ground, planted in beds or borders either free-standing or along shrubbery edges. Influenced by colour schemes and foliage effects applied in bedding schemes, design elements such as colour, texture and foliage effects made their entry in herbaceous border design in the course of the second half of the nineteenth century. By the end of the nineteenth century herbaceous borders had become well-established garden features and the value of perennials as garden plants was appreciated by most gardeners.

William Robinson (1838-1935), Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) and Karl Foerster (1874-1970) quickly made their names once they were established in the gardening world. Their fame spread through their books, plans (Jekyll's design work) and plants (Foerster's plant breeding efforts), all of which are still popular today. Jekyll's more

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painterly, artistic approach left a definite mark on British twentieth century planting design, whilst Foerster's horticultural and botanical expertise helped to develop the German naturalistic planting schemes of today.

The exchange of ideas and parallel thinking which occurred throughout the nineteenth century between the two countries, appears to have been disrupted around the turn of the century, and have only been take up again during the last decades of the twentieth century. British garden design and planting ideas have become very popular in Germany in the course of the last ten or fifteen years, and the German approach to herbaceous planting was not discovered in Britain until the early nineteen nineties and is rapidly gaining popularity.

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CHAPTER 1: PREFACE

Prior to embarking on the main body of the text it is important to clarify some of the issues which arise when dealing with gardens. Plants are one of the main ingredients in every garden. They are living creatures, susceptible to external influences. It is important to be familiar with these influences and to bear them in mind whilst reading this thesis.

There is also a brief explanation of the main terminology used in the text. Terms which are only raised on one or two occasions are explained in the course of the text or in footnotes.

1.1. Terminology

The main subject of this thesis is hardy herbaceous perennials, usually just referred to as perennials, unless otherwise stated. Herbaceous plants usually consist of plants of which the green part completely dies down each year, without leaving a woody structure. They can be either annual, in which case the plant dies after having set seeds at the end of the season, biennial, when the plant needs two growing seasons to develop, flower and set seed, or perennial. Perennials have an underground root system which will survive year after year, producing new foliage and flowers on an annual basis. Some of the annuals, biennials or perennials used in gardens can be tender, in which case they require a protected growing environment for winter and are planted out after the last frosts have gone. Most bedding plants are tender herbaceous plants. The majority of herbaceous plants are dicotyledons, though are monocotyledons. Monocotyledons are bulbous plants or grasses. Bulbs on the whole have not been included in this study, as borders and beds of perennials usually do not suit their requirements. Some are common exceptions are irises, red hot pokers, sisyrinchiums, gladioli and hemerocallis.

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Borders are strips of ground which form a fringe, either to edge a formal setting of grass or a parterre, or provide a strip of planting along walls, hedges or fences, or along a path. Beds are usually free-standing, and can be angular or rounded in shape, formal or informal. They are usually set in grass or gravel surrounds. The term 'herbaceous border' was first used by Loudon in 1822 referring to "species and varieties of herbaceous border-flowers", but was not used extensively until the end of the nineteenth century.¹

Nomenclature

Although botanical vocabulary has been kept to a minimum, some of the terminology was inevitable. All plants are given a binomial Latin name, consisting of a genus and species name, written in italics. Several plant species can belong to one genus, and similarly several genera can belong to one plant family. For example the Papaveraceae family contains several genera, including the genus *Papaver*. This genus is further subdivided into *P. orientale*, the Oriental poppy, *P. somniferum*, the opium poppy, and others. The species in turn can be further subdivided into subspecies and varieties. These are naturally occurring plants which differ from the species. There are also cultivated varieties or cultivars, which result from crossing two different plants with one another. The latter is not italicised, for example *Papaver orientale* 'Perry's White'.

A number of botanical plant names occur throughout the text. Wherever possible the names have been rendered in the same way as the author did. However, in the main body of the text, Latin names have been italicised, even if originally they were not. An attempt has been made at providing updated nomenclature though this was not always possible. The further back in history, the more erratic nomenclature was, and the

¹ Loudon, John Claudius: *Encyclopaedia*, 1822, p. 993

harder it is to identify the plants. Names have been verified in major reference works.² Those which were not traced, or over which some confusion exists have received a question mark in between brackets (?). where new names occurred, they have actually been added after the old name, in between brackets preceded by the word 'syn.'. For example *Dielytra spectabilis* is now (syn. *Dicentra spectabilis*). Plant names which are followed by a name in brackets without the word 'syn.', were synonyms given by the original author.

1.2. External Influences which Play a Role in Planting Schemes

Gardening is influenced by many external factors, which mean that every single case becomes different. It is quite safe to assume there are no two gardens or two planting schemes in the world which are absolutely identical. Even if a scheme is copied in the most minute of details, there will always be at least one factor which is different. The elements which are most likely to influence a garden are listed below.

Personal Taste

If one was to give ten gardeners or garden designers an equal piece of land and identical plants, with which to make a border, the end result would be ten different borders. Although not everybody may regard garden and planting design as an art form, nobody can deny that it is governed by personal taste. Trends and fashions have been identified in the course of this research, but it has revealed how every person had strong personal views on how to achieve an effect. Most authors were sparing with details on how to achieve the desired effect, assuming the reader knew it all. If on the

² Philip, Chris: *The Plant Finder*, 1995; Griffith, Mark: *Index of Garden Plants*, 1994; Trehane, Piers: *Index Hortensis, Volume 1: Perennials*, 1989; Tutin, T. G.: *Flora Europaea*, vols 1-5, 1964-1980; *Index Kewensis*, 1895

other hand they did volunteer more specific information, it usually would differ from what their contemporaries had to say.

The Climate and its Influence on Plant Use

Our climate plays a vital role in what we can or cannot plant in a garden. Some problems can be overcome artificially, for example by overwintering tender plants in greenhouses or coldframes. However climate will affect the choice of plants for a permanent planting scheme, as is the case in the majority of examples discussed in the course of this work. When comparing two countries such as Germany and Britain, there are several points which need to be considered.

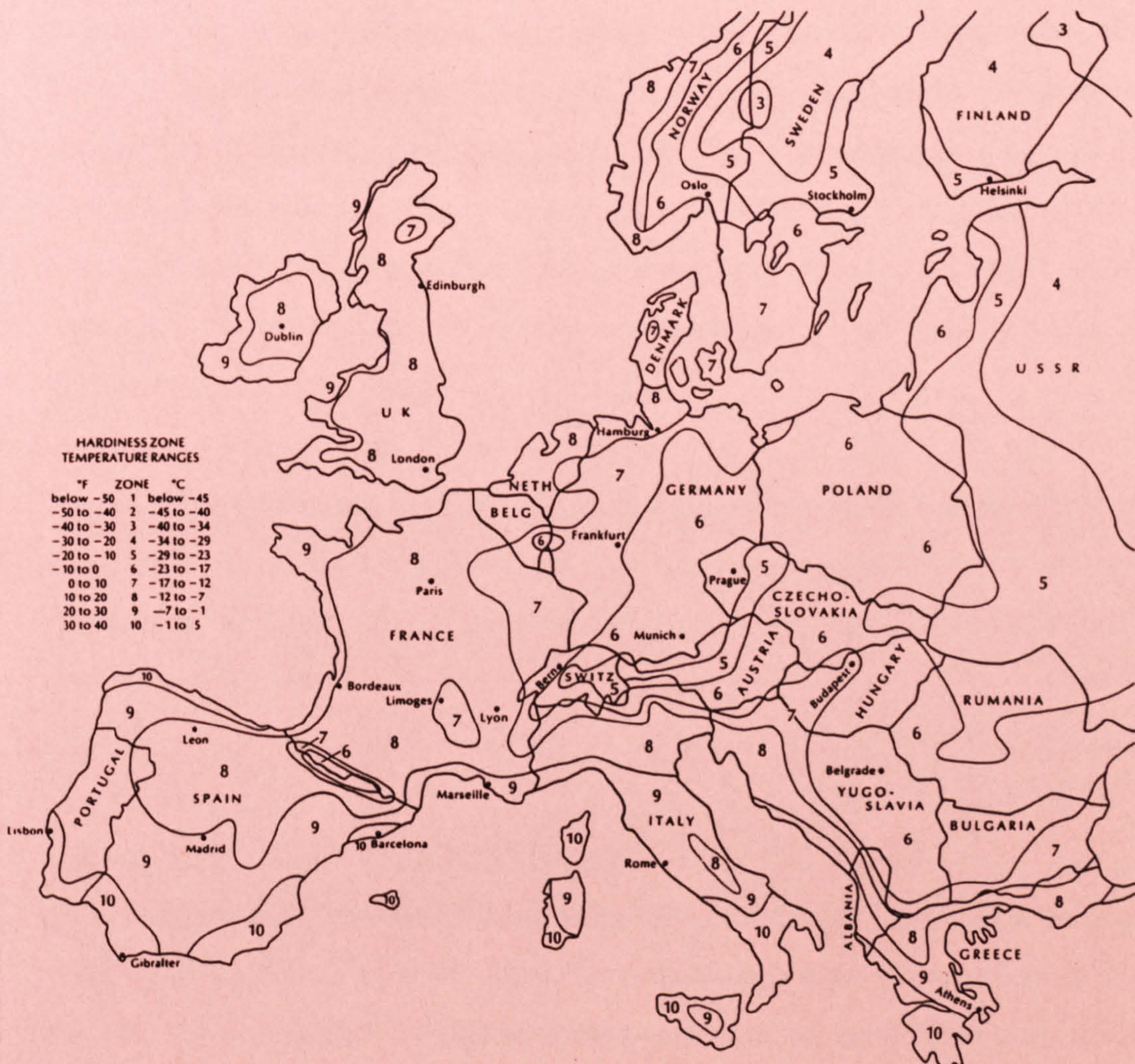
As an island, Britain enjoys a much milder climate than Germany. Germany is a large country with very wide ranging topographical differences, from the flat northern landscape to the Alps in the south, and there are large differences within its boundaries. The further eastward one travels, the climate becomes more continental, with dry, hot summers and cold, snowy winters. Consequently, there is a range of plants which are perfectly hardy in most areas of Britain, which will not survive an average German winter. Either they freeze in much colder eastern and southern areas, or tend to rot in wet winters encountered in the north west. This inevitably affects the range of plants which can be used in Germany, and the way in which they are used. Some plants, which in England are grown as hardy perennials in permanent planting schemes, are used in Germany as bedded out plants, overwintered in a cool greenhouse.

Most of Britain lies in hardiness zone 8³, with the exception of the west coast (zone 9) and a small area in the Scottish Highlands (zone 7). The largest hardiness zone in Germany is zone 6, and covers the south and eastern part of the country. Western

3 Hardiness zones give the average winter temperatures. Zone 6: -23 to -17°C., Zone 7: -17 to -12°C., Zone 8: -12 to -7°C., Zone 9: -7 to -1°C. Jelitto, L. and Schacht, W.: *Hardy Herbaceous Perennials* vol 1, 1990

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ILLUSTRATION 2: MAP OF EUROPEAN CLIMATIC ZONES



Map showing Europe's climatic zones. Britain lies in zone 8, with the exception of a small area in the Highlands which is in zone 7, and the west coast in zone 9. Most of Germany is in zones 6 and 7, with a north westerly corner in zone 8.

(Jellito, Schacht: *Hardy Herbaceous Perennials*, 1990, p. 4)

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Germany lies in zone 7, and only a small area to the north west lies in zone 8. (See illustration 2.)

In the early eighteenth century reference was made to the fact that roses needed covering up in winter with straw, tied down with planks to protect them against the frosts: a measure not necessary in normal British winters.⁴ However, as Ruempler pointed out, herbaceous perennials are probably the one vegetation group which suffers least from climatic influences, as most plants have their root system covered with a protective layer of snow during winter, keeping the worst frosts off. This does not apply to all perennials, but those hardy in Germany were considered by Ruempler to be numerous.⁵

It is not only hardiness that is affected by climate, flowering time is also influenced by it. German winters are more prolonged than British ones, so that some plants will flower several weeks later. Flowering times may also vary from year to year, depending on the weather.

Native Flora

There are differences between British and German native plants, for example southern Germany extends to part of the Alps, from where quite a few of our garden plants originate. German gardeners would have had much easier access to these areas rich in plants than British gardeners, and consequently many were strongly inspired by seeing plants growing in their natural environment. Being insular has also meant that travel was maybe not as accessible to British gardeners as it would have been on the continent, where access to a neighbouring country is easily gained.

⁴ *Parnassus Hortensis*, 1714, p.99

⁵ Ruempler, Th.: *Die Stauden*, 1889, pp.2, 3

Aspect and Soil

These two factors probably are the main reason why every garden is different. There is the obvious consideration of orientation, which not only determines the amount of sunlight or shade an area enjoys, but also has its influence during the frosty winter mornings. Exposure plays a vital role too. If a garden is fully enclosed by a dense hedge or wall, it will create sheltered microclimates. Partial enclosure to give protection from cold northerly or easterly winds will also help. The lie of the land may be the cause of frost pockets and shady corners and will play an important role in restricting the development of plant growth and flowering during spring and autumn.

Although soils can be greatly improved with the addition of organic material and fertilisers, the acidity or pH level, soil type, structure and drainage play important roles in healthy plant development.

The Effects of Time and the Problem of Wandering Plant Material

People tend to think about the age or longevity of trees in terms of hundreds of years. They are a long term element in our environment. The life-span of shrubs tends to be thought of in terms of decades. The woody elements in gardens are very static, becoming taller and broader as time goes on, each species at its own particular growth-rate. Once trees and shrubs have been planted they normally will remain in that same position for the duration of their life, forming part of the structure of the garden.

Herbaceous plants, whether annual, tender or hardy perennial, have to be thought of in terms of months or years. Some hardy perennials, if growing in the right circumstances, can carry on for decades, even long after a garden has been abandoned. However, not all perennials are that long-lived, especially when the growing conditions are not quite right. Annuals or tender perennials will vanish at the end of the season when killed by frost, or when they have set their seeds. There is a chance that the plant self-seeds, but maybe in a different position, and the seedlings may not be true to type.

Chapter 1: Preface

There is not only the problem of longevity which must be considered. The nature of the root system of some perennials means that they do not always stay in the place where they were originally planted. Clump-forming perennials will just form larger and larger clumps, but some plants have for example a mat-forming root system, which means they can 'wander'. The patch can become larger and larger, or the plant can also migrate if it finds a more suitable growing environment.

For these reasons, even when faced with a garden which has only been abandoned for a few years, what looks like a relatively well stocked but weedy herbaceous border may have quite a different planting arrangement from what it was intended to have. This information alone cannot be relied upon when trying to reconstruct an image of what the border may have looked like in its heyday.

For these same reasons most gardeners tend to regularly re-arrange a display of herbaceous perennials. Some plants will have out-grown their positions, others will have become too weak. Then there are also the design failures, like colours which do not match, or a bad gap in the flower display at a particular time of year, not to mention having to find a home for the latest plant acquisitions.

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Aim of the Study

The development of herbaceous planting is a large subject, on which one could easily spend a lifetime researching all the different aspects which have played a part in it. This thesis is an overview of main trends and developments which have affected the use of hardy herbaceous perennials in British and German gardens. The aim has been to provide an insight into how hardy herbaceous perennials were used in gardens of the nineteenth century, and how some of the design and planting ideas which we are familiar with today have come about. Furthermore, similarities and differentiating features between the German and English use of herbaceous perennials have been singled out.

Due to the magnitude of the subject it was not considered feasible to take an in-depth look at how the political, economic, social and artistic trends of both British and German society have influenced gardens. The relevance of plant introductions and development of nursery trade on planting design is briefly discussed, but this in itself is a subject which would provide sufficient material for a separate thesis. Most of the research material consisted of published texts, which would have been available to anyone who could read and who could afford it, whether they lived in England, Scotland or Wales. German literature was also widely available. Regional variations would have occurred, especially at a lower social level, but were not properly documented.

Although temptation was great to get entangled in the picturesque debate, it is only briefly discussed. Much of the dialogue referred to wider landscape issues, rather than detailed gardening matters with which this thesis deals.

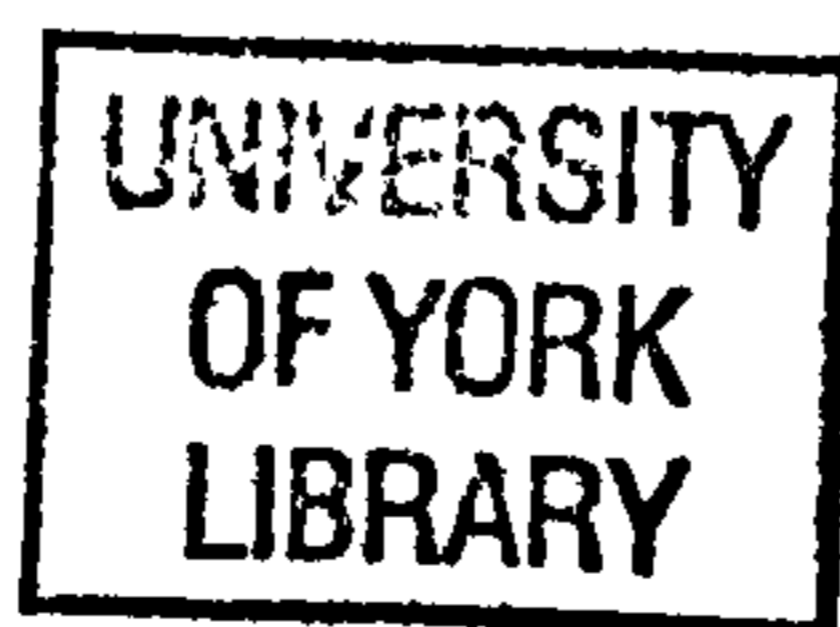
The subject of Victorian gardening has been studied before, but mainly with the intention of providing an overall picture of nineteenth century gardening. The

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fashionable geometric flower gardens of the period with their colourful and exotic bedding displays have received much more attention and have been subject of several restoration projects in recent years. The Victorian display based on contemporary designs was reinstated a few years ago at Waddesdon, and Charles Barry's parterre at Harewood House has recently been recreated. In Germany several important nineteenth century gardens have been faithfully restored, but floral contributions have been restricted to bedding-out plants. No effort has been made to re-introduce some of the perennial planting displays which would have been present in the majority of the gardens. Even though hardy perennials were evident in most gardens throughout the nineteenth century, their specific role has received little attention up until now.

Most studies of herbaceous planting design which have been carried out until now, have focused on pre-nineteenth century history or have been restricted to schemes and styles dating from the early twentieth century. These provide much information relevant to the seventeenth, eighteenth or twentieth century, but do not offer details on planting styles from the nineteenth century. The work of Gertrude Jekyll and Sir Edwin Lutyens has received most attention, though designers such as Lanning Roper and Russell Page have also been subject of publications. As for specific gardens, Sissinghurst and Hidcote are two of the early twentieth century gardens in this country which have received much attention.

A comparative analysis of how perennials were regarded and applied in British and German gardens has, as yet, never been undertaken. Nineteenth century German gardeners like Petzold and Fuerst Pueckler were strongly influenced by the English landscape gardens. This unprecedented study looks at the links which existed between the two countries and how they influenced each other.



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The Countries Selected for the Study

Germany was strongly influenced by British garden design during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and many parallel ideas have been discovered. However a division occurred at the turn of the century, which has resulted in Germany developing a totally different approach to gardening with herbaceous perennials. The questions *why* and *how* these differences occurred and what we can learn from them were the reason for choosing Britain and Germany as study subjects for this thesis.

The Chosen Research Period

The main reason for choosing the nineteenth century is that, from a gardening point of view, it was the period during which flower gardening really came into its own right, after having been neglected in favour of the landscape movement during the previous century. It is not that flower gardening had been abolished during that period, but it simply did not receive the attention it enjoyed during the Victorian era, and was also less well documented. The examples of the late eighteenth century flower gardens at Nuneham Courtenay and Hartwell are an exception to this, but as yet there is no definite proof as to how common these gardens were.

The nineteenth century was a period of development and expansion in many fields. Numerous plant collecting expeditions and increasing efforts by nurserymen to produce new plant varieties resulted in an ever-expanding choice of plants. The development of technology also affected gardens, offering improved growing facilities.

It has been possible to distinguish a pattern of evolution in the use of perennials during the nineteenth century, which culminated in the development of the magnificent herbaceous borders of the beginning of the twentieth century, and which are still familiar to us today. The work of such eminent twentieth century gardeners and designers like Norah Lindsay, Vita Sackville-West, Margery Fish, Graham Stuart

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Thomas, Mrs Desmond Underwood, Francis Perry, Lanning Roper and Alan Bloom must not be underestimated in the role they have played in the development of twentieth century herbaceous gardening. Some of the Germans who left their mark were Willy Lange, the 'Bornimer Kreis' (the Bornim Circle, consisting of the design partnership of Hermann Mattern, Herta Hammerbacher and Karl Foerster), Friedrich Wilhelm Wiepking, Gustav Allinger and Richard Hansen.

Research Material

The research covers a very broad spectrum, encompassing many aspects of herbaceous gardening. Although not every possible source of material has been consulted, the different types of information available have been explored, some proving to be more successful than others. No doubt more documentation will come to light as time goes on.

A large proportion of the research for this work has been based on secondary source material, predominantly nineteenth century gardening books, magazines and nursery catalogues. It is for the first time that a critical study of this material has been carried out, looking specifically for indications of herbaceous plant-use, and for evidence of interaction between both countries. It is also the first time that much of the German research material in particular, has been made available to the British public.

The Lindley Library in London was the best source for nineteenth century horticultural literature, covering both Britain and to some extent Germany. Some material was also obtained from the Bodleian library. The library of Wageningen University in the Netherlands proved very resourceful as it holds an extensive collection of European literature. In Germany the Technische Universitaet of Berlin and to a lesser extent the library at Weihenstephan as well as Foerster's private library in Potsdam offered many more answers.

The Absence of Primary Source Material

As perennials were never in the public limelight during most of the nineteenth century, they rarely featured in illustrations, and were not prominently displayed on plans. Their appearance was, in many instances, rather circumstantial.

Nineteenth century garden plans usually show the general layout of the garden, the positioning of terraces, paths, flower beds, shrubberies and trees. However, detailed planting of the bedding schemes, and even more so the planting of the herbaceous beds or borders, was normally left in the care of gardeners, who were highly skilled staff. Due to their intimate knowledge of the site and its problems, they were in the best position to know which plants would thrive and furthermore were familiar with the taste of their employers. As a result, plans with layout proposals for flower gardens exist, but none were found to give sufficient detail on the actual plants, and ways of planting. Only one exception is known, the collection of plans for the flower garden beds at Hartwell, held at the Bodleian Library. Detailed planting plans did not become common until the end of the nineteenth century when Gertrude Jekyll, who only visited a few of the sites she designed, carried out a design service by correspondence. This forced her to draw up planting plans which can still be referred to today.

A letter to all the County Record Offices in England, asking if they knew of the existence of any planting plans or detailed garden views showing evidence of herbaceous planting schemes, provided nothing, nor did an appeal to *Country Life* readers. As data becomes more accessible and such information is catalogued on computer, it may be worthwhile carrying out another search in the future. More information may come to light, though the chances of finding anything like the valuable collection of plans for Hartwell are remote.

Contemporary paintings and drawings, which were rather rare until the latter part of the nineteenth century, cannot necessarily be relied upon as sound evidence. It is

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difficult to tell to which extent the artist may have used his or her imagination to improve the picture, or indicated something which was maybe planned but not yet installed.

Fieldwork

Gardens are living objects which continue to evolve even when one tries to capture them at one period in time. Due to the very nature of herbaceous perennials, gardens will never look the same two years running. The further back in history one reaches, the more likely are the chances that gardens would have changed considerably. Nonetheless quite a number of gardens, known for their displays of perennials or for their Victorian design, have been visited. However none of the gardens visited give an entirely accurate picture of nineteenth century herbaceous planting schemes. The disappearance of old cultivars, now replaced by modern ones is just one of the basic, practical problems. Financial restraints imposed on most garden managers may partly be to blame, but doubtlessly it is also due to a lack in understanding of nineteenth century herbaceous planting design.

The oldest known surviving borders in the country are at Arley Hall. These date from the middle of the nineteenth century. Their basic layout has remained unchanged, but no evidence has survived which can tell us how they were planted originally. (For more details on Arley, see the case study in chapter 7.1.) The parterre and Elysian garden at Audley End House are interesting recreations of late eighteenth and nineteenth century flower gardens where perennials were featured prominently, but in quite distinctive ways. Gardens like Blickling and Castle Drummond had elaborate flower gardens, with intricate patterns of flower beds. Both gardens have been much simplified to keep up with fashions and the reduction in workforce. The borders at Packwood House are described as typical examples of nineteenth century planting. However, their dense planting makes this claim debatable, as is discussed in chapter

3.4. Nonetheless these and the borders in the walled flower garden at Calke Abbey probably give the most accurate impression of a nineteenth century mingled scheme.

A few gardens have been undergoing careful restoration with the aim of returning them to their nineteenth century glory. At Biddulph Grange the Dahlia Walk evolved in the course of James Bateman's occupancy, from a double dahlia border, to a double herbaceous border. The National Trust is considering mimicking this evolution, though as yet Biddulph has no herbaceous borders. The Plantation Garden in Norwich is undergoing restoration, but for the replanting of the flower beds they can only rely on one or two early photographs, which show mainly bedding plants.

Even the gardens of William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll have undergone changes. At Munstead Wood Jekyll's famous herbaceous border has been replanted but only bear her colour theories in mind. Although generally her ideas for the garden are being respected, a single-handed gardener can only do so much. At Gravetye the layout for the West Garden has been strongly simplified. The main paths are still there, but all the beds in which Robinson used to grow roses accompanied with flowers have gone. (For more details on Gravetye, see the case study in chapter 7.2.)

Similar problems have been encountered in German gardens. Most of those visited have been carefully restored, though restoration seems to have been mainly concentrated on structural elements. Buildings, paths, beds as well as the structural planting of trees and shrubs are usually meticulously reinstated. Beds are filled with bedding plants, but no evidence of any planting of perennials was found. At Branitz, and at Bad Muskau, Fuerst Pueckler had a number of beds planted permanently with perennials which have sadly enough not been included in the gardens today. Illustrations of Schloss Charlottenburg have also shown that flowers were planted for example near the entrance to the Mausoleum, which today is entirely surrounded by evergreen shrubs. The nineteenth century parks such as the Pfaueninsel and Kleine Glienicke, which contribute to the Havel landscape around Berlin and Potsdam, would

have had informal flower borders in front of the shrubberies, or flower beds in the pleasure ground planted with perennials. They were supposed to create a visual link from the flowering shrubs down to grass level.

Germany's leading nurseryman and author Karl Foerster (1874-1970) changed his Sunken Garden in Bornim near Potsdam three times in the course of his life. Although the lay-out has remained unchanged since his death, the planting has evolved. Trees and shrubs have matured, making the re-instatement of the pergola difficult and give different shade/sun patterns which cause growing conditions Foerster would not have known. Therefore planting has had to be adapted to the new conditions. (For more details on the Foerster Garden, see the case study in Chapter 7.3.)

The Leading Figures of the English Flower Garden: William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll

William Robinson (1838-1935) was regarded as the father of the English flower garden. Although he had started his career as a gardener he made his fame by writing, expressing his pronounced ideas against nineteenth century formal gardens and bedding displays. He promoted the use of perennials and planting in naturalistic ways, and launched the idea of the wild garden. His own garden at Gravetye was used to experiment and put into practice some of his ideas.

Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) had started her career as an artist, painting and making embroidery. As her eyesight failed she took up gardening. She too made use of the published word to spread her gospel, though she was not as strongly opinionated as Robinson, with whom she had started her career as a garden writer. She became a very successful garden designer, often working in close partnership with the architect Sir Edwin Lutyens. Her planting plans and books and the contemporary photographs of the gardens she designed, combined with the appeal which many of these gardens have, help to explain why Miss Jekyll has become such a familiar name today. However,

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William Robinson's, and especially Gertrude Jekyll's overall work have been extensively researched and documented and will therefore not be analysed in great detail. Instead it is the background to their careers and their influence on others which will be considered, and in Jekyll's case, a study of her work on herbaceous borders has been included.

Other Research in the Field and Recent Publications

Even though herbaceous perennials have enjoyed a rise in popularity during the last decade, and much attention has been focused on the work of early twentieth century gardeners, no proper research has been published on the subject of herbaceous perennial planting schemes during the main development period: the nineteenth century. Existing research on historical planting design either focuses on the period preceding the nineteenth century, and covers herbaceous planting only to a limited extent, as in the work of Mark Laird¹, or it post-dates the nineteenth century and concentrates mostly on the work of Gertrude Jekyll and her contemporaries. Although Brent Elliott's book *Victorian Gardens* can undoubtedly be regarded as the standard reference work on nineteenth century gardening, it does not cover the subject of herbaceous planting in great depth.

Following on from his M.A. dissertation at York looking at the planting of shrubberies, he has since also analysed some early herbaceous planting schemes.

Laird, Mark: "An Approach to the Conservation of Ornamental Planting in English Gardens, 1720-1830, with Special Reference to the use of Ornamental Shrubs", 1984, IoAAS, University of York; Laird, Mark: *The Formal Garden: Traditions of Art and Nature*, 1992, London, Thames and Hudson; Laird, Mark: "Our Equally Favourite Hobby Horse: the Flower Gardens of Lady Elizabeth Lee at Hartwell and the second Earl Harcourt at Nuneham Courtenay", *Garden History*, Vol. 18, no. 2, 1990, pp. 103-54; Laird, Mark, & Harvey, John: "'A Cloth of Tissue of Divers Colours': The English Flower Border, 1660-1735", *Garden History*, Vol. 21, no. 2, 1993, pp. 158-205; Laird, Mark: "Ornamental Planting and Horticulture in English Pleasure Grounds, 1700-1830", *Garden History Issues, Approaches, Methods*, 1992, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington D.C., John Dixon Hunt Editor

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The following reference works discuss the lives and work of William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll:

- Allan, Mea, *William Robinson. 1838-1935. Father of the English Flower Garden*, 1982, Faber & Faber, London
- Bisgrove, Richard, *The Gardens of Gertrude Jekyll*, 1992, London, Frances Lincoln
- Festing, Sally, *Gertrude Jekyll*, 1991, London, Viking
- Massingham, Betty, *Gertrude Jekyll*, 1992, Risborough, Shire Publications, Lifelines 37
- Gunn, Fenja, *The Lost Gardens of Gertrude Jekyll*, 1991, Charles Letts & Co.
- Tooley, M. J. and Arnander, P., editors, *Gertrude Jekyll: Essays on the Life of a Working Amateur*, 1995, Michaelmas Books

The omission of herbaceous planting in Germany's meticulously restored nineteenth century gardens is equally due to a lack of understanding of the subject. To an extent it has been covered by Hermann Mosbauer who wrote a dissertation on the use of perennials during the nineteenth century in relation to garden design. Martina Nath's study on the vegetation of five specific eighteenth and early nineteenth century landscape gardens consists of an in-depth study of the indigenous and exotic plants and their ecological development as opposed to the cultivated plants which would have been included.²

Karl Foerster's work has been the subject of a number of studies and publications, though none have been translated or made available in this country. His wife, Eva Foerster wrote a biography together with Gerhard Rostin entitled *Ein Garten der*

² Mosbauer, Herman: "Die Staudenverwendung im Deutschen Garten des 19. Jahrhunderts unter beruecksichtigung der Gartengestaltung", 1972, Fakultae fuer Landwirtschaft und Gartenbau der Technischen Universitaet Muenchen; Nath, Martina: *Historische Pflanzenverwendung in Landschaftsgaerten*, 1990, Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, Worms

Erinnerung: Sieben Kapitel von und ueber Karl Foerster (1982). To accompany an exhibition on Karl Foerster's work in 1985, Grit Hottentraeger and H. Schumacher produced the following documentation for the Karl Foerster Stiftung, although it was not published as a catalogue: *Dokumentation der Ausstellung: Vom Bluetengarten der Zukunft, Eine Hommage an Karl Foerster*.

No historic comparative studies have ever been undertaken. In Sweden, Eva Gustavsson currently is studying different approaches to planting design with perennials in different countries, but is concentrating on contemporary as opposed to historic planting design.

Presentation of the Subject

One of the main aims of this work has been to offer a document which may be of interest to people working in the field of garden restoration. With this in mind the subject has been broken down into three main sections, so each can be consulted on an individual basis. The first two main parts analyse British (chapter 3) and German (chapter 4) development of herbaceous plant use up to the end of the nineteenth century, after brief introductory chapters on the development of herbaceous plant use up to the nineteenth century. These sections are broken down to cover different aspects of garden design. They discuss the types of flower garden which could be encountered, principal design elements relevant to the use of perennials and the different ways of planting perennials, using contemporary examples.

The third section brings together the two countries, highlighting their interaction with regard to herbaceous plants, and discusses their relationship with other countries. Chapter 5 acts as a joint final chapter embracing German and British development, consisting of a comparative analysis of plant-availability mainly based on German and British nursery catalogues. Furthermore, six extensive lists of herbaceous plants compiled by eminent German and English garden writers of their period, have been

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included in the appendices and have been analysed in Chapter 5. They were chosen to represent the early, middle and latter parts of the nineteenth century. The nursery catalogues analysed in chapter 5 on the other hand, mainly cover the latter part of the nineteenth century. Chapter 6 unites the two countries and brings the subject into the twentieth century. The development of herbaceous planting design of the nineteenth century came to a peak in Britain with the work of Robinson and Jekyll, and in Germany it was Karl Foerster who a little later became active in re-shaping the look of German planting ideas. The chapter discusses the background to Jekyll's and Robinson's work, and looks at Jekyll's contributions to herbaceous planting design, and analyses in greater detail the life and work of Karl Foerster.

The research is concluded with chapter 7, which consists of three case studies. Arley Hall in Cheshire was chosen because it is the oldest known surviving border in the country. Gravetye in Sussex was selected because it was the garden of William Robinson. Representing Germany is Karl Foerster's garden in Bornim-Potsdam.

Besides contemporary plant lists, the appendices also cover biographical notes on Gertrude Jekyll and Karl Foerster. Appendix 15 lists common plant names with their Latin names referred to in the main text.

Acknowledgements

Research is a case of pulling together hundreds of strands of information which are gathered by consulting a vast network of people and their work. Much of the information used for the purpose of this research has had to come from people long dead, but this is an invaluable opportunity to remember them. My first thanks must go to Karl Foerster as without the legacy of his work I would have never embarked on this project.

There are the many authors to whom we should be thankful for leaving us the inheritance of their knowledge and experience. The prolific work of John Claudius Loudon and Hermann Jaeger for example proved an invaluable source of information. Authors like Maria Elizabeth Jackson and Mary Russell Mitford were a delight to read. The heated exchanges between Reginald Blomfield and William Robinson caused great amusement. It has also been an honour to learn from the great expertise of great gardeners from the past such as Donald Beaton.

Christopher Wood generously allowed me to view his collection of pictures of garden paintings, enabling me to borrow some of his negatives. Beatrice Parsons' painting of a border by the sea was so enchanting it had to feature as an introductory illustration (see illustration 1). The Bridgeman Art Library was a great source of pictorial information.

Many people have helped and offered their support in the course of my work. Charles Foster at Arley Hall was most generous in allowing me to consult the estate archives answered many questions and came to the rescue with a vital illustration. Paul Cooke, the head gardener, provided more details. Peter Clarke gave time and information on English Heritage's work at Audley End. At Gravetye Manor, Peter Herbert allowed me to visit the garden, and patiently answered queries. Nicole Milette let me use her photographs and additional archival material.

There are several people whom I would like to thank for giving up their time to talk to me and offer information. Jelena de Belder was my first port of call, and as always came up with an endless list of contacts and suggestions. Tony Lord provided several follow-up leads, and kindly offered a copy of the transcript of his interview with Graham Stuart Thomas. Sophieke Piebenga shed light on picturesque mysteries. Vroni Heinrich at the Technische Universitaet in Berlin came to my rescue on several occasions. Peter Herling of the Denkmalamt in Potsdam provided me with much

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information on Karl Foerster's garden. Klaus von Krosigk was an excellent guide and answered many of my questions.

I had some very interesting and enjoyable interviews with various people who met some of the great gardening figures of the past, but who also left their own mark. I would like to thank Graham Stuart Thomas, Alan Bloom, Rob Leopold, Mien Ruys, Richard Hansen, Hermann Goeritz and Ernst Pagels for sharing their experience and knowledge.

I am most indebted to Brent Elliott for taking over supervision of my thesis and giving his patient guidance and invaluable time. His encyclopedic knowledge of the Lindley Library's contents is phenomenal. Michael Stratton's comments and suggestions were essential. Thank you for your support and encouragement. Although only involved at an earlier stage, Peter Goodchild offered much advice and helped me to develop this subject. I have also greatly appreciated the use of his fine private library.

The ladies at the Lindley Library deserve a warm thank-you for their calm, kind and patient help. No task appeared too big, however large the pile of books involved. Keith Parker and Jan at the King's Manor Library have both offered excellent support and advice. I was most grateful for the use of the libraries at Weihenstephan and Wageningen. Carla Oldenburgen-Ebbers and her assistant enabled me to gather much information. I am also indebted to the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin for allowing me to consult the Karl Foerster archives, held in Bornim, even though cataloguing had not yet been completed.

Without all the help I received on the home front, the months of perusing through libraries and archives would never have come fruition. I am very grateful to Marianne Foerster who welcomed me as a total stranger into her house, offering me a 'German home' every visit. The hours spent working in her father's work room and library were very inspiring as were the hours spent talking. I had a diligent support group in

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Coleshill who helped me through the good and the bad days. My parents and sister not only offered moral support but were all put to task proofreading, checking nomenclature, re-typing and dealing with computer gremlins. A special thanks also to Susie Eagle and Pauline Brown for their help with corrections, plant lists and illustrations.

Finally I would like to thank Gabriella, as without her help, support and patience I would never have finished it.

CHAPTER 3.1: A REVIEW OF HERBACEOUS PLANT USE IN BRITAIN UP TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Herbaceous plants have been cultivated by mankind for thousands of years. Originally the useful plants were grown as food crops and herbs, but as time went on more and more plants were cultivated purely for their aesthetic appeal. Evidence of what was grown is limited principally to what has been revealed in the course of archaeological investigations. The first series of noteworthy introductions probably stems from Roman times, although signs of earlier introductions have been found in excavations of sites dating from the Iron Age and before. The importance of Roman plant introductions can be found in Anglo-Saxon and Old German plant names which stem from Latin, in which there were names for several trees, fruit trees, vegetables, roses, lilies and violets. According to John Harvey, it would appear that Romans had little or no direct influence on the actual appearance of our gardens. Excavations of the Roman garden at Fishbourne have revealed that the garden was surrounded by box hedges, something which was not generally applied in British gardens until the reign of Henry VIII, when they were introduced from Italy.¹

3.1.1. Middle Ages

The evidence of garden activity which we can consult for reference today started to increase during the Middle Ages. Contemporary illustrations allow us to build up images, enhanced by some more details gleaned from manuscripts, although evidence remains sketchy. We have to wait until the sixteenth century before garden books started to be produced in considerable numbers.²

¹ Harvey, John: *Medieval Gardens* 1981, pp. 22-3

² Hoyles, Martin: *Gardeners Delight* 1994, pp. 1, 7

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The fourteenth century was a period of development during which exotic plant species were introduced into the garden scene for their ornamental value, and gardens of botanical significance were created.³

Medieval herb gardens were attached to monasteries, castles and houses, and would usually be situated in the vicinity of a building, within its protective walls. This was especially the case in castles likely to be besieged, as the herb garden would provide necessary plants for the kitchen, the medicine cupboard, dyeing and perfuming as well as offering a safe recreation area for the lady of the house.⁴

To create an image of how these early plant collections were displayed, medieval illustrations are probably the best source of information available today. Gardens consisted of spaces enclosed by walls, fences or moats for security and protection. The spaces were divided into a formal pattern of beds, or contained flower meadows. (See illustration 3.)

The gardens remained primarily functional, though C. Estienne and J. Liebault in *L'Agriculture et la Maison Rustique* of 1572, divided the Garden of Pleasure into two: one part was dedicated to growing flowers for making garlands and nosegays, called the 'nosegaie garden'. The other part, which although functional could still be visually pleasing, contained sweet smelling herbs not necessarily grown for their flowers but primarily for their aromatic foliage.⁵

As the Middle Ages progressed, wealthy garden owners were more inclined to segregate the different types of gardening. Herbs, fruit and flowers were separated,

³ John Harvey: *Medieval Gardens* 1981, p. 94

⁴ Frank Crisp: *Medieval Gardens* edited by Catherine Childs Paterson, 1966, p. 21

⁵ Frank Crisp: *Medieval Gardens* edited by Catherine Childs Paterson, 1966, p. 22

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ILLUSTRATION 3: MEDIEVAL GARDEN



(Original in colour)

Medieval illustration of a garden (C. 1410-20) showing a raised bed in the background with perennials such as irises and hollyhocks as well as roses. In the foreground a flowery mead with lilies, peonies, lily of the valley, alpine strawberries and primulas.

(Harvey, John: *Mediaeval Gardens*, 1981, plateV)

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often leaving the vegetable gardens way behind. The lower classes retained the mixture of food and ornamental plants in the same patch, which probably meant they looked after it better.⁶

Flowers were often grown in grass. Early medieval gardens would have wild flowers, but as exotics became more popular, they were introduced into flowery meads. These could be compared to the flower meadows and even the naturalistic planting schemes which have been developed on the continent in recent years: they were rich meadows or clover lawns into which native or exotic flowers were sown.

Sometimes flowers were planted in raised beds, though most of the time they were grown in long grass. The soil in the higher beds, raised between 0.50 metres to 0.60 metres⁷, was usually retained with brick. Lower ones, 0.30 metres tall, were supported with horizontal wooden boards with stakes, even lower ones received a simple edge of stone or wood.⁸ (See illustration 56 for an example of a garden with raised beds.)

Early medieval beds were said to be raised to facilitate the picking of flowers, rather than for ornamental or cultural purposes. Some created a special feature, and were made of wood or brick, turfed with flowers growing out of the grass; others had flowers growing directly in soil. These resembled today's raised beds (originally oblong shaped, but after the fifteenth century also square, circular or curved).⁹

⁶ Teresa McLean: *Medieval English Gardens* 1989, p.198

⁷ This was done for drainage purposes, as described by William Lawson in *The Country Housewife's Garden* 1626, p.8

⁸ Teresa McLean: *Medieval English Gardens* 1981, p.160

⁹ Frank Crisp: *Medieval Gardens* edited by Catherine Childs Paterson, 1966, p. 54

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The sparse spacing of plants was a distinctive feature of medieval gardens, a practice continued through the seventeenth century. The novelty and comparative rarity of some plants are a possible explanation why they were spaced so far apart, allowing the observer to enjoy the specimens from all sides, rather than seeing the effect of a whole group of plants massed together as is usually seen today.

Plants

Information on plants used in flower gardens of the Middle Ages is sparse. Manuscripts did not always refer to plants by specific name, and if so, common names were used¹⁰, which do not always relate to today's nomenclature, and illustrated plants are sometimes hard to identify accurately.

One of the most important treatises of the Middle Ages was Petrus de Crescentiis' work *Opus Ruralium Commodorum*, written at the end of the thirteenth century. It talked about planting in small herb gardens, "all kinds of flowers, such as violet, lily, rose, gladiolus and the like", as well as medicinal and aromatic herbs chosen for both scent and variety of flower.

Judging by the way the planting of herbs and flowers was intertwined, it would appear that the useful was mixed with the pleasurable, although separate kitchen gardens were used for growing plants, including herbs used for culinary purposes. Tall plants such as fennel could be grown along the outskirts of the garden, against the walls, lower growing ones like strawberries, saffron and onions, in the middle beds.

¹⁰ It is hard to identify some of the common names used in the past, as regional variants and changing names over the centuries have caused confusion and can account for errors in the nomenclature of plants.

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Their appearance was considered as well as their usefulness.¹¹ A vital tool in daily life, plants were used for medicine, dyeing, cooking, scent and decoration. Some, like the lily, were valued for their symbolic importance. Compared to the vast plant range we can rely on today, the selection available in the middle ages was very limited.

Monks played an important role in the distribution of plants throughout Europe, and the dispersal of information on their cultivation and use. They were amongst the privileged few able to read and write treatises. They travelled and had contacts with monasteries in different countries. In many instances they were physicians who would dispense prescriptions to neighbouring people.¹²

3.1.2. The Seventeenth Century

The concept of keeping the ornamental garden separated from the vegetable garden was probably maintained over the centuries¹³. Even today the custom of keeping the fruit and vegetable areas separate is maintained, unless space the limitations in many of today's gardens prevent this, and encourage gardeners to mix the ornamental with the useful.

¹¹ Frank Crisp: *Medieval Gardens* edited by Catherine Childs Paterson, 1966, p. 15

¹² Frank Crisp: *Medieval Gardens* edited by Catherine Childs Paterson, 1966, p. 21

¹³ Evidence found at the Fishbourne Roman villa shows there probably was a separate vegetable garden. It is not clear whether the English took on this custom, or whether it was re-introduced at a later stage. By Tudor times it was well established.
Jellicoe, Goode and Lancaster: *The Oxford Companion to Gardens* 1991, p.314

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In 1626 William Lawson described two distinctive garden types: the garden for flowers which was of a "perfect, and exquisite form to the eyes", and the garden where "your herbs for the pot do grow", or the kitchen garden. Plants were grown in beds, which were divided into smaller lots to provide easier access for weeding.

Unlike those in the flower garden, kitchen garden beds did not have to be raised. Beds were normally raised to improve drainage, but as the kitchen garden contained mainly summer-grown crops, most of which actually prefer a moist soil, many of the beds were empty during the wetter winter months. ¹⁴

In Elizabethan times the distinction between gardens for pleasure and gardens for utility grew, as pleasure gardens became more fashionable.¹⁵

John Rea (d.1677)

As printing developed, books became more available and details of gardens in literature became more frequent. One of the more useful descriptions on how to lay out the flower garden can be found in John Rea's book *Flora, Seu de Florum Cultura* of 1676.

It was a very comprehensive work, giving great detail on how to make a garden, and was divided into three parts. The first, dedicated to Flora the flower goddess, described how to make, plant and preserve fruit and flower gardens, which contained flowers, plants and fruits hardy for the British climate. The second part, dedicated to Ceres, the

¹⁴ William Lawson: *Country Housewife's Garden* 1626, p. 8

¹⁵ Frank Crisp: *Medieval Gardens* edited by Catherine Childs Paterson, 1966, p. 45

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goddess of seed and tillage, described cropping and how to sow and care for the plants. The third part, Pomona, was about the cultivation of fruits.

According to John Rea, the flower garden should be situated south of the house on a level piece of land not too far away, encompassed by walls.¹⁶ The size of the enclosures related to the owner's position in society: thus a nobleman's flower garden could be approximately thirty square yards, while a gentleman's garden had only to be about twenty square yards in size. In either case, the overall garden constituted a formal enclosed space, as can often be seen on Kip and Kniff engravings of that period.¹⁷

John Rea's description of a walled flower garden was very detailed, and although he did not include illustrations in his work, his descriptions were so precise that it is possible to draw up a plan on the basis of them. (See illustration 4.)

The flower garden walls were furnished on the south and south-east sides with peaches and nectarines, planted 12 feet (4 metres) apart. In between each of these was a double-flowered pomegranate and next to the corners grew Indian jasmine and double-flowered clematis.¹⁸

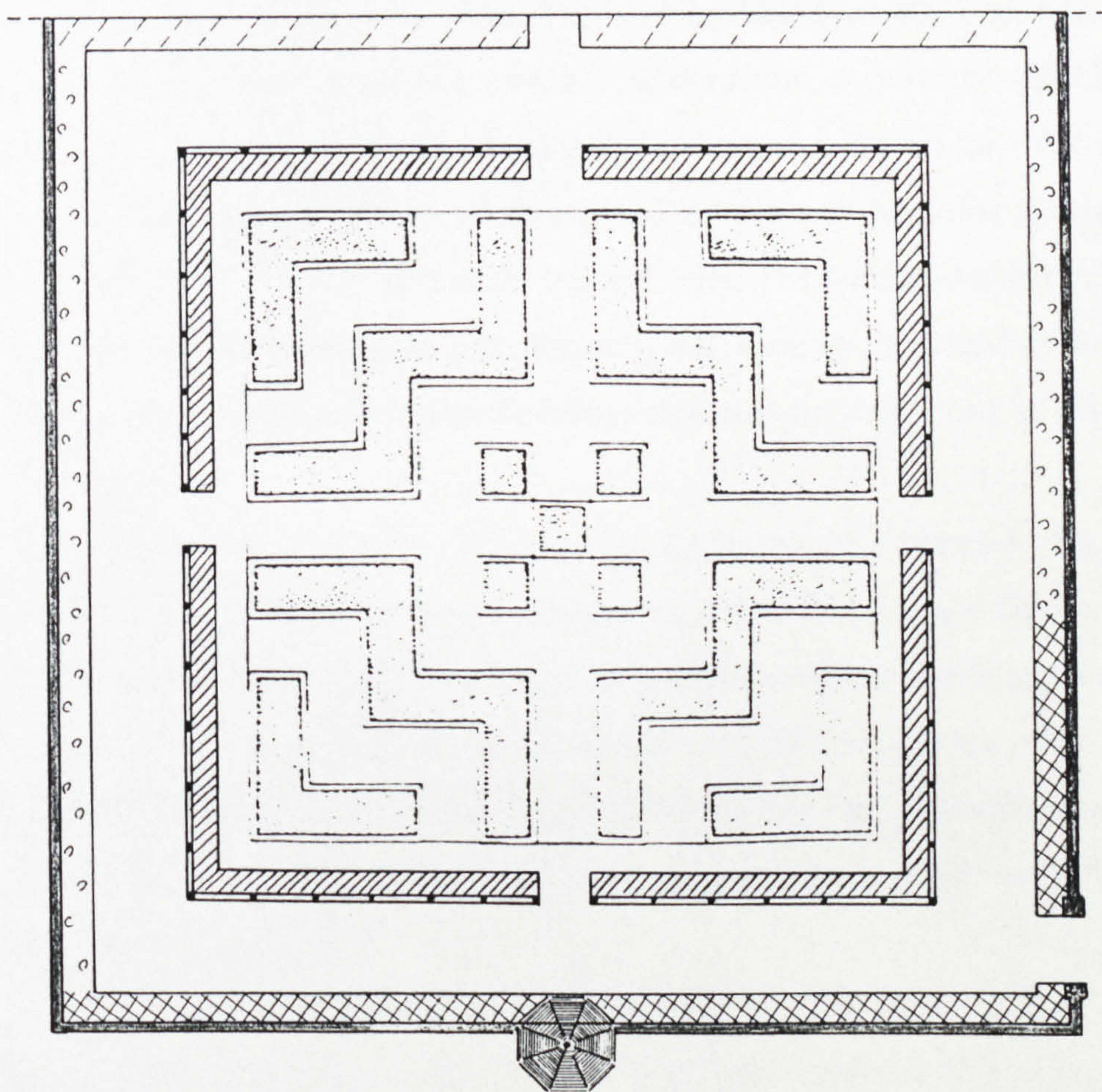
¹⁶ The custom of enclosing a garden space was still practiced in the eighteenth century.

¹⁷ For further details see Peter Goodchild: "John Rea's Garden of Delight: Introduction and the construction of the flower garden" *Garden History* Vol. 9 No. 2, 1981, p.99-109

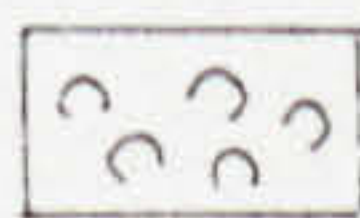
¹⁸ For the latin names, see appendix 15 for list of common names with their Latin counterparts.

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ILLUSTRATION 4: AN INTERPRETATION OF JOHN REA'S DESCRIPTION OF HOW TO LAY OUT AND PLANT A WALLED GARDEN



South and south east walls: peaches and nectarines, twelve feet apart (3.60 metres), with Indian gesmine and double clematis in between the plants that stand next to a corner. A double pomegranate between the others.



East and west walls: plums and cherries.



North walls: pears and quinces. In between every pear a tall standard rose tree.



Lattice with roses.



Plants grown in pots.



A fret with borders.

(Rea, John: *Flora, Ceres & Pomona*, 1676, pp. 8-10, Goodchild, Peter: "John Reas's Garden of Delight", *Garden History*, vol. 9, no. 2, 1981, pp. 99-109)

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On east and west walls plums and cherries were planted. On north walls pears, grafted on quince rootstocks, were alternated with tall standard roses which had different coloured roses grafted onto each plant. The borders along the walls were filled with auriculas, red primroses, hepaticas, double rose champion, double nonsuch, double dames-violet, wall flowers, double stock gillyflowers and many others. The lattice frame had shoots of different roses intertwined in such a fashion that it created a hedge, which had to be kept trim at the top and sides. The borders within the lattice frame had all kinds of plants in pots standing out, such as the best July flowers, auriculas, myrtles and oleanders; these beds were then edged with all sorts of crocuses.

Beds were divided into smaller lots to provide access for weeding. Planting of the beds within the fret¹⁹ had to "answer one another" or reflect the opposite side, creating symmetry. The corners of these beds carried tall flowers such as crown imperials, lilies and martagons. In the middle of the squares great clumps of peonies would grow, surrounded by cyclamens. The remaining beds were filled with daffodils, hyacinths, tulips, fritillaries and bulbed irises, though some required particular beds, like ranunculus and anemones.²⁰

Unlike the nineteenth-century practice of treating herbaceous perennials as bedding out material, lifting them when they had finished flowering, here they were intended to be used as true perennials. When planting it was therefore important to plant perennials first, in a place where they could stay for several years without disturbance.

¹⁹ A fret is a geometrical pattern of flower beds.

²⁰ John Rea: *Flora, Seu de Florum Cultura* 1676, book 1: Flora , pp.8-10

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Plants

Even into the seventeenth century people continued growing plants chiefly for functional purposes, though increasing quantities of ornamental plants were used. William Lawson listed some of the more common of the innumerable garden herbs available, which included the following ones grown for ornament rather than for use:²¹

Daffadowndillies (daffodils), daisies ("They be good to keep up, and strengthen the edges of your borders, as pinks, they be red, white, mixt"), flower-de-luce, hollihock, July-flowers or gilly flowers in nine or ten different colours, July-flowers of the wall or wall-flowers, lavender-spike, white lavender, lillies white and red, marigolds, French poppy.²²

3.1.3. The Eighteenth Century²³

Formality in garden layout continued into the early eighteenth century. Formal parterres were bordered with strips of planting, described in 1731 by Philip Miller in *The Gardener's Dictionary* as borders, which were a form of edging bed around a formal parterre. The word 'border' stems from the French 'bordure', meaning edge and is the ancestor of today's terminology.

The planting in these narrow borders, which were often designed to be viewed from all sides, was well structured. Taller perennials were planted in the middle, lower ones along the edge. They were so displayed "as to appear gradually one above the other",

²¹ See Appendix 15 for list of common and Latin names

²² William Lawson: *The Country Housewife's Garden* facsimile ed. 1927, first ed. 1617, p. 80

²³ See also Mark Laird: *Ornamental Planting and Horticulture in English Pleasure Grounds, 1700-1830* 1992

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creating an ascending layered effect²⁴. The larger the garden, the taller the tall perennials could be, indicating that the planting scale had to be related to its surroundings. The plants had to be mixed so that some would be in flower every month, making sure the colours would be distributed.

Richard Bradley published a sketch explaining how a border four feet (1.20 metres) wide should be planted (see illustration 5):

- Row A: tallest plants mentioned
- Rows BB: middle plants mentioned
- Rows CC: lowest plants mentioned

The plants consisted of equal parts perennials, bulbs and annuals.

The following is a list of perennials, divided into three different heights, which was included in the book. (Latest synonyms given in brackets where possible)

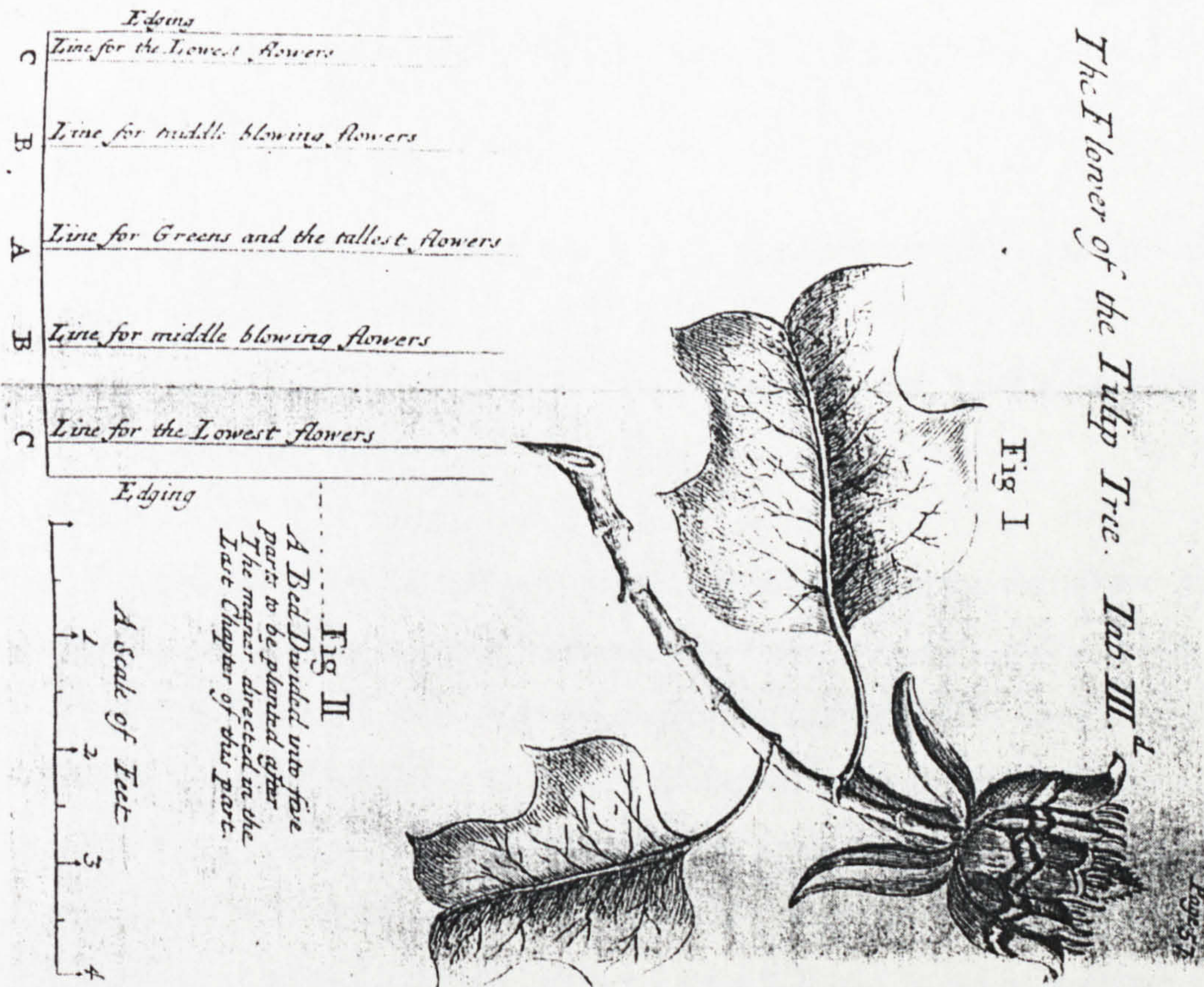
Tallest perennials:

Hollyhocks (mixed colours, single and double flowered) were also recommended for planting in lines in avenues or among flowering shrubs in the wilderness, perennial sunflowers could be planted as a companion to the hollyhocks; twenty varieties of *Aster*; everlasting pea growing near trees or hedges for their support; *Campanula pyramidalis* and Canterbury bells could be grown in 'pots for chimneys' as well as in the middle of large borders; the primrose tree; lilies and *Lilium martagon* cultivars could also be planted near hedges along long walks or in parterres; foxgloves, *Verbascum*, *Acanthus* (rare) and white hellebores.

²⁴ Bradley, Richard: *New Improvements of Planting and Gardening both Philosophical and Practical* part 2 1717, p.63

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ILLUSTRATION 5: EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PLAN SHOWING PLANTING IN ROWS



Richard Bradley illustrated his book with the above plan, showing how a border, which could be viewed from both sides, should be planted. He divided the border into five rows, the outer rows (C) were destined for the lowest flowers, the next rows (B) were for "middle blowing flowers", and the central row (A) was for "greens and the tallest flowers". This linear planting remained popular until the late nineteenth century.

(Bradley, Richard: *New Improvements of Planting and Gardening, Both Philosophical and Practical*, 1717, p. 135)

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Middle sized perennials (less rampant than the taller ones: better for the smaller garden):

Valerian, blue bottle (syn. *Centaurea cyanus*), monkshood, rose campion, double rocket, bachelors' buttons, scarlet lychnis, sweet william, carnations and pinks, wall flowers, stocks, French honeysuckle, *Flos cardinalis* (syn. *Lobelia cardinalis*).

Lowest kinds of perennials (Best for the outside of the border or garden bed, or cultivated in small gardens):

Polyanthus, auricula, black hellebore, christmas rose, gentianelle, hepatica, violet, daisy, thrift.

Formal gardens continued using a mixture of shrubs and flowers. Philip Miller described borders which ranged in width from four feet (1.20 metres) to five or six feet (1.50-1.80 metres) and were slightly raised in the middle, which made them more attractive. They were adorned with flowers, shrubs and yews. Borders were functional as well as ornamental. They provided a way of enclosing parterres and prevented people from walking all over them. Only near the house was it acceptable to discontinue the borders, as the taller shrubs in some instances would have obscured the view of the parterres.

A continuous border was the most common sort. It could be divided into compartments by narrow passages and planted as described above. Alternatively, it could be level with a narrow grass verge, flanked by two sanded paths on either side. The verge could either be totally devoid of planting, or be decorated at regular intervals with some flowering shrubs and yews or vases and flower pots. Another option was to edge parterres with sanded strips which were lined with box on the path side. On this type of border cases with tender orangery plants were ranged, interspersed with yews to give some interest during winter months.

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Borders were not only used as decorative edging to parterres, they were also used by florists to display their flowers. Unlike today where the term "florist" refers to somebody who arranges or sells flowers, florists used to cultivate florists' flowers to the highest standards. According to James Maddock²⁵, eight plants had become particularly popular as florists' flowers by the late eighteenth century. These were auricula, polyanthus, anemone, ranunculus, carnation, pink, hyacinth and tulip.²⁶ Later pansy, picotee and sweet william were added.²⁷

Florists' borders could be alongside walks or detached, and were filled with the choicest plants. They were often enclosed by boards painted green, which "make them look exceedingly neat". Where flowers were used in the larger parterres, the intention was to ensure that no areas looked naked or bare. It is not clear whether with this comment Miller meant that parterres should be in flower at all times, or whether no bare earth should be shown. If it was the latter, it indicated dense planting which does not correspond with illustrations of the period.²⁸ (See illustration 6.)

Even though tulipomania had peaked in the early seventeenth century, tulips were still greatly in demand in the eighteenth century. James Sowerby described in his *Flora Luxurians* of 1789-1791 the Rodney a bybloemen Tulip, raised in the Austrian Netherlands costing £10.10s.

²⁵ Maddock, James: *Florist's Directory* 1792

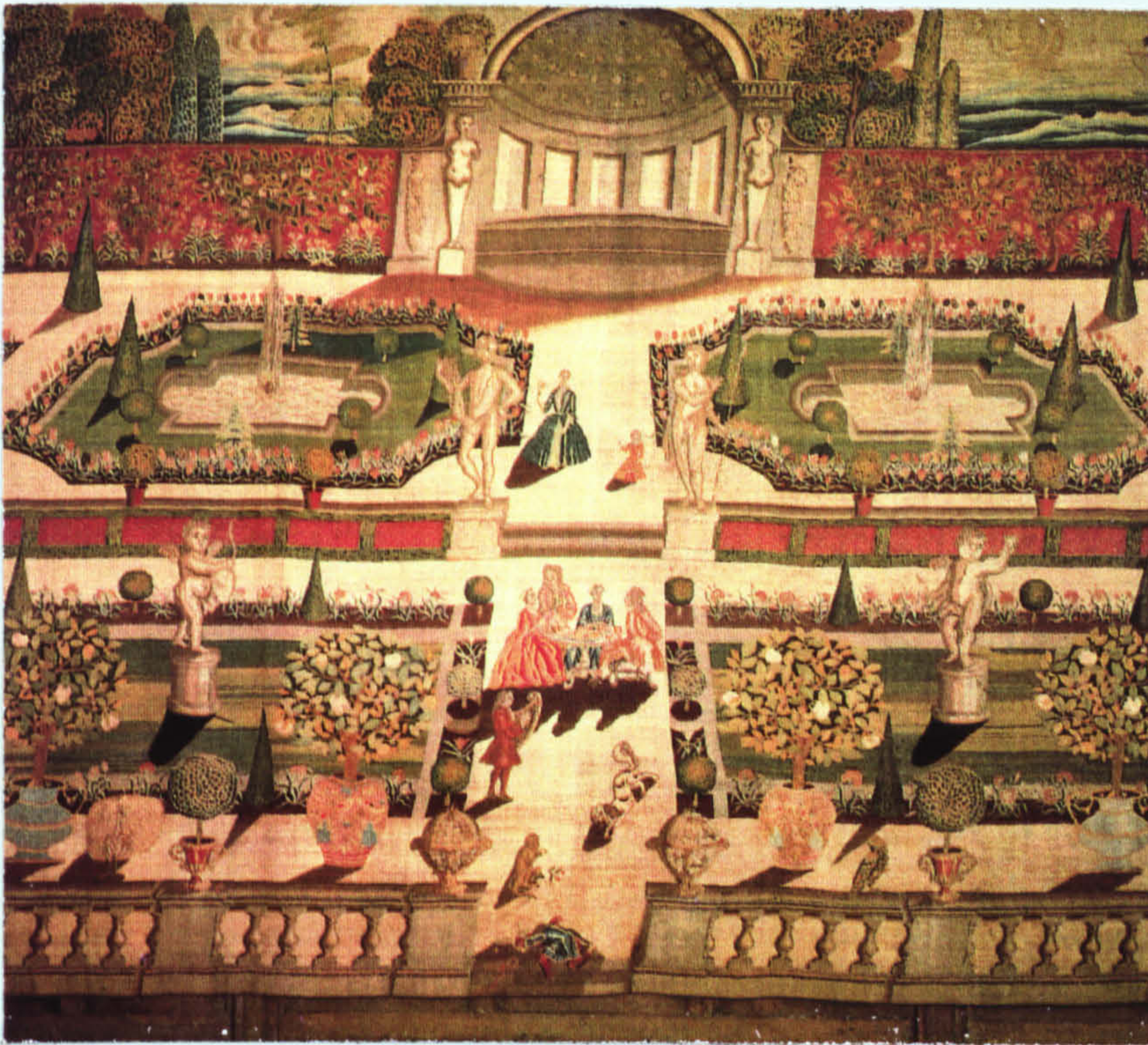
²⁶ Even though tulipomania had peaked in the early seventeenth century, tulips were still greatly in demand in the eighteenth century. James Sowerby described in his *Flora Luxurians* of 1789-1791 the Rodney a bybloemen Tulip, raised in the Austrian Netherlands costing £10.10s.

²⁷ Jellicoe, G.&S., Goode, P. and Lancaster, M.: *The Oxford Companion to Gardens* 1991, p. 189

²⁸ Miller, Philip: *The Gardeners Dictionary* 1731

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ILLUSTRATION 6: EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FORMAL GARDEN



(Original in Colour)

One of the two tapestries of Stoke Edith, showing a formal garden typical for the period, with a geometric garden layout of four quarters. Each quarter was surrounded by a narrow border sparsely planted with seasonal flowers.

(*"The Anglo-Dutch Garden in the Age of William and Mary"*, *Journal of Garden History*, vol. 8, nos. 2 & 3, p. 323)

Plants

Miller included in his *Gardeners Dictionary* of 1731 monthly lists of what was of interest at that time of year. For the months June, July, August and September (the four months in which the largest proportion of herbaceous plants flower) he listed 146 flowers which included annuals, biennials, perennials and bulbs. (See appendix 1 for this list.)

The range appears restricted compared to the herbaceous plants mentioned in Richard Weston's *English Flora* published forty-four years later in 1775. The second chapter, dedicated to herbaceous plants, listed a total of 1560 plants. They included annuals, biennials, perennials and bulbs, and covered everything from garden flowers, fruit and vegetables to native plants. The plants were classified according to the system devised by Linnaeus²⁹, bearing Latin names followed by the common English names³⁰, which was a major development in the world of botanical nomenclature.

The Landscape Movement

The popularity of William Kent (1685-1748), Lancelot "Capability" Brown (1716-1783) and their contemporaries resulted in the overshadowing of flower gardens by grander landscape gardens. Designed to imitate nature perfected, there was little or no space for flower beds. If a flower garden was retained at all, it usually remained in a walled enclosure, quite some distance away from the house, to be incorporated into

²⁹ Carl Linnaeus (1707-78) published *Species Plantarum* in 1753, which set the norm for botanical nomenclature still applied today. His binomial or two-word system for naming species finally sorted out the botanical chaos which had reigned until then. He replaced all existing plant names with a one-word generic name such as *Nasturtium*, followed by a one-word specific epithet such as *indica*.

³⁰ Weston, Richard: *The English Flora* 1775, p. 47

a promenade circuit. Flowers took on a secondary role, being used as under planting of shrubs or trees rather than as star performers of the flower garden.

The Informal Flower Gardens

The change in taste, from the late seventeenth century formal gardens to the informal eighteenth century landscape gardens, was reflected by the end of the century in some flower gardens.

Humphry Repton (1725-1818) often incorporated flower gardens and flower displays in his creations. The later ones particularly, tended to be rather formal in design, consisting of geometric beds filled with herbaceous plants. Other floral additions still reflect the informality of the landscape style. The accompanying illustration 7 shows one of his famous 'before' and 'after' pictures of his own garden, which he had improved with some flower beds with mixed flowers, a few flowering shrubs and climbers. The flower beds resemble those found in nineteenth century German landscape parks such as Kleine Glienicke (See illustration 66). Repton does not appear to have been a dedicated plantsman, giving only an impression of the plants he had in mind in his sketches. However, these at least, give us an idea of the planting style he wanted to achieve.

Although informally positioned, Repton's beds had a simple geometric shape. Other examples of the late eighteenth century indicate that some flower gardens actually had a very irregular lay out, with beds of a very irregular pattern. For more details see chapter 3.2.1.4 and illustrations 13, 14, 15 and 16.

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ILLUSTRATION 7: REPTON'S OWN GARDEN IMPROVEMENTS



(Original in colour)

Repton, famous for his 'before' and 'after' views of proposed improvements, prepared these paintings of his own Essex garden. The improved picture shows an informal flower garden with mixed flower beds, climbers and flowering shrubs embellishing the lawn. Repton never specified which flowers to plant.

(Scott-James, Anne; *The Cottage Garden*, 1984, p. 25)

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Resumé

By the end of the eighteenth century herbaceous plants were being used in the garden, though through lack of evidence it is not known in what proportion. Planting in borders had been known for a long time, having evolved from the plate-bandes or borders surrounding formal parterres. The more informally shaped beds seem to have emerged during the last third of the century and were forerunners of the informal bed seen in the earlier part of the nineteenth century.

Although the plant range available had greatly increased, the hybrids of many herbaceous perennials were not introduced until after the eighteenth century. The overall effect of herbaceous planting schemes would therefore not have been as rich and diversified as we may be inclined to think today, nor would there have been the subtle colour schemes we have come to expect.

CHAPTER 3.2: THE TYPES OF BRITISH FLOWER GARDENS

"A flower garden is now become a necessary appendage of every fashionable residence."¹

Whether flower gardens were fashionable or not, whether they were formal or informal, whether they were for the affluent or the not so affluent, readers of garden literature in the nineteenth century were told they should dedicate at least some of their land to flower gardening. Indeed, space to grow some flowers was found in many gardens, be it humble cottage gardens or in the gardens of the more affluent, where they were found in front of the house, tucked away in the pleasure ground or as decoration in the kitchen gardens.

Gardens came in different sizes and styles. The flower gardens attached to grander houses were often more likely to be influenced by the latest fashion, whereas ideas for smaller modest gardens were guided by the family's requirements and their purse. The literature suggested to its readers a variety of types of flower garden that could be created. The style not only depended on the author's own preferences, but was also dictated by the lie of the land, size of available area and style of the house.

The early nineteenth-century flower gardens saw two distinctive types: the informal or modern style as Loudon called it, and the formal or ancient style. The informal style had its roots in the landscape movement of the eighteenth century. The formal style pre-dated this and consisted of garden layouts based on geometrical patterns.

¹ Jackson, Maria Elizabeth: *The Florist's Manual*, 1816, p 5

Flower Gardens Situated near the House

According to Maria Elizabeth Jackson, flower gardens could be either sited near the house, preferably on the south or south east side, in front of the windows of the principal rooms, or set apart from the house, so as to form a part of the pleasure grounds.

In most cases, however, flower gardens were preferably situated near the house, ideally exposed to a south, south-east or east aspect as long as it did not interfere with the carriage approach². M'Intosh was of the opinion that the flower garden was best near the house to have easier access, though the house's shadow lines were not to cross the flower beds as the quality of the display could be affected by poor plant development. As a result, the north and east sides were less favoured than the south and west sides.

However, a garden exposed to the east, south and west directions, could be used to extend the flowering season with the flowers facing the warm southern sun flowering first, those exposed to the east being last to open. The flower garden near the house was best laid out in formal borders, unless the ground was uneven and sloping, in which case preference was given to bolder scale mixed borders set in grass. This was then considered a pleasure garden, which could also include some flowering shrubs.

Flower Gardens Removed from the House

When a flower garden was set apart from the house in an area of the pleasure ground, it was best sited not too far away from the house, preferably at the end of a walk. It was important to enclose the gardens with rabbit-proof fencing, which was easily

²M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, 1853, Vol. 1, p. 578.

Chapter 3.2: The Types of British Flower Gardens

camouflaged with low-growing shrubs. This made them into secluded garden rooms.³ Ideally these gardens were modest and smaller in size so as not to detract from the main display near the house.

These irregular gardens did not have to be secluded in the pleasure ground. Wilkinson described a border garden which consisted of irregular walks and borders, which were planted with trees, shrubs and flowers. It was situated beyond the geometric garden and was separated only by a balustrade and low terrace. On the other side, it was separated from the open grass land, park or lawn by a sunken fence which would have kept unwanted intruders from ravaging the displays.⁴ It made a transition from the formality around the house to the informality of the surroundings.

Although it was not unknown to find formal flower gardens placed in the pleasure grounds, away from the house, the beds were preferably laid out in an irregular fashion.

Size

The size of a flower garden was usually in relation to the proportions of the house. Alternatively Loudon suggested it should take up approximately one fifth of the size of the kitchen garden. He added that should the owner be particularly keen on the flower garden, it could also be made much larger, implying that the actual size was really not that important, as long as the gardener and his budget could cope with it. The smaller flower gardens were best laid out in formal style. The larger sized flower gardens, where the eye could not take in the whole at a single glance, were best laid

³ Jackson, Maria Elizabeth: *The Florist's Manual*, 1816, pp. 15-6

⁴ Wilkinson, Gardner: *On Colour and the Necessity for a General Diffusion of Taste Among all Classes*, 1858, p. 364

out with irregular shaped beds possibly with some shrubs subdividing the space into different areas.

The surface of the paths surrounding the beds could be grass or gravel, but the irregular shaped flower gardens looked best set off against a turf background.

3.2.1. Everyman's Garden: The Cottage Gardens

It has often been claimed that the cottage garden was the one place where herbaceous perennials survived during the nineteenth century, whilst the fashion for massed displays with bedding plants raged through the grander gardens. Not only were herbaceous plants used in gardens of different types and sizes, but the man in the street was encouraged to raise plants from seed on an annual basis, even if he did not have the same financial resources as some of his wealthier contemporaries.

The reasoning behind this idea probably was that these gardeners could not afford to buy many plants, relying instead on plant material exchanged with friends and neighbours. The latest plant novelties were too expensive to buy, but the old traditional plants, especially those that were easy to propagate or divide, would be spread about widely. This practice still occurs in Britain today, with people exchanging plants and surplus often offered for sale at local charity functions. In addition, the less affluent were unlikely to have access to gardening literature, and were probably less preoccupied with "keeping up with the Joneses" in their garden.

An account in *Blackwood's Magazine* of 1853 shows us that, albeit with some delay, the latest fashions in the world of plants reached all levels of society:

"We have been often pleasantly surprised to see in the gardens of the poor or in remote sub-alpine districts, the plants which a few years earlier would only have been seen in gardens of some pretension."

Chapter 3.2: The Types of British Flower Gardens

Showy dahlias and hardier fuchsias were among the plants found in the gardens of the poor.⁵

In the late nineteenth century cottage gardens became a very popular subject for painting, giving us a good image of what these gardens may have looked like. Painters such as Helen Allingham (1848-1926), Arthur Claude Strachan (b. 1865, working 1885-1929), Henry John Sylvester Stannard and Lillian Stannard (1877-1944) depicted these idyllic rural settings. Some of the gardens illustrated were probably genuine, but not all. This is seen when comparing paintings by Arthur Claude Strachan. Although his gardens were depicted very clearly and in great detail, several showed the same mixture of flowers such as pink and red peonies, hollyhocks, helenium, delphiniums and others arranged slightly differently over and over again, making the paintings unreliable as an historical document. Furthermore, every single plant appears to be in full flower. Their clarity however gives us an idea of the plants likely to have been used and how they may have been arranged, (see illustration 8).

Wide borders of delphiniums, herbaceous peonies, lavender, pinks and lilies, backed by roses, are some of the flowers commonly shown by Strachan. Pansies, foxgloves, marigolds and antirrhinums were other delights.

The humble abode of most people living outside urban centres, usually came with its own surrounding garden. From here the occupier could provide his household with the necessary vegetables, fruit, some herbs for culinary or medicinal purposes and usually some chickens and a pig. The gardens were usually enclosed by a wall, fence or hedge, more to keep straying animals out than domestic animals in. These enclosures can often still be seen in rural villages, where the basic village structure has remained unchanged.

⁵ M'Intosh, Charles: "The Garden" from M'Intosh *The Book of the Garden*, *Blackwood's Magazine*, Vol. 73, 1853, p. 133

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ILLUSTRATION 8: A DEVON COTTAGE



Arthur Claude Strachan's painting of a cottage garden scene shows a garden full of flowers such as delphiniums, peonies, lilies and roses in the background. The front of the borders are edged with low-growing, pink flowered plants, possibly pinks. Upon closer inspection, and after comparison with his other paintings, it becomes obvious that he used the same groups of plants for different paintings, often combinations of flowers which normally would not flower together.

(Strachan, Arthur Claude, undated, Christopher Wood Gallery)

Chapter 3.2: The Types of British Flower Gardens

Cottage Garden Show Societies encouraged gardeners to grow their produce to the highest standards in order to participate in the shows. H. W. Ward commented on their importance, and said that they instilled a love for flowers and promoted a better knowledge of the requirements and culture of flowers. He added that at that time (1891) their numbers were still on the increase, with each year seeing new societies arising.⁶

During the nineteenth century several publications came on the market, aimed at the cottage gardener or labourer. There were books like *The Finchley Manuals of Industry; Or Practical and Economical Training for the Management of a School or Cottage Garden* the third edition published in 1850. The second volume contained garden advice, mainly on the production of edible crops. Then there were magazines, such as *The Cottage Gardener* which was published from 1849 till 1861⁷.

Authors like Loudon also referred to cottage gardens. When he subdivided suburban gardens into four categories, the fourth one was for gardens of street houses or cottage gardens, measuring from one perch to an acre.⁸ He listed the following issues which he said had to be considered when laying out and planting a garden:

- economy in the first cost
- economy in the after-management
- profit
- exercise and recreation for the occupier and his family
- growing fruits and culinary vegetables, with some flowers

⁶ Ward, H.W.: *My Gardener: A Practical Handbook for the Million* 1891, p. 178. Loudon's *Gardener's Magazine* of 1836 listed for the first time a separate index with a "List of Horticultural, Botanical and Floricultural Societies" (mainly in the United Kingdom but also a few abroad), which exceeded one hundred societies.

⁷ The *Cottage Gardener* became in 1861 the *Journal of Horticulture* which continued to be published under that name till 1915.

⁸ A perch is the equivalent of 30¼ square yards or 25.30 square metres.

Chapter 3.2: The Types of British Flower Gardens

- growing only ornamental trees, shrubs and flowers
- florists' flowers
- forming a botanical collection⁹

The first half of this list contained the essentials, the second one the items for pleasure.

Those fortunate enough to have a larger garden were advised to keep their flowers separate from the vegetable area. If this was not possible, perennials and annuals could be mixed in with the useful plants. In this case Loudon advised using more common and less demanding plants which would grow without too many requirements.¹⁰

Those not so fortunate to have a garden attached to their house may have had an allotment. Although in Germany the first forms of allotment were made available in Kiel as early as 1830, it was not until 1887 that the Allotment Act forced local authorities to provide land for allotments if there was a demand for it, a certain amount of allotment space had been provided in several towns and cities by the clergy and a few magnates. Also since the last quarter of the eighteenth century, certain acts gave authorities the power to allocate pieces of land. This remained very inadequate till the latter part of the nineteenth century.¹¹

Allotments were not only used for growing crops for the table, they were also used for flower production. *Gardening Illustrated* described one allotment with a central path leading down the middle, with, on either side, a herbaceous border twenty yards long (18 metres) and three feet wide (0.9 metres) running north-south. On the corner of one side it had a bunch of sweet peas, on the other side *Convolvulus major* (syn. *Ipomoea*

⁹ Loudon, John Claudius: *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Garden Companion* 1838, p. 171

¹⁰ Loudon, John Claudius: *A Treatise on Forming, Improving and Managing Country Residences*, 1806

¹¹ Jellicoe, Goode and Lancaster: *The Oxford Companion to Gardens* 1991, p. 9

purpurea). At the back of the beds grew phloxes, Brompton stock, German wallflowers, penstemons, and chrysanthemums. The front was filled with pansies, asters, French and African marigolds, zinnias, pinks, carnations, cloves, foxgloves, coreopsis, golden feather, heliotrope, helichrysum, ten week stocks, verbenas, candytufts, lobelias, lilies of the valley, lilies, antirrhinums, petunias, *Phlox drummondii* and four bush and four standard roses. Most plants used had to be grown annually, though some perennials were grown too.¹²

Laying Out and Planting the Smaller Cottage Garden

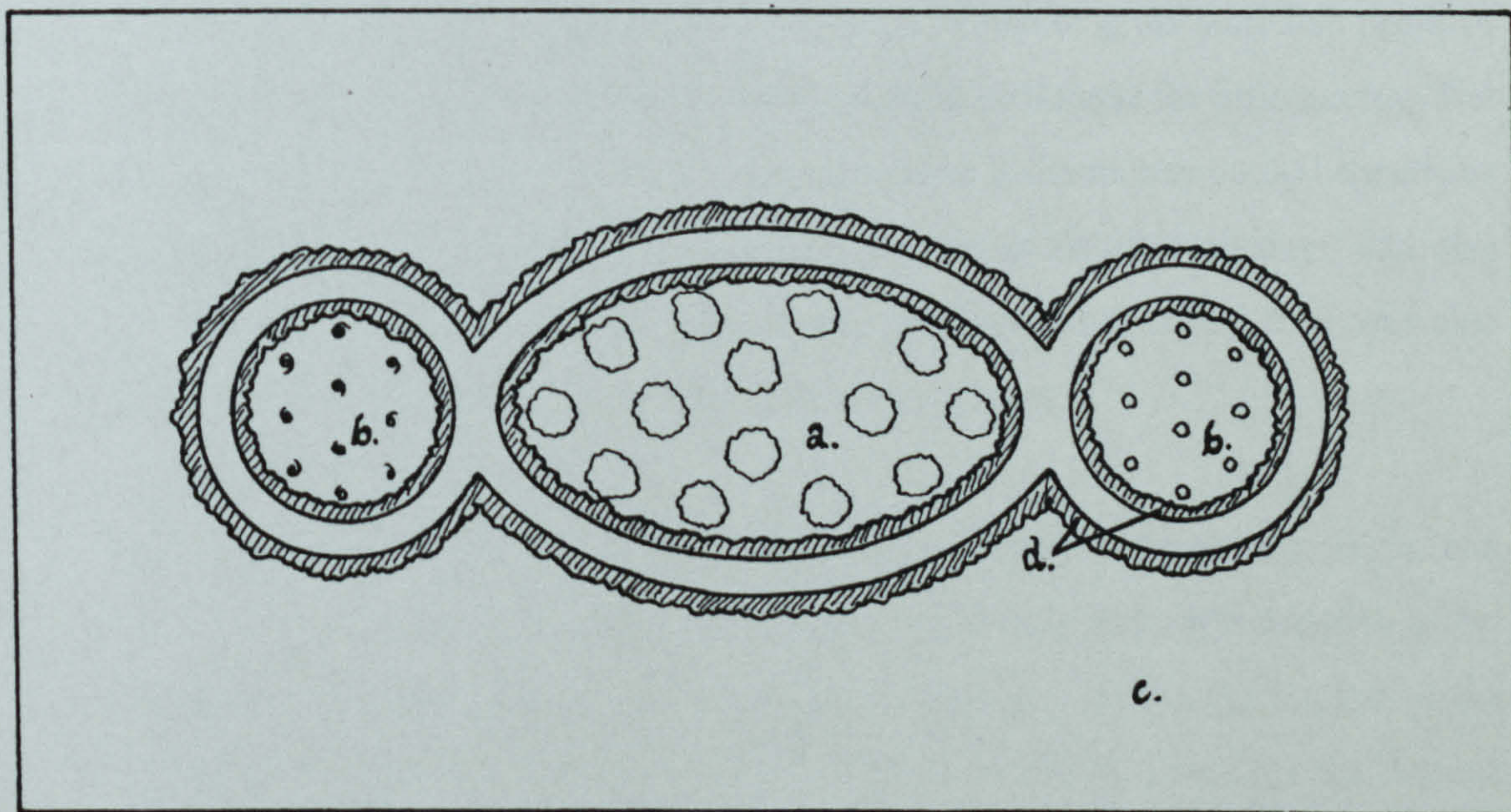
Even in small gardens, gardeners were encouraged to grow some ornamental plants. The layout of these was usually fairly simple, making optimum use of the available space. If the plot was oblong, the *Cottage Gardener*¹³ recommended the gardener to put an oval bed in the centre with two circular ones at either end (see illustration 9). These were bordered with a suitable edging plant such as box, thrift, daisies or even heath. A path of no more than eighteen inches (0.45 metres) was put around these beds (it was considered needless to waste valuable space), and the remaining area of the garden was also converted to beds, used for planting larger flowers like dahlias or flowering shrubs and roses. Ideally, the central, oval bed was completely filled with roses (if the gardener could not afford to purchase these the magazine provided propagation guidelines). The two circular beds could be filled with any florist flowers the gardener possessed, such as pansies, pinks, verbenas and tulips. If he had none, he was advised to plant the best perennials.

If the garden was so small that these three beds would not fit, a single circular bed was recommended. If on the other hand it was a little larger, gardeners probably would

¹² S., T.: "My Allotment Garden" vol. 3, 1881, p. 449. *Gardening Illustrated*

¹³ Anon.: "The Flower-Garden", vol. 2, 1849, p. 5, *The Cottage Gardener*

ILLUSTRATION 9: LAYOUT FOR A SMALL COTTAGE GARDEN



This layout for a small cottage garden is based on a description in *The Cottage Gardener*. The paths were eighteen inches wide (0.45 metres). The lay out was formal, the planting could be more informal, especially round the edges.

- a. **Oval bed planted with roses**
- b. **Circular beds planted with pansies, pinks, verbenas and tulips**
- c. **Flower beds planted with dahlias or flowering and evergreen shrubs**
- d. **Edgning plants (box, thrift, daisies or common heath if the soil was sandy)**

(Anon.: "The Flower Garden", *The Cottage Gardener*, vol. 2, 1849, pp. 5-6)

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have preferred growing some vegetables and fruit, but he was reminded not to take too much space, nor forget a good spot for his favourite flowers.

In an article on how to plant a cottager's flower garden¹⁴ in the *Cottage Gardener*, the gardener was advised, if his plot was small, to concentrate on growing flowers rather than vegetables: on such a small space he would not be able to grow sufficient produce to feed his whole family. Good quality produce could be bought for little money. The article went on to explain that from flower gardening some money could be made as well, selling the excess plants from herbaceous perennials after division, and also saving seeds of annuals and biennials. If the gardener could afford it, it was also profitable to keep one or two beehives in a flower garden.

The Finchley Manuals of Industry on gardening recommended primarily annual and biennial plants for adorning the garden. Although people were still urged to grow perennials by exchanging roots¹⁵, even the poorer man was encouraged to follow the fashions, by favouring temporary displays without perennials. Even for the cottage gardener it was considered important to display a well kept and well-stocked garden. A few climbers and a showy flower bed in the front gave a good impression. The neatly bordered bed could be filled with plants raised from seed (in those days regarded as a cheap way of providing plants, as it is today), or by exchanging seeds, roots and plants with neighbours (recommended as even more economic)¹⁶.

The actual plant range available depended on the regional and local variation in soil and climate, though a few hardy garden perennials were likely to be encountered in most areas of the country: primroses, polyanthus, pansies, peonies, *Trollius europaeus*,

¹⁴ Anon. "The Flower Garden", *The Cottage Gardener*, vol. 2, 1849, p. 5

¹⁵ Roots being dormant herbaceous perennials, or possibly bulbs, though most bulbs do not propagate as readily as herbaceous perennials.

¹⁶ *Finchley Manuals of Industry* No II: Gardening; 1850, p. 124

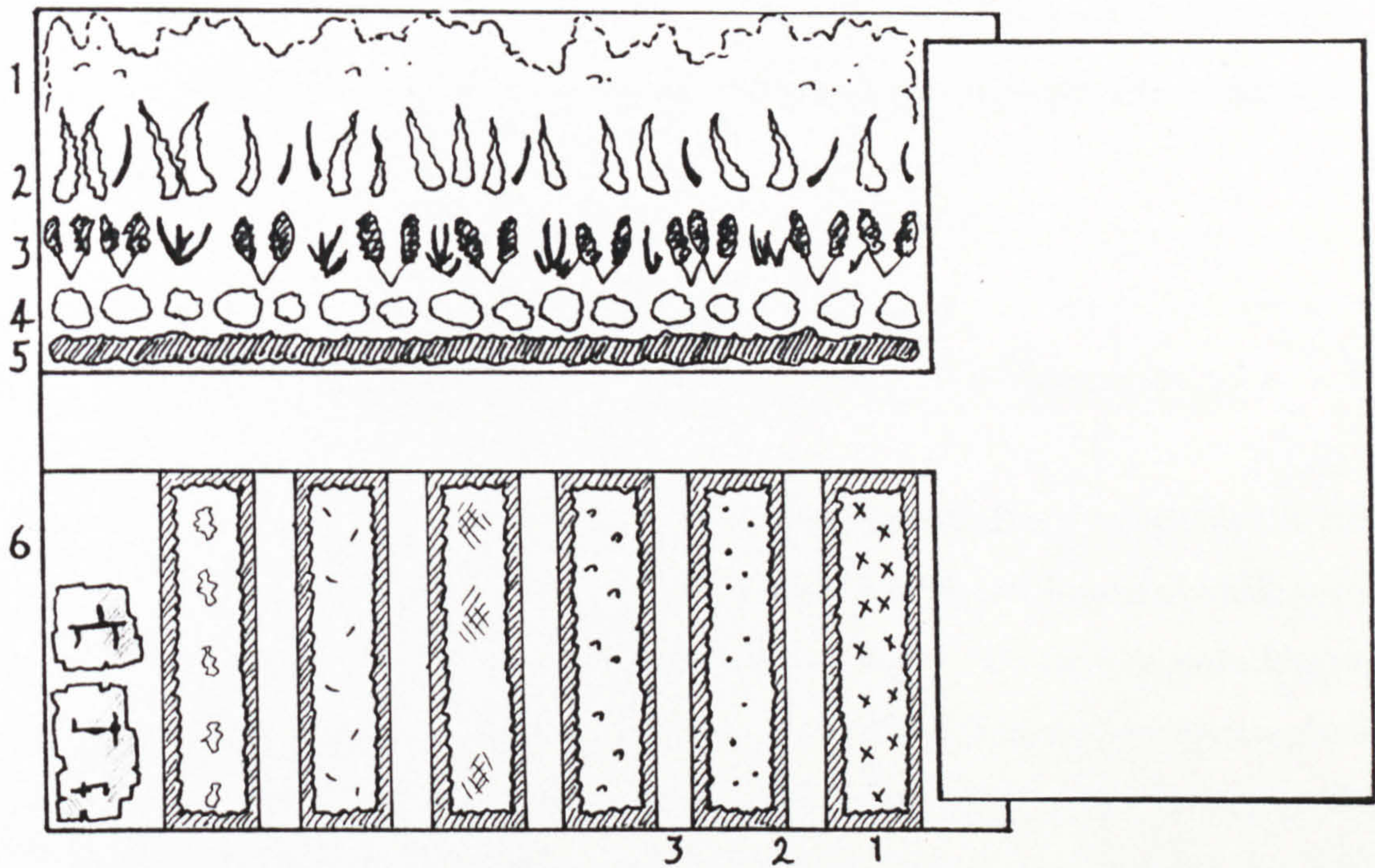
aubrietias, *Arabis*, *Alyssum*, garden anemones, daffodils, Japanese or autumn anemones, double daisies, white and red pinks, mossy saxifrages, sedums (to give dense patches of foliage of silver and green), clumps of *Scilla* or bluebells.¹⁷

Laying Out and Planting the Larger Cottage Garden

Where the garden was large enough to devote a space to the growing of crops for the table, some recommended reserving a pretty space, preferably near the house, for flowers. The walk leading up to the door was central to the garden, at least four feet wide (1.20 metres), with beds on either side. One could be a mixed flower border, the back of which would have a row of mixed flowering shrubs. The penultimate row had a few standard roses with hollyhocks, in front of which would be tall-growing perennials and medium sized roses. The next row down would contain low-growing flowers, behind an edging of box, thrift, daisies or heather. On the other side of the path the beds could be laid out and planted in exactly the same way as what was recommended for a small cottage garden (see above), or alternatively the space could be filled with beds four feet wide (1.20 metres) edged with one of the fore mentioned edging plants, and separated from one another by a narrow path. These beds would then be filled in the massed style, one type of plant per bed, such as pinks, double stocks, double wall flowers, double sweet Williams, carnations, pansies, ranunculus, anemones or tulips. If it was too expensive to obtain the necessary quantity of plants to fill these beds straight away, they could always be filled for the time being with annuals such as *Eschscholzia*, *Nemophila insignis* and *Clarkia pulchella*. At the end of these beds the gardener was advised to put his turf pit and frames (see illustration 10). The central path could be covered with an archway, making an attractive sight and providing some pleasant shade.

¹⁷ D., A.: "Plants for the Cottage Garden", *Gardening Illustrated*, Vol. 3, 1881, p. 128

ILLUSTRATION 10: LAYOUT FOR A LARGE COTTAGE GARDEN



This layout for a large cottage garden is based on a description in *The Cottage Gardener*. The path was four feet wide (1.20 metres). On one side of the main path was a border, on the other side six beds, four feet wide with narrow paths in between. It was possible to have arches over the main path, to provide shade.

1. Mixed flowering shrubs
2. Standard roses and hollyhocks
3. Tall herbaceous plants and medium roses
4. Low growing flowers
5. Edging (box, thrift, daisies or heather)
6. Beds planted with pinks, sweet Williams, stocks, double wallflowers, carnations, pansies, tulips, ranunculuses or anemones, one species per bed. At the end of beds space was provided for turf pits and frames.

(Anon.: "The Flower Garden", *The Cottage Gardener*, vol. 2, 1849, pp. 5-7)

As in Germany, it is clear from these different examples that such humble gardens were intended to be enjoyed as well as be of use to the family. So besides frames, turf pits, fruit and vegetables, a few chickens and a pig, annuals as well as perennials played an important role.

3.2.2. Kitchen Gardens

Although kitchen gardens were primarily used to produce fruit and vegetables, it was not unusual for the kitchen garden to be adorned with flower borders, which were often used for cutting flowers to decorate the house.¹⁸ Castle Howard's kitchen garden was known for having one of the finest collections of hardy herbaceous plants grown in large masses. The walls were lined with flower borders, one exceeding 300 yards, whilst the broad walk was flanked by more borders. Loudon, talking about artificial borderings, explained that they were flower borders along the walks in gardens, particularly those found in kitchen gardens.¹⁹ These were used not only for spacing roses and shrubs, but also perennial plants and annuals. He said it was well practised by most gardeners.²⁰ These descriptions tie in with the illustrations published by Fish in 1862 (see illustration 11) and the German example shown in illustration 60, based on a drawing by Lebl. The main paths were all lined with ornamentals.

Although kitchen gardens had been included in the pleasure ground's circuit of sights to see, some people felt they were offensive to the eye and should be located out of

¹⁸ Gordon, George: "The Royal Gardens Windsor", *Supplement to Gardeners' Magazine*, 1896, pp. 375-82

¹⁹ Anon.: "Castle Howard and its Garden", *Gardener's Magazine*, Vol. 35, 1892, pp. 176-7

²⁰ Loudon, John Claudius: *A Treatise on Forming, Improving and Managing Country Residences* 1806, Vol. 1, p. 333

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sight. Joshua Major thought they should never be a portion of the pleasure ground, nor a place for recreation or exercise: the constant presence of gardeners was destructive to privacy and the sight and smell of rotting vegetables and manure were not appealing.²¹

This view was luckily not shared by everyone. A reader of *Gardening Illustrated* ('R.M.E.M.') wrote to the magazine asking his fellow readers for advice on how to plant his kitchen garden borders and how to separate them from the vegetables. His borders, edged with box, were two feet and six inches deep (0.75 metres), on either side of a fifty yard (45 metres) north-south running path. Replies came in the following issues. J.G. Seafeld of Gosport suggested that a well cropped kitchen garden was not unsightly, and should not need screening from the borders. He suggested planting sweet peas as a background, together with tall plants like sunflowers, *Bocconia cordata* (syn. *Macleaya cordata*), phloxes, dahlias, kniphofias, asters and other tall growing flowers. In front of these, herbaceous or annual plants were arranged to give a lengthened flower display.

The reaction of the next reader 'J.D.', was rather similar, saying such a border was one of the prettiest features in many old-fashioned farmhouse and cottage gardens. J.D. agreed that vegetables and flower borders made a perfect backing for each other. He recommended the following way to plant the garden. The walls or fences were to be covered with fruit. The remaining garden was to be filled with vegetables, bush fruit, strawberries and a border on each side of the central walk.

Within the borders he suggested planting six standard roses on either side, planted at the back of the border so their roots were actually in the kitchen garden plot beyond. If this was not possible and they had to be planted in the border, the reader advised selecting a less vigorous variety. Between the roses a selection of *Phlox decussata*

²¹ Major, Joshua: *The Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* 1852, p. 22

(syn. *P. paniculata*) should be planted at equal distances, allowing eight feet (2.40 metres) between roses and phlox. In the centre of the remaining spaces grew *Anemone* 'Honorine Jobert', *Harpalium rigidum* (syn. *Helianthus laetiflorus*), *Pyrethrum serotinum*, delphiniums and clumps of old white and tiger lilies. In the remaining space, in front of the taller plants, he suggested planting *Anemone sylvestris*, *Achillea ptarmica* flore-pleno, double *Spiraea filipendula* (syn. *Filipendula vulgaris* 'Multiplex'), double *Geum coccineum*, *Penstemon jaffrayanus* (syn. *P. azureus*), *Pyrethrum roseus* (syn. *Tanacetum coccineum*) varieties, single and double, clove and border carnations. These could be relieved by a few clumps of day lilies, German iris, English and Spanish iris, St Bruno's lily, tigridias and gladioli, all of which have sword-shaped foliage and would give strong effect in summer and autumn. The latter reflects an awareness of the role of foliage in a border, the vertical lines of the leaves of these plants breaking up the solid mass created by the other plants. For spring and early summer there would be old favourites such as *Gentiana acaulis*, primroses of all colours, double and single, polyanthus, alpine auriculas, daffodils of all kinds, pansies, anemones, florists' and others, border and show pinks, crocus, colchicum, interspersed with florists' penstemons for autumn colour and Christmas roses and hepaticas for shady places. ²²

Even though R.M.E.M's border was only 0.75 metre wide, judging by Seafeld and J.D's planting recommendations, kitchen garden borders could be much larger, probably depending on the space available.

'J.D.' referred to the kitchen garden border as being one of the finest features of old-fashioned farmhouses and cottage gardens, but a report in the *Gardeners' Magazine* of 1896 on the royal gardens at Frogmore stated that in the large walled garden existed

²² M., R.M.E. : "Flower Border in the Kitchen Garden", *Gardening Illustrated*, vol. 4, 1882, p 490; Seafeld, J.G.: "Flower Border in the Kitchen Garden", *Gardening Illustrated*, vol. 4, 1882, p. 506; D., J.: "Flower Border in the Kitchen Garden", *Gardening Illustrated*, vol. 4, 1882, p. 517

a border devoted to herbaceous plants, which was "the finest for the production of distinct effects in the open" (the latter being as opposed to the greenhouses).²³ The association of flowers with vegetables was obviously not only reserved for the more modest farmhouse or cottage garden, it was also fit for a royal garden too.

Another late nineteenth century example could be found in Newark-on-Trent at Osmondthorpe House, a town house. The owner converted the old kitchen garden to introduce flower borders, as the front garden was unsuitable. They were closely planted with a mixture of perennials and a few bedded out plants like dahlias, flowering from June to mid-October.²⁴

Even though borders flanking the central path were most common, it appears that this was not the only way in which flowers could be introduced in a kitchen garden. Loudon suggested that where a kitchen garden was large enough to include an orchard and was in part also a flower garden or ornamental garden, the form could be varied, by introducing occasionally curved lines which relieved the sameness of a square shape.²⁵ In Loudon's *Gardener's Magazine* there is even a description of a kitchen garden with a one-acre self-contained flower garden which included beds for American plants and which was edged with borders of choice shrubs and creepers.²⁶

²³ Gordon, George: "The Royal Gardens Windsor", *Supplement to Gardeners' Magazine*, 1896, pp. 375-82

²⁴ Marsland, S. Kercheval: "Flower Garden: Hardy Plants in a Town Garden", *The Garden*, vol. 38, 1890, pp. 339-40

²⁵ Loudon, John Claudius: *Hints on the Formation of Gardens and Pleasure Grounds*, 1812, p.20

²⁶ Rutger, Thomas: "A Series of Designs for laying out kitchen gardens", *Gardener's Magazine*, 1835, vol. 11, p. 13

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One example of such a walled garden which contained separate areas survives at Calke Abbey in Derbyshire. There the kitchen garden with an orangery is separated from the physic garden and the flower garden though they are all part of the same complex, and were all built at the same time in 1773.²⁷ These examples show that it was not unusual to have a separate area in the kitchen garden devoted to ornamental displays. This is confirmed in a report on the garden at Dalkeith Palace which informs us that the southern part of the kitchen garden had a large area dedicated to the systematic arrangement of herbaceous plants. It was separated from the rest of the garden by a laurel fence and a walk. In contrast to the above, this was a collection of botanical importance which may not have been edible, but had an educational function.²⁸ In Germany too, gardens containing botanical displays had been classified, alongside medicinal, fruit and vegetable gardens, under the heading of "useful gardens" (see Chapter 4.2).

The plants in the previously mentioned examples were predominantly perennials, though others were used to adorn these borders too. One of the borders in the kitchen garden at Lamport Hall, described in 1859, was planted with the following mixture: in the back row scarlet runner beans, then standard roses and sunflowers, followed by crimson spinach and *Delphinium formosum* (syn. *D. x belladonna*), then came a mixed, broad row of plants of dwarfer habit, edged with variegated mint. Another had, in the back row, hollyhocks, then standard roses, then orange *Calceolaria* 'Mrs Burns', in front of which were fine China asters, *Geranium sanguineum*, perilla, Mangles' variegated geranium with a dense row of *Lobelia x speciosa* in the front. The planting in these borders made full use of ornamental vegetables as well as annuals, half hardy perennials, hardy perennials and roses.

²⁷ The National Trust: *An Introduction to Calke Abbey, Derbyshire*, 1990

²⁸ Fish, R.: "Recollections of the Gardens at Dalkeith Palace", *The Cottage Gardener*, Vol. 17, 1856, p. 37

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Alternatively, the borders could also be filled with bedding plants as was the case at Trentham and Lough Crew in Ireland. Here the central axis was lined on either side by a ribbon border, backed by a beech hedge, making the borders quite separate from the rest of the kitchen garden. Thus anybody objecting to the sight of rotting vegetables, as Joshua Major did, would have nothing to complain about. All the side walks had borders backed with espalier fruit trees, which were regularly used as backing. Several of those borders were filled with carnations, heart's ease, and bedding plants.²⁹ (See illustration 11.)

Even if, in the course of the nineteenth century, herbaceous perennials were not the most popular, many found a home in the kitchen gardens of grand as well as modest gardens.

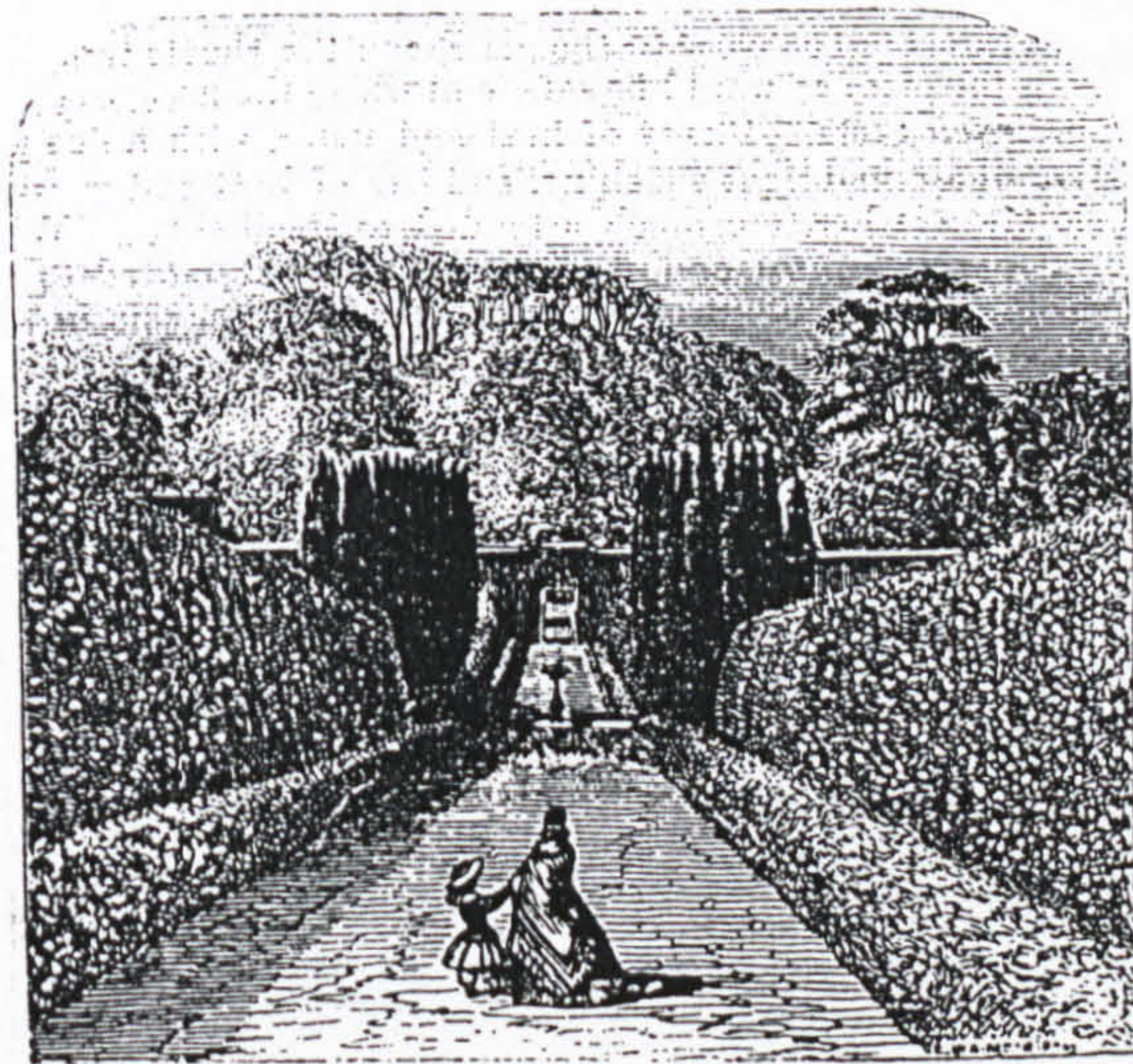
3.2.3. Formal Flower Gardens

The ancient geometric style "employed symmetrical forms" which were useful in flat situations or when surrounded by high walls such as in towns (see chapter 3.4). The former suited modern mansions best, the latter was considered more appropriate for buildings of Gothic or ancient architecture.³⁰ The symmetrical style was sometimes thought to be more suited to small gardens, which were likely to be overseen at one glance. On the other hand, larger gardens which were big enough to contain forest trees were best laid out in the modern or informal style.

²⁹ Fish, R.: "A Few Days in Ireland: Lough Crew", *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, Vol. 2, 1862, pp. 298-301

³⁰ Loudon, John Claudius: *Hints on the Formation of Gardens and Pleasure Grounds* London 1812

ILLUSTRATION 11: ILLUSTRATION OF A KITCHEN GARDEN BORDER



Drawing of the kitchen garden at Lough Crew in Ireland, showing a double border of flowers, backed by yew hedges, flanking either side of the path. It was planted in the ribbon style with purple dahlias, yellow calceolarias, scarlet geraniums, variegated balm, *Lobelia speciosa* and edged with box. Such formal borders were not uncommon along the broad walks of kitchen gardens.

(Fish, R.: "A Few Days in Ireland: Lough Crewe", *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, vol. 2, 1862, p. 299)

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Many nineteenth century authors recommended siting formal or geometric flower gardens in the vicinity of the house, or alternatively near an other ornamental building such as an orangery, which Repton thought was the more appropriate feature for such a garden. This way the flowers could easily be viewed at all times from a close range. Loudon's main argument for locating the flower garden in such a prominent position was that he considered it as a work of art, and therefore it was better suited near the mansion where it could be easily admired.³¹ When near the house, it was usually preferred, wherever possible, to put the flower garden in a sheltered position in full view of the best rooms or on the most private side, from where the best panorama could be enjoyed.³²

Repton recommended that unless the flower garden was adjacent to the house, it should be isolated in a separate area and screened from the rest of the garden. This then allowed it to be of a totally different character from its surroundings, meaning it did not have to be formal.³³

An example of a small, formal flower garden which could easily be viewed at a glance and which was isolated from the rest of the garden was shown in the *Gardener's Magazine*. They published an illustration and description of a circular flower garden placed in a recess of the shrubbery lawn. It consisted of a central circular bed, surrounded by curved and round beds. The garden was surrounded by a turf strip of a minimum of five feet (1.5 metres) and was edged with a border of low American

³¹Loudon, John Claudius: *Hints on the Formation of Gardens and Pleasure Grounds* 1812, p. 26

³²Kemp, Edward: *How to Lay out a Garden*, 1858, p. 251

³³ Repton, Humphrey: *The Art of Landscape Gardening [The Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening 1803]* 1907, p. 144

shrubs. The beds were planted in the mingled style.³⁴ (For a copy of the plan and analysis of the planting see chapter 3.4.)

The formal garden contained geometrically shaped beds, ranging from the simple square or circle, to the most elaborate and fancy shaped patterns and scrolls, though most authors seemed to favour the use of simple shapes.³⁵ These were then embellished by decorative items such as urns, vases, statues and fountains. The formally shaped beds, usually set in gravel or grass, combined with the ornaments, were referred to as a parterre. The creation of such a formal flower garden was considered by many as the highest form of garden art. (For more details see Chapter 3.3.)

Structural Planting

In association with formal flower gardens, the framework planting of trees and shrubs had to reflect the formality. They were placed in lines like architectural features. These lines were not necessarily straight, they could also be curved, possibly following the line of a path, but the trees and shrubs would be planted symmetrically, at equal distances to give uniformity and rhythm.³⁶

Crisply trimmed hedges were used to mark the boundary, especially in smaller, enclosed formal gardens.

The beds could be planted in various ways. Often it was done in the massed style, as is explained in chapter 3.4.2., with bedding plants, though the mingled style could also

³⁴ D., C. : "Plan for a Flower Garden", *Gardener's Magazine*, Vol 7, 1831, pp. 33-5

³⁵ Kemp, Edward: *How to Lay Out a Garden*, 1858, and Nicol, Walter: *The Villa Garden Directory*, 1809, p.16

³⁶ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, 1853, p. 581

be applied, using a mixture of herbaceous perennials (see Chapter 3.4.1.2), or if the garden was of botanical value, plants could be planted according to generic order.

Edging

Formal gardens were most attractive when set in gravel. However gardeners were recommended either to make a barrier between dug bed and gravel with a narrow strip of grass, or alternatively to insert an edging of a low-growing plant such as box, daisy, pink, London pride or primrose.³⁷ The edge could also be of brick, metal, cast or wrought iron, similar materials to those used in Germany (for illustrations see 66 and 68 in Chapter 4.3).

Borders in Formal Settings

Geometric gardens tend to be associated with a display of formal beds, rather than with herbaceous borders. Some accounts show that it was not impossible to combine the two. In such cases the borders tended to be peripheral rather than central to the display. One such example was quoted in the *Gardener's Magazine*. It was a plan for a garden described as in the ancient (formal) style and consisted of eighty seven beds and borders laid out on the lawn in front of a house and along a kitchen garden wall. The borders were situated along the house and the kitchen garden wall.³⁸ (For illustrations and analysis of the planting see chapter 3.4.)

Another example where borders were associated with formal gardens can be seen in Wilkinson, who produced an illustration of a geometric garden surrounded by a balustraded terrace walk, with a border for flowers placed between walk and

³⁷ Loudon, John Claudius: *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, 1825, pp. 790-6

³⁸ D., C., & Baillie, W.: "Plan and Select List of Plants for a Flower Garden in Ancient Style", *Gardener's Magazine*, Vol. 7, 1831, p. 298

balustrade. The enclosed illustration shows the border planted in the mingled style.³⁹ (See illustration 12 and chapter 3.4.1 for details on the mingled style.)

3.2.4. Informal Flower Gardens

Different styles of informal gardens, with varying degrees of informality, manifested themselves during the nineteenth century, though without doubt the picturesque movement had the largest impact.

The latter part of the century saw another noteworthy development which has been of more relevance to twentieth century garden design than the picturesque movement: the wild garden.

The nineteenth century saw another type of flower garden: the irregular flower garden, which garden writers like M'Intosh and Loudon classified under the heading of "modern type" flower garden. Its style, layout and bed-shape could classify it as a picturesque garden, though none of the authors referred to it by that title.

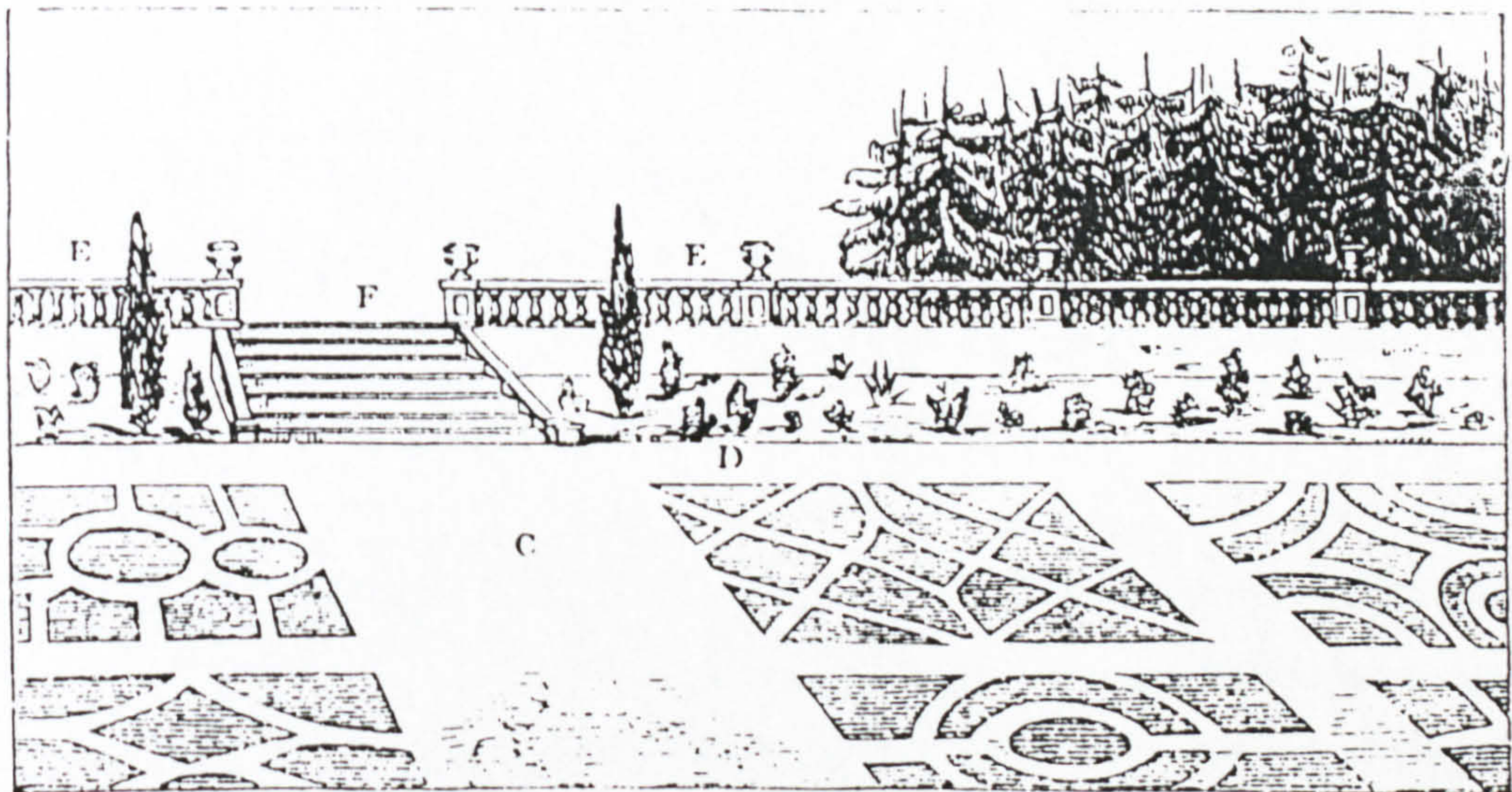
3.2.4.1. The Irregular or Informal Flower Garden

Loudon described the modern or informal style as "a collection of irregular groups and masses, placed about the house as a medium, uniting it with the open lawn".

These gardens consisted of informal beds, irregular in outline, laid out on a lawn, possibly at some distance from the house and enclosed by a belt of trees and shrubs or

³⁹ Wilkinson, Gardner: *On Colour and the Necessity for a General Diffusion of Taste Among all Classes*, 1858, p. 370

ILLUSTRATION 12: A GEOMETRIC GARDEN EDGED WITH A BORDER



- C, Geometrical garden on the slope, when lowered.
- D, Sloping bed against the terrace wall.
- E, Terrace walk and balustrade.
- F, Upper dressed garden.

Drawing of a geometric border surrounded by a balustraded terrace walk, showing a mingled border between the walk and the balustrade which enclosed a formal parterre.

(Wilkinson, Gardner: *On Colour and the Necessity for a General Diffusion of Taste Among all Classes*, 1858, p. 370)

a wall. Although no examples survive of these types of flower gardens, evidence indicates that the Hartwell and Nuneham Courtenay examples were not unique. The similarities between these two flower gardens and those illustrated on the 1786 Arley Estate Plan (see illustration 99) and the flower garden plans first published by Jackson and later by Loudon, all indicate a similar informal flower garden style with beds, lawns and shrubbery edges all devoid of straight lines, and no two identical⁴⁰.

The best examples are plans and illustrations (see illustrations 13 and 14) of the flower gardens at Nuneham Courtenay (1771) of which images by Paul Sandby survive, and at Hartwell (1799) of which planting plans survive. The gardens, both designed by William Mason, were clearly based on the same principles.

By combining the Nuneham illustrations and the Hartwell plans we get a very good idea of the effect achieved and how it was done. Both flower gardens were situated quite close to the house and consisted of irregular beds filled with a mixture of flowers, interspersed with some trees and a few decorations informally dotted about on a lawn. On Sandby's illustrations it appears that the flower garden was surrounded by a belt of trees and shrubs and that a small temple acted as a focal point.

Although the beds were informal in shape (round, oval or kidney shaped) and disposition (scattered about on the lawn, interspersed with trees), the planting plans show that the actual planting of the beds was rather regimented, reminiscent of the mingled style later promoted by John Claudius Loudon. Plants were arranged in approximately equal-sized clumps. Planting in the round beds tended to be in ever-decreasing circles. In the kidney-shaped and oval beds it was carried out in straight rows on a grid pattern, the number of rows varying between five and six. The rows

⁴⁰Jackson, Maria Elizabeth: *The Florist's Manual*, 1816, illustrations after front pages; Laird, Mark; *Journal of the Garden History Society*, 1990, pp. 103-54; *Arley Hall Plan*, 1786, Arley Hall Archives; M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, p. 578

closest to the front of the bed would contain five to ten plants. As the front was planted with smaller plants they may have been planted in small numbers rather than as solitaires in order to produce a bigger impact. The number of plants per row would decrease towards the centre as the plant size increased, ending up with a tall, single plant in the middle, (see illustration 13).

In the centre of each bed stood a tall-growing plant, such as a tall sunflower, mallow or hollyhock. From the centre down the overall height of the planting was gradually decreased to the edge of the bed. By late summer, when all plants had reached their final growing height, the beds would have been dome shaped.⁴¹ (See illustration 13.)

The planting plans show a certain rhythm in the planting, noticeable in the positioning of the plants as discussed above, and in the repetition of one or two plants at regular intervals. Illustration 6 shows the regular repetition of pinks along the edge, others had roses and honeysuckles halfway between the edge and centre of the bed. However, due to the varying nature of the plants this rhythm would not have been obvious to the observer.

Despite the repetition of plants and the grid layout, the overall effect was informal with clumps of a very mixed nature, producing flower shows of different colours at different times of the year. The overall effect of the flower garden is more likely to have been one of a lush, colourful mixed display.

⁴¹ Planting plans: Bodleian MS.Top.gen.b.55.fols.36r-60r; Illustration: Paul Mellon Centre

74/1026. For further detail about Hartwell and Nuneham Courtenay see Mark Laird: "Our equally favourite hobby horse: The flower gardens of Lady Elizabeth Lee at Hartwell and the 2nd Earl Harcourt at Nuneham Courtenay", *Garden History*, vol. 18, 1990, pp. 103-54

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ILLUSTRATION 13: PLANTING PLAN FOR HARTWELL



Planting plan for a circular flower bed at Hartwell (1799). The plants are a mixture of perennials and annuals, planted as individuals or possibly very small clumps, with the height increasing towards the centre of the bed.

(Bodleian: MS.Top.gen.b.55. fols.36r-60r, drawing 36)

John Harvey identified most of the plants listed on the Hartwell planting plans. Of the 133 plants only forty-four were herbaceous perennials, and seven bulbous or tuberous type plants. The others were woody plants and roses (eighteen in total), annuals and biennials, including tomatoes and beans. Only one out of the sixteen known planting plans for Hartwell contains only shrubs, the others consist of a mixture of shrubs, roses, annuals, biennials, perennials and bulbs. (See appendix 2 for the list of plants.)

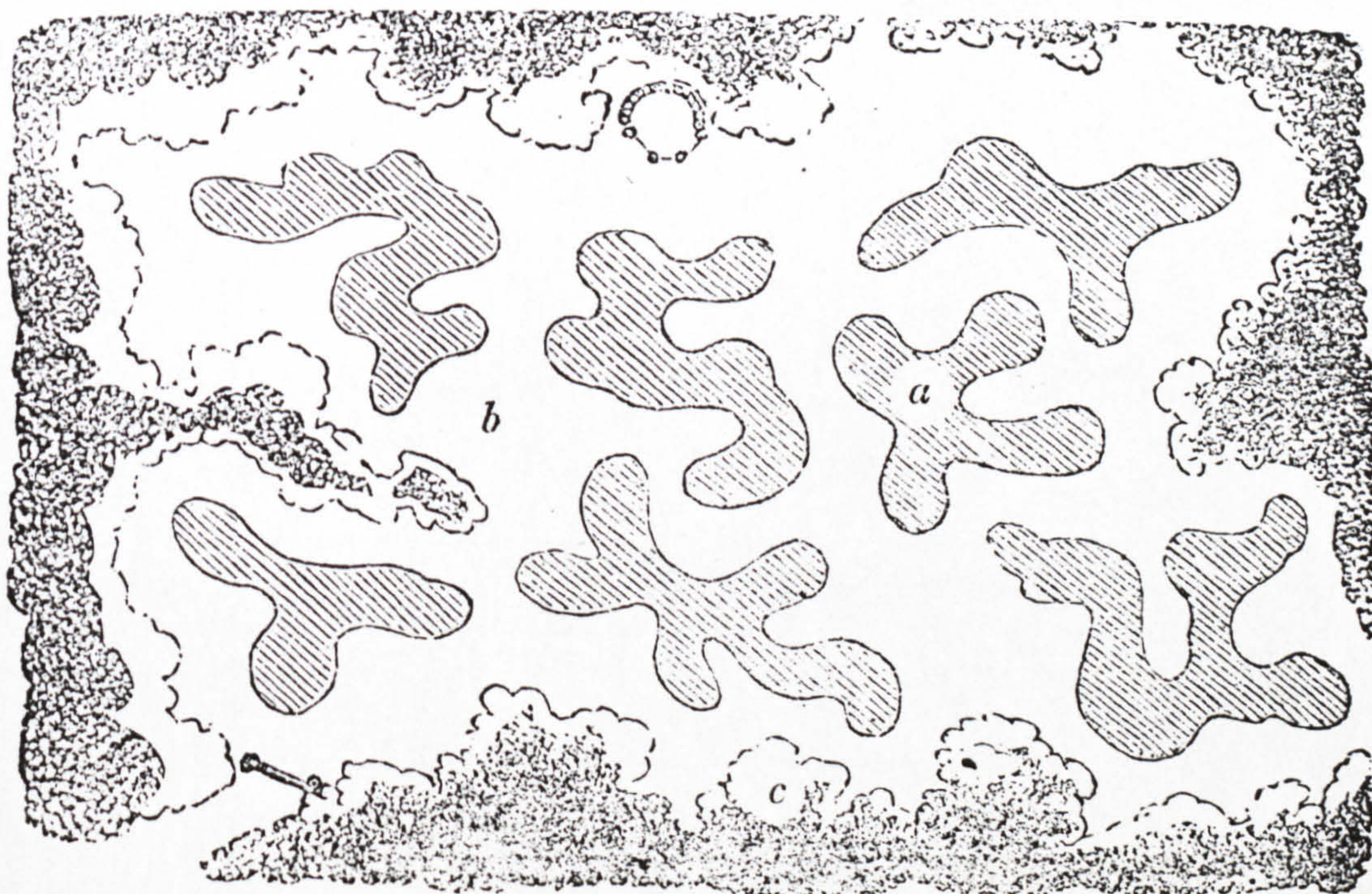
An Informal Garden at Arley Hall

Evidence shows that the informal style seen in Mason's designs may not have been that uncommon. An estate map from Arley Hall dated 1786 shows a walled enclosure near the house containing irregular shaped beds. The lack of detail prevents us from seeing what these beds may have been filled with, but the vicinity to the house indicates it could have been an ornamental garden. (For more details and illustrations see chapter 7.1 case studies.)

Maria Jackson's Plans for Informal Flower Gardens

In *The Florist's Manual* published in 1816, two plans for enclosed flower gardens were published (see illustrations 15 and 16). These consisted of irregularly-shaped beds, one being roughly kidney-shaped or even more irregular, the other ones less organic in shape, almost scroll-like with scalloped ends. They were set in lawns, possibly with a few ornaments and were enclosed by a belt of trees and shrubs. The same illustrations were reprinted in John Claudius Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* (1822). (For more details see chapter 3.3.1.2 Informal Beds.) These illustrations are very reminiscent of William Mason's work at Nuneham Courtenay and Hartwell, indicating that this style was not exceptional. Insufficient evidence exists to determine the popularity of this style, or its origins.

ILLUSTRATION 15: FIRST OF TWO PLANS FOR INFORMAL FLOWER GARDENS



One of two plans for an enclosed flower garden, showing irregularly-shaped flower beds, set in lawn, surrounded by a belt of shrubs. This plan was also used by John Claudius Loudon in his *Encyclopedia*. As seen at Hartwell, Nuneham Courtenay and Arley Hall, these designs were not uncommon.

(Jackson, Maria Elizabeth: *The Florist's Manual*, 1816)

ILLUSTRATION 16: SECOND OF TWO PLANS FOR INFORMAL FLOWER GARDENS



One of two plans for an enclosed flower garden, showing irregularly-shaped flower beds, set in lawn, surrounded by a belt of shrubs. The pattern is very reminiscent of the paisley patterned Kashmiri shawls. Although still informal, the beds were slightly less irregular than in the previous example. Consisting of beds in lawns, these flower gardens quickly vanished when out of favour, so that little actual evidence of them remains. However they do seem to have been rather popular, as archival evidence has shown their existence at gardens such as Arley Hall, Mount Edgcumbe, Hartwell, Nuneham Courtenay and the Shawl Garden at Belton.

(Jackson, Maria Elizabeth: *The Florist's Manual*, 1816)

3.2.4.2. The Picturesque and Gardenesque Movement

Several major movements have occurred in the development of British parks and gardens, though some had a bigger impact on the appearance of our gardens and their surrounding landscape than others. Loudon defined four main styles as follows:

- *The geometric style* consisted of laying out a planting in geometrical figures.
- *The picturesque style* consisted of trees and shrubs planted at irregular distances, as seen in natural forests or forest groups. The effect they were intended to create was one of groups of trees and shrubs and masses of trees, united into compositions which would look well if painted.
- *The gardenesque style* had trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants, planted in masses or groups, but at such distances that they would never touch each other. The effect from nearby was of distinctive trees and shrubs, from a distance that of one mass or group. The gardenesque was for the admirer of landscape scenery, botanist and gardener, as opposed to the picturesque, which was aimed at the admirer of landscape scenery only.
- *The rural or natural style* was in contrast with artificial scenery. It was like the natural landscape, but could only be considered as a work of art if it was known to be made by man.⁴²

As we shall see, these categories were also recognised by other landscape gardeners and writers of the time, such as Charles M'Intosh in *The Book of the Garden* of 1853 and 1855, but although the picturesque was the most influential one of the four styles listed by Loudon, the gardenesque style is of most relevance to this research as it relates more to the detailed planting of flowers.

⁴² Loudon, John Claudius: "Gardening as an Art", *Gardener's Magazine*, Vol. XI, 1835, p. 611

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An elaborate discussion of these styles is impossible within the scope of this thesis, but the picturesque movement has been briefly explained to help understand and clarify the gardenesque movement, as this development arose from it.

The pleasure ground could apply to the entire surroundings of a dwelling, from the house door to the park and beyond, but it was chiefly seen as an embellishment of the wider landscape. Flower gardening tended to take place within the perimeter of the pleasure ground, within easy strolling distance from the house, if not adjoining it (see chapters 3.2.3. and 3.2.4.) as these areas were not necessarily subjected to picturesque treatment.

"...I have often experienced opposition in attempting to correct the false and mistaken taste for placing a large house in a naked grass-field, without any apparent line of separation between the ground exposed to cattle and the ground annexed to the house.[...] advantage may be easily taken to ornament the lawn with flowers and shrubs, and to attach to the mansion that scene of 'embellished neatness', usually called a pleasure-ground."⁴³

Repton defined the *pleasure ground* as the space between the house and the area where cattle was kept, it was the space where flowers were grown. He also referred to it as the *dressed ground*. Price, in contrast defined the pleasure ground as the area beyond the terrace.⁴⁴ M'Intosh quoted Mrs Loudon's definition of a pleasure ground, which was elaborate and precise in its description:

"A portion of a country residence devoted to ornamental purposes, in contradistinction to those parts which are devoted exclusively to utility or profit, such as the kitchen garden, the farm, and the park. In modern

⁴³ Repton, Humphry: *The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphry Repton* edited by J.C. Loudon ,1840, p. 213

⁴⁴M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, 1853, Vol. 1, p. 700

times, the pleasure-ground consists chiefly of a lawn of smoothly shaven turf, interspersed with beds of flowers, groups of shrubs, scattered trees, and, according to circumstances, with a part of the whole scenes and objects which belong to a pleasure-ground in the ancient style. [...] A pleasure-ground in the modern time differs from that prevalent at any former period, in including all the scenes and sources of enjoyment and recreation of the ancient style as well as the modern."

It was possible for a house to have one or more terraces, with or without an architectural flower garden, and beyond this to have a lawn with flowers, shrubs, groups of trees, ponds, lakes, rock work, summerhouses or greenhouses, an orangery and even a botanic garden. From here walks would lead the garden visitor on to the shrubbery, which she stated "in the present day, is usually formed into an arboretum", which could be adorned with various rustic structures. The main part of the pleasure ground was on the side of the house where the drawing room was, the park area was at the front of the house. The size of park or pleasure ground was irrelevant to the size of the house. A small house could have a large park and pleasure ground, a large house could have small landscaped surroundings.⁴⁵

The Picturesque Style

There is no movement in the development of British gardens which has caused so much ink to be spilled, nor has generated so much discussion as the picturesque. Although it is thought to be one of the most important developments in the latter part of the eighteenth and first part of the nineteenth century, it is one of the more difficult terms to define in the context of garden history, as even Charles M'Intosh found in 1855:

⁴⁵M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, 1853, p. 579

"There are few words whose meaning has been less accurately determined than picturesque."⁴⁶

The term *Picturesque* has been used over a relatively long time span by many people who each had their own interpretation of its definition.

Primarily an art movement in which artists embellished nature as they saw it, in order to make their pictures more attractive, it changed when landscape gardeners started making gardens which would be "as pretty as a picture".

The first edition of the *Oxford Dictionary*⁴⁷ defines the word picturesque as follows:

" 'in the style of a painter', but in English assimilated to picture, giving the sense 'in the style of a picture'...

1.a. Like or having the elements of a picture; fit to be the subject of a striking or effective picture; possessing pleasing and interesting qualities of form and colour (but not implying the highest beauty or sublimity): said of landscape, buildings, costume, scenes of diversified action, etc, also of circumstances, situations, fancies, ideas and the like.

1.b. Picturesque gardening: the arrangement of a garden so as to make it a pretty picture; the romantic style of gardening, aiming at irregular and rugged beauty...."

On the one hand the word *picturesque* has been used to describe landscape or garden scenery worthy of a painting. It became an art movement which spilled over into the

⁴⁶ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 2, 1855, p. 693

⁴⁷ *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* edited by Sir James Murray, Vol. VII-2, 1906-1909

garden. On the other hand, in more practical terms it was used to describe ways of planting, to the extent of calling the bedding out of subtropical foliage plants *picturesque bedding*.⁴⁸ Gertrude Jekyll also made use of the term in relation to the planting of perennials in an article entitled "The Picturesque use of Hardy Summer Perennial Plants".⁴⁹

The concept of the picturesque started off in the eighteenth century as an artistic idea. The reverend William Gilpin, who in the course of his travels described the landscape of the river Wye and the Lake District, had used the term for the first time in 1745.⁵⁰

It was described by Sir Uvedale Price in his *Essays on the Picturesque* (1794-1801) to apply "to every object and every kind of scenery which could be represented in painting". It related to landscape images: those which were worthy of a picture. McIntosh, referring to Price's work, explained that Price had distinguished three areas in the garden. Even if the house was of the simplest architecture, art was always present, but to go from art immediately over into the disorder of nature was impossible. Therefore Price suggested the following three gradually decreasing stages, which would make the transition from 'high art' into nature. As a result. Near the house one could find the architectural terrace and flower garden in formal style. Then came the shrubbery and pleasure ground, which acted as a link between the formality of the house and its immediate surroundings and the total informality of the park, which was the third zone. According to a writer in the *Quarterly Review*, *landscaping of parks in the picturesque style* had been Price's strongest point. The author lamented the fact that most people had lost sight of these three transitional categories and that planting flowers, shrubs and trees required quite separate treatment. Instead gardeners

⁴⁸ Elliott, Brent: *Victorian Gardens*, 1986, p. 153

⁴⁹ Jekyll, Gertrude : "The Picturesque Use of Hardy Summer Perennial Plants", *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, 1891, pp. 324-8

⁵⁰ Simes, Michael: *A Glossary of Garden History*, 1993, p. 91

had started to apply picturesque principles to the entirety of the garden, including flower gardens, right up to the house.⁵¹ Another problem was the interpretation of the picturesque as a simple imitation of nature in its most unpolished form, and to banish all embellishments from around the house, where they really belonged.

In 1806 Loudon explained to his readers there were two meanings attached to the term *picturesque*. It could be:

"...a particular character, a kind of beauty, distinguished by roughness, abruptness and irregularity, either in form, colour, sound, or touch, and may be produced in every possible art;..."

Alternatively the term picturesque:

"...applied chiefly to visible objects, and is used to signify that they are capable of producing a good effect when painted..."⁵²

Loudon liked to use the term in the second sense, and proposed that from there on he would refer to the expression *picturesque improvement* instead of *landscape gardening*, which in those days was used to define what now would be known as landscape design or architecture.

Loudon's second definition, 'capable of producing a good effect when painted', could be applied to almost any garden scene, including those which may not necessarily have been described as picturesque. This is just one example which shows how loosely the term *picturesque* could be applied.

The picturesque was not only about verdant, smooth pastoral scenes; it could be rough and romantic.

⁵¹ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, 1853, Vol. 1, pp. 693, 700

⁵² Loudon, John Claudius: *A Treatise on Forming, Improving and Managing Residences*, 1806, Vol. II, p. 356

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In 1850 Kemp described a picturesque scene consisting of rugged forms, broken lines and abrupt changes. The ground was not smoothed out or levelled, there were rough and tangled tufts of vegetation, jutting masses or bold faces of rock, gnarled trunks and tortuous branches of trees and ruined buildings half covered with ivy, wallflowers and ferns.⁵³

Similarly, in 1866 Hughes described a picturesque landscape consisting of broken and rugged features, bold outlines, trees and shrubs "arranged in irregular plantations, deep and tangled in portions". Sudden variety and contrast were much used, cascades, broken scenery, rapid streams and rocks all contributed to the picturesque effect. Hughes thought it gave great consequence and contrast to the rigidity of French and Italian gardens.⁵⁴

The images projected by these descriptions are those of a rugged landscape in which the composition created by the landform and accessories, such as rocks, streams, trees and shrubs, left little space for flowers or horticultural achievement.

Loudon split the picturesque into several categories: the rough, the trivial, the refined or elegant picturesque and the pictorial style. In 1853 M'Intosh described the categories. Nearest to the house, beyond the dressed parterre, one would expect to find the polished or refined picturesque. At a distance the style would become the trivial picturesque with trees and shrubs, going over into the rough picturesque without trees, which then linked up with the natural scenery beyond.⁵⁵

⁵³ Kemp, Edward: *How to Lay Out a Garden*, 1850, p. 71

⁵⁴ Hughes, John Arthur: *Garden Architecture and Landscape Gardening*, 1866, p. 41

⁵⁵ Loudon, John Claudius : "On Laying Out and Planting", *Gardener's Magazine*, 1843, p. 167; M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, 1853, Vol. 1, pp. 577 & 698

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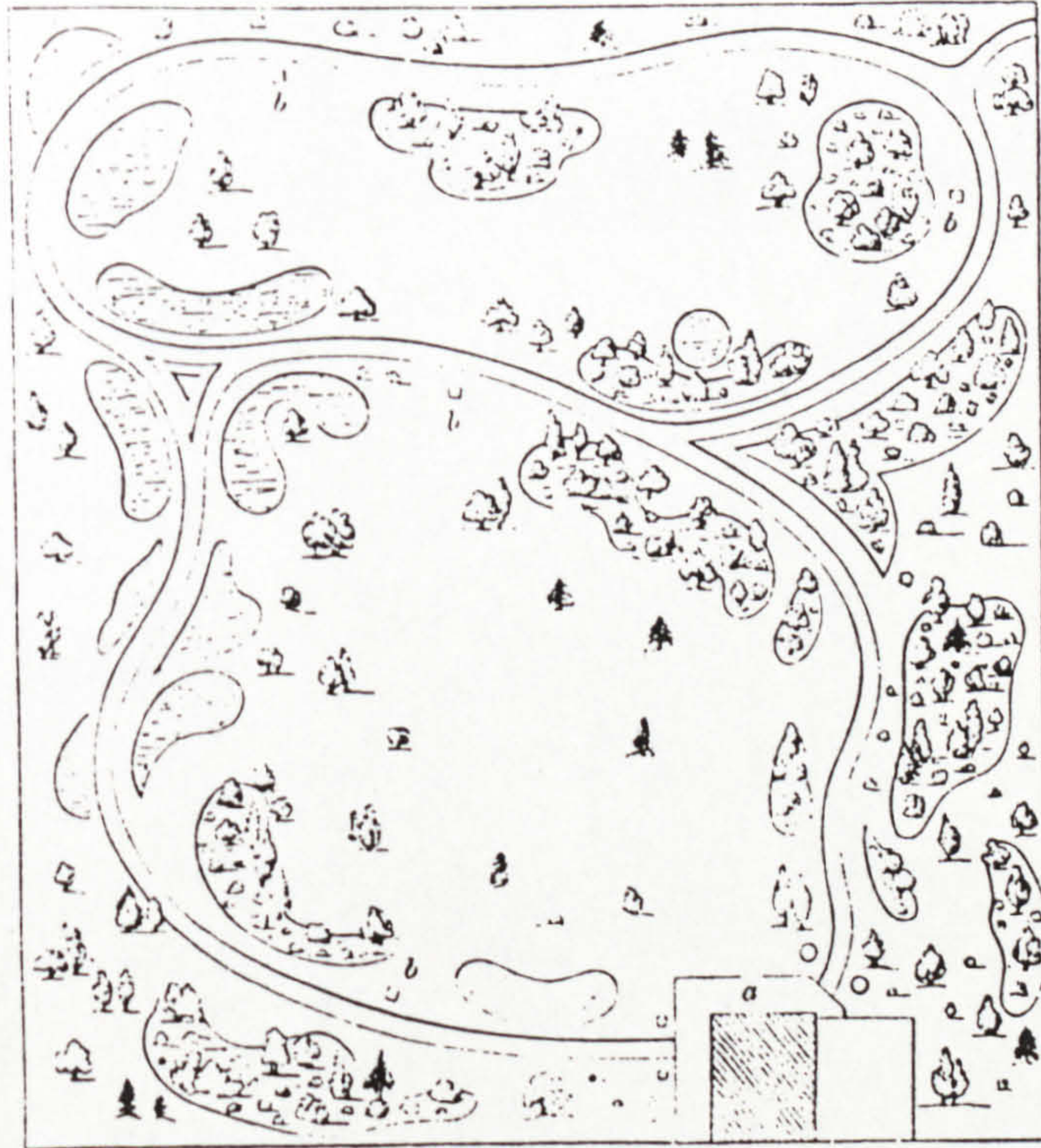
The refined picturesque areas could contain flowers, although they were probably parterres of bedding plants. In contrast, the rough picturesque, which was intended to look like nature, contained "strong growing plants", a term often used to refer to herbaceous plants. Preference was probably given to indigenous plants or those with a naturalistic appearance which would blend in well with native planting.

To back up his explanations, M'Intosh included several illustrations of gardens. One was for a picturesque garden which included several styles, the other example shown here was for a refined picturesque flower garden (see illustration 18). The picturesque garden (illustration 17) had a terrace garden near the house (see *a* on the plan) laid out in the geometric style, which could be laid out as a simple parterre. The rest of the garden was a composition of trees, shrubs and flowers grouped in masses in the picturesque style. Statues and vases (marked *b* on the plan) represented what M'Intosh called the architectural or sculptural style. Without the terrace garden or statues and vases, the garden would have looked little better than a well thinned forest scene, or so M'Intosh thought.

The refined picturesque flower garden example was set at some distance from the house (see illustration 18). It was enclosed by wire fencing (which would have kept rabbits and/or deer out), screened by a belt of shrubs like laurels and rhododendrons. These were allowed to spill forward in broadly waving lines, to create an effect of unevenness, making sure no soil or bed margin was visible. The walks were gravelled, the beds set in turf. On the plan *a* was a moss house, *b* a seat. M'Intosh did not specify which plants to use, the large beds were planted with dwarf shrubs, the others with low-growing flowering plants. The smallest clumps contained only one plant species of one colour⁵⁶, indicating that they would have been planted in the massed style, the other in the mingled style (see chapters 3.4.1.2 and 3.4.2).

⁵⁶ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, 1853, Vol. 1, p. 699

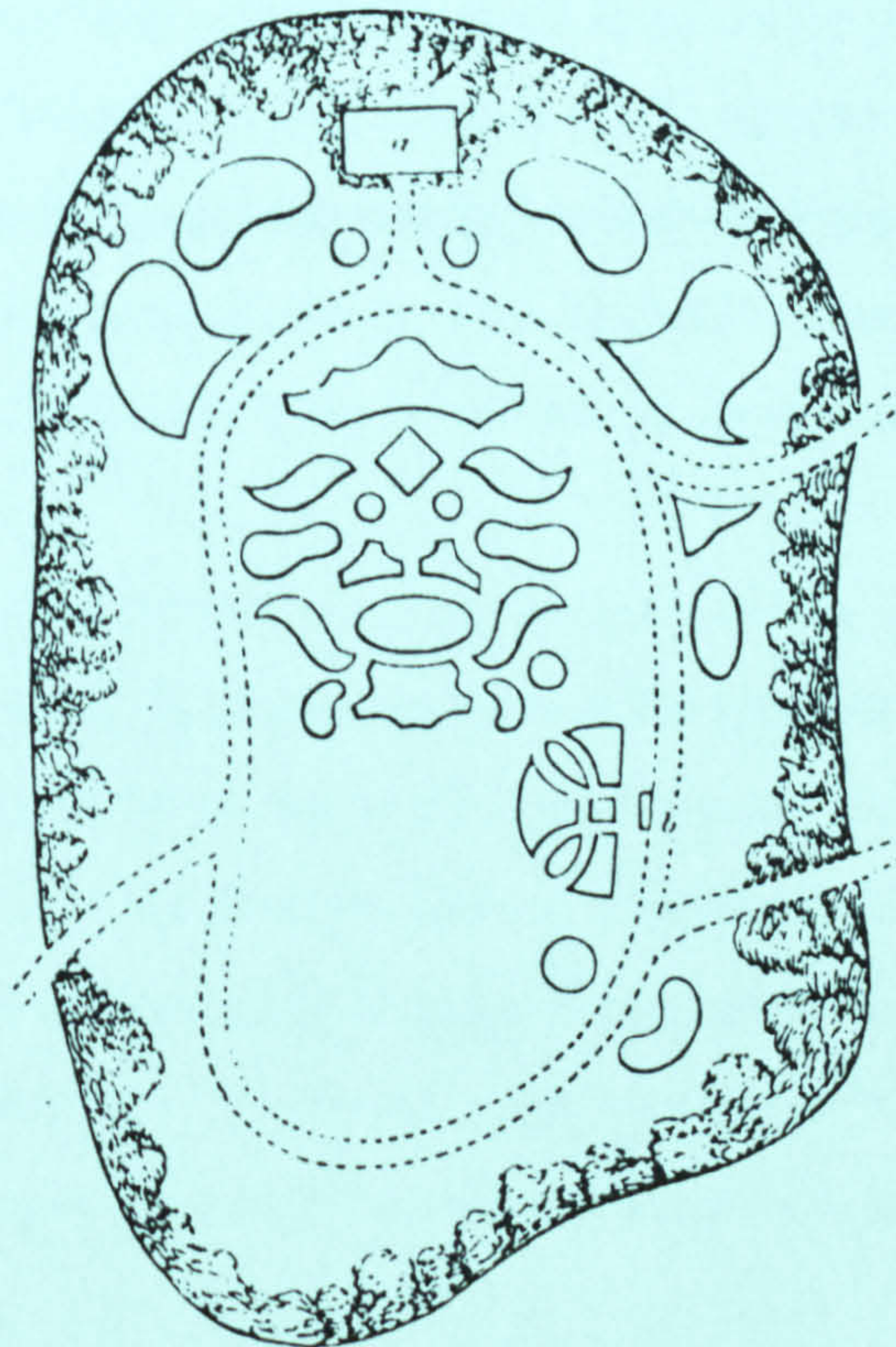
ILLUSTRATION 17: PLAN FOR A REFINED PICTURESQUE GARDEN



A plan of a garden which according to M'Intosh combined gardenesque, architectural and geometrical features. There was a terrace garden near the house (a), which could be laid out as a simple parterre. The rest of the garden consisted of trees, shrubs and flowers planted in masses along the walks, representing the picturesque style. Statues and vases (b) represented the architectural or sculptural style.

(M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, 1853, p. 694)

ILLUSTRATION 18: PLAN FOR A REFINED PICTURESQUE FLOWER GARDEN AT SOME DISTANCE FROM THE HOUSE



This plan shows a flower garden in the refined picturesque style. The walks were covered in gravel, the figures cut out of turf. It was surrounded by a wire fence to keep animals out, but this was concealed by shrubbery planting, providing shelter and privacy. It consisted of evergreen shrubs such as rhododendrons and laurels, which graded down in stature towards the front. The large beds contained dwarf shrubs, the small ones low-growing flowering plants, planted in small clumps of one species and colour only. There was a moss house (a) and seat (b).

(M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, 1853, p. 699)

Most, including Loudon, agreed that the different styles could not be intermixed. Being of different character, it was impossible, for example, to combine the picturesque and gardenesque into one scene. However M'Intosh explained that it was not inappropriate to mix styles within one garden, as long as the areas were separated, and the level of order and control decreased towards the perimeter. Nearest to the house could be the Italianate style, progressing into lawn terraces in the Dutch style. After this could come the gardenesque style, beyond which the picturesque area would lie.⁵⁷ This meant the landscape gardener could be flexible when laying out his gardens, making use of all the different styles, if and where appropriate.

Much was written and speculated about picturesque gardens. An article in the *Cottage Gardener* of 1860 made the observation that although most gardeners of those days were experts on the subject, knew all about creating the right effects and were probably better at it than Repton and his contemporaries, none ever had the opportunity to put their knowledge into practice. In and near London particularly, no gardener ever had the chance to lay out a picturesque garden. They could only make small-scale improvements, but never created a whole new scheme.⁵⁸

Small-Scale Picturesque Gardens

Although many references to the picturesque style found in the course of this research referred to larger sites, picturesque planting could also be recommended for the smaller town gardens as could be seen in Loudon's book the *Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion*, published in 1838. It contained suggestions for town gardens of varying sizes, for owners of varying financial means.

⁵⁷ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, 1853, p.575

⁵⁸ Beaton, Donald: "How to Proceed in the arrangement of Pleasure Grounds", 1860, p. 250, *Cottage Gardener*

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In this book, Loudon distinguished four categories of garden, depending on size:

- *First-rate gardens*: with lawn, pleasure ground and park or farm. House stood at some distance from the entrance. Ten acres upwards.
- *Second-rate gardens*: with lawn, pleasure ground, walled kitchen garden and stable offices. House stood at some distance from the entrance gate, but no park or farm attached. Two acres upwards.
- *Third-rate gardens*: house was at some distance from the entrance gate, with lawn, pleasure ground and kitchen garden combined. One acre or more in extent.
- *Fourth-rate gardens*: house formed part of street or row. From one perch⁵⁹ to one acre.

The first three categories were for villa gardens, the latter included street houses and cottage gardens, owned by people of modest means.

These picturesque villa flower gardens described in Loudon's book⁶⁰, consisted of trees, shrubs, and flowers arranged in irregular groups and thickets of different sizes, scattered across the lawn. They were intended to create an ensemble, a whole picture, without any one particular item standing out in isolation.

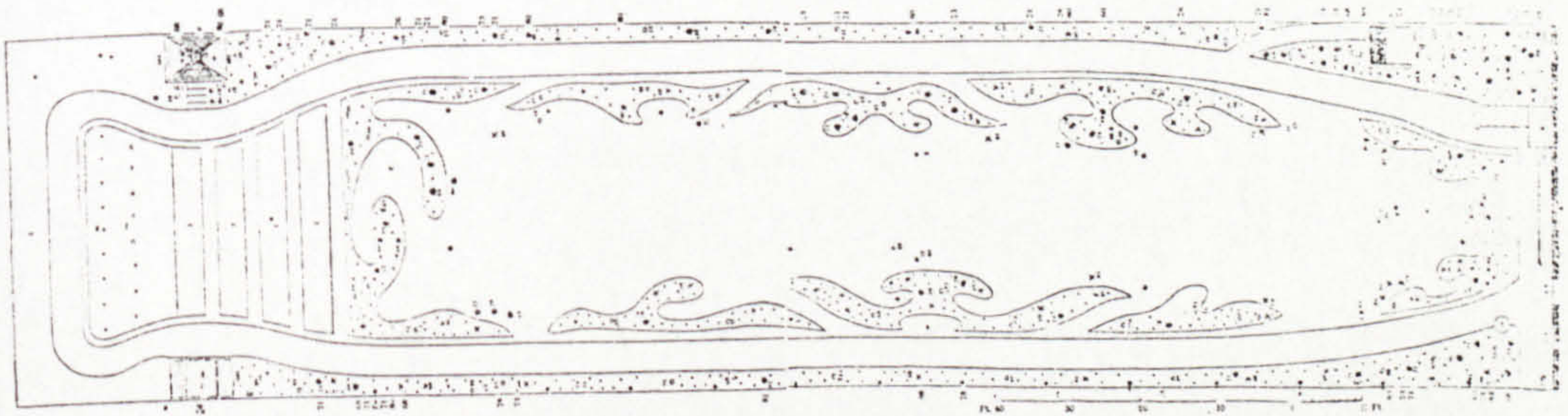
Loudon illustrated his book with a detailed example and plan for such a garden (see illustrations 19 and 20).⁶¹ Around the edges of the garden, against the fences, he suggested having borders reserved for planting herbaceous plants, with just a few trees and evergreen shrubs. Here the flowers could grow without too much interference from tree or shrub branches and roots, which would otherwise create competition for

⁵⁹A perch was a measure of thirty and a quarter square yards, or 25.3 square metres.

⁶⁰Loudon, John Claudius: *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Garden Companion*, 1838, p. 251

⁶¹Loudon, John Claudius: *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion*, 1838, pp. 251-261

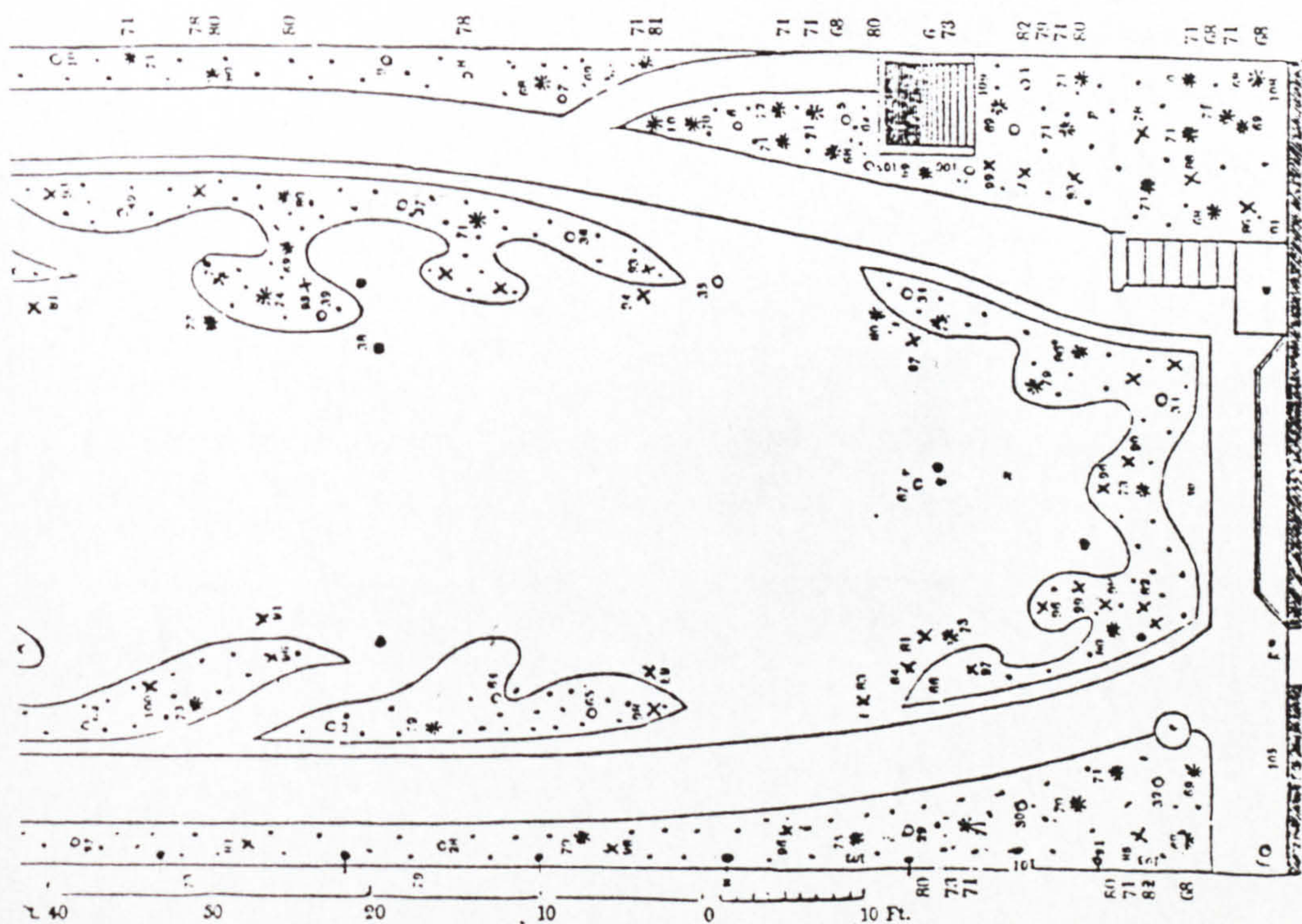
**ILLUSTRATION 19: PLAN FOR A SUBURBAN VILLA GARDEN PLANTED
IN THE PICTURESQUE STYLE**



The above plan shows a central lawn with irregularly shaped beds with scalloped edges. They were planted with trees and shrubs, interplanted with perennials. Only along the outside wall was there a border specifically designed for flowers.

(Loudon, J. C.: *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion*, 1838, p. 251)

ILLUSTRATION 20: DETAIL OF PLAN FOR A SUBURBAN VILLA GARDEN PLANTED IN THE PICTURESQUE STYLE



The detail of the preceding plan shows the planting in beds and borders. Woody plants were marked with crosses and stars, perennials with dots. They were planted to cover any bare earth until the shrubs had filled out the spaces. At this point they could either be removed or the shrubs could be cut back to make some space for them.

(Loudon, J. C.: *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion*, 1838, p. 251)

light, water and nutrients. In the middle of the garden there was a large lawn with a number of irregularly shaped beds with scalloped edges scattered about. These were for trees and shrubs, initially interplanted with a few herbaceous perennials, which would gradually disappear after three or four years, as the trees and shrubs grew and reached maturity. If so desired, some branches of the shrubs could be pruned back to allow more space for the perennials, but this was not generally recommended.

To create a picturesque effect, small groups of shrubs and flowers set in a lawn had to be of irregular shape. After a few years the ground would be completely covered with vegetation, leaving no bare earth to be seen, and obliterating the distinct line of the bed's margin as the bed and grass merged naturally into one another.⁶² The intention was to allow grass and plants to flow into one another in an unobtrusive way. Paths had to be well topped up with gravel, and the general line of the beds had to follow the outline of the paths.⁶³

In Loudon's *Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion* a second way of planting herbaceous plants was described. Besides the irregularly-shaped island beds with woody plants, where herbaceous plants were only used as gap fillers (see above), there were also borders round the edge of this same garden. These borders were reserved for growing herbaceous perennials, without too much competition from roots and foliage for light, water and nutrients. Consequently very few woody subjects were added to these borders, and the herbaceous perennials would have been arranged according to the principles of mixing or mingling.

In contrast to Loudon, Kemp considered that small gardens were virtually impossible to render picturesque. Picturesque elements could be introduced into the garden scene,

⁶² Loudon, John Claudius: *A treatise on Forming, Improving, and Managing Country Residences*, 1806, Vol. I, p. 350

⁶³ Gilpin, William Sawrey: *Practical Hints upon Landscape Gardening*, 1832, p. 55

but he thought it was difficult to lay out a small garden in the picturesque style, as it accompanied a house, which in itself was an object of the highest art. He suggested some of the following elements which could be added to a garden to render it picturesque: growing ivy or clematis over old tree stumps; decorating garlands with roses; covering pillars in climbers growing wildly; leading climbers to grow up into trees; growing ivies on a standard tree-like stem allowing them to branch out and grow wild; adding rockeries and rocky streams, water falls; introducing fern collections; building rustic arbours and seats; adding broken pillars, old vases or urns; displaying baskets of flowers; adding scooped out tree trunks.⁶⁴

Herbaceous Planting in Picturesque Context

Loudon suggested that in a picturesque display, whether it was in a flower garden, shrubbery or greenhouse, a natural approach should be taken to planting by following the example of a natural forest, where one species prevailed over the others. When different species were involved, all the species of one genus should be planted to be connected to one another, but with a careless and natural appearance.⁶⁵

Looking at nature to see how to arrange plants was something the Germans frequently did during the second half of the nineteenth century (see Chapter 4.2.4.3: Germany's naturalistic planting and the wild garden), though they were more interested in meadows than woodlands.

Following nature was a good guideline in planting. There are several parallels that can be drawn between nature's behaviour pattern and picturesque planting recommendations. Unless topographical features, extreme climatic conditions or other

⁶⁴ Kemp, Edward: *How to Lay Out a Garden*, 1850, pp. 71-2

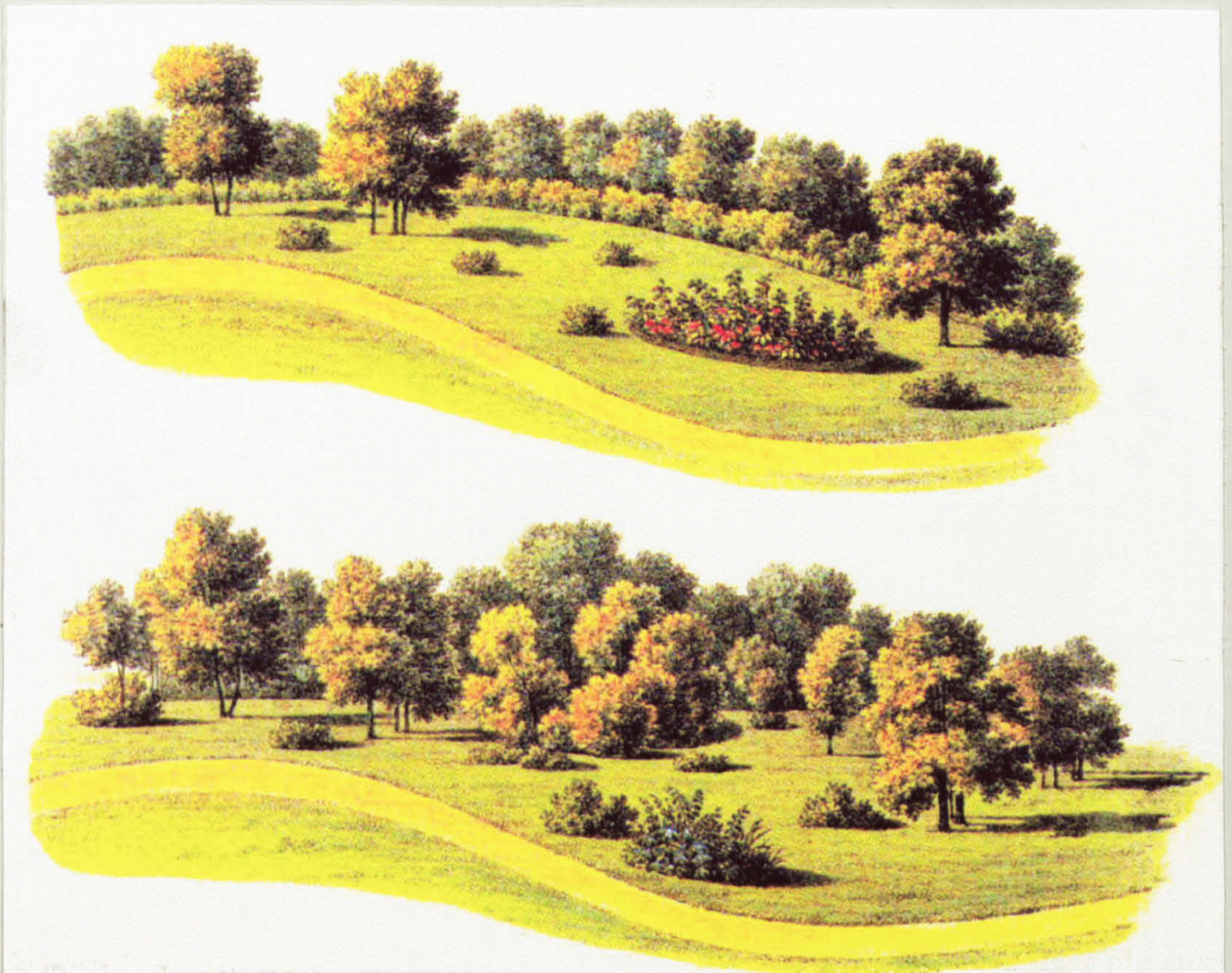
⁶⁵ Loudon, John Claudius: *Observations on the Formation and Management of Useful and Ornamental Plantation*, 1804, p. 262

circumstances such as grazing animals or fire inhibit the growth of trees and shrubs, nature goes through a set pattern of regeneration. Cleared land will first be covered by grasses and low herbaceous plants (annual, biennial or perennial), offering protection to developing pioneering woody species, which in turn will act as nurse crops to shelter the long-term tree cover. As shade increases and the trees and shrubs grow larger, there will be less and less space for herbaceous plants, except for shade tolerant ones, and those growing along woodland margins or in clearings. Herbaceous plants then take on a secondary role, just as they do in the tree and shrub beds described by Loudon (see above). Furthermore, monoculture only occurs in nature under exceptional circumstances. In most instances where one predominant species is found it is accompanied by one or more others. If one species fails, another one will be there to take its place. Straight lines are the exception in nature. Plants grow where the seed falls, root where a branch touches the ground or emerge where a root sucker finds the right conditions.

In settings designed under the picturesque influence, herbaceous perennials frequently played a secondary role, often filling the areas in between trees and shrubs in a bed. In the pleasure ground herbaceous flowers were planted along the shrubbery walks to embellish and enrich resting areas, encouraging the walker to sit down (see illustration 21). The ground below plantations could be covered with native flowers, such as violets, snowdrops, squills, *Ranunculus ficaria*, *Lychnis*, primroses, wood anemones and ferns.⁶⁶ Scented flowers or even fruit were ideal. Around the edges of shrub masses, flowers were planted to bridge the gap between the shrubs and the grass until the shrubs had filled the space. This would take between one and four years, after which period they would most probably have died due to lack of light. This planting of flowers in beds along walks and along shrubbery edges was also very popular in Germany. (See also illustration 79.)

⁶⁶ Kemp, Edward: *How to Lay Out a Garden*, 1858, pp. 170-1, 239-40

ILLUSTRATION 21: PUECKLER'S TREE PLANTING DETAILS



(Original in colour)

To improve a shrubbery edge in naturalistic settings, Pückler broke the straight bed margin by bringing forward small clumps and specimens of trees and shrubs. Small flower beds were placed along the path.

(Pückler - Muskau, von Herman: *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei* 1834 (1996))

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ILLUSTRATION 22: ILLUSTRATION OF AUDLEY END'S ELYSIAN GARDEN



(Original in colour)

William Tomkins' paintings show the Elysian garden at Audley End House, which was created in the 1780's. Informal flower beds were dotted around on the lawn, and the shrubbery edges were planted with edges of perennials, as can be seen in the background.

(English Heritage Photographic library, J950038, Audley End House: "View from the Tea House" by William Tomkins)

At Audley End House, English Heritage are currently restoring the Elysian garden dating from 1780s. This pleasure ground area consisted of a doric arcade, a cold bath, subterranean passage, a rustic gateway and a cascade. The winding contours of the shrubbery edges were planted with mixed perennials such as hollyhocks, pinks and *Campanula pyramidalis*. There were also informal beds planted with mixed herbaceous planting. Unfortunately the garden had disappeared by the 1830s as plants had succumbed to frosts. ⁶⁷ Illustration 22 shows one of the views by William Tomkins, painted in 1788.

Similar to Loudon's suggestion for planting a mixture of trees, shrubs and flowers in the island beds of the villa garden (see illustration 19), were William Sawrey Gilpin's recommendations for planting clumps. If the garden was small, it was best to plant one fair-sized mass of trees and shrubs, but if at all possible, it was preferable to have several masses. These created more variety and intricacy. Masses of large trees were planted together with shrubs of various size and character, in order to make a visual connection with the lawn. Especially low, overhanging evergreens were suitable for planting near the edge of the lawn, as their overhanging branches would hide the bed's edge. (See also chapter 3.3.1.2, Informal Beds.)

In *A Treatise on Forming, Improving, and Managing Country Residences* of 1806, Loudon described in some detail the type of planting suitable for different purposes in a park or garden. Firstly he listed plants suitable as groundcover, secondly he gave some suggestions for plants which would add character to different areas.

- *To clothe the ground:* mainly grasses and succulent plants used in agriculture. For wild scenes: *Juncus*, *Effusus* (syn. *Juncus effusus?*), carexes, *Fragaria vesca*, *Thymus x montana*, *Galium montanum*, and *Bellis perennis*, some of which, already present, could be encouraged to increase, while others could be introduced. Plants such as *Alchemilla alpina*, *Thymus*, *Saxifraga oppositifolia*

were considered to look and grow well in the wild hilly landscapes, but would not thrive in cultivated meadows, lawns or fertile open parks.

- *To enrich, vary, give intricacy to fore-grounds, abruptness, broken ground, water margins or picturesque parts of a scene:* These plants came in various categories.⁶⁸

- *Plants for the polished ground:* producing intricacy, broken ground or water margins where no cattle is present. These could consist of exotic shrubs, flowers, and creepers such as *Rhododendron*, *Rosa*, *Arbutus*, *Phyllaria* (syn. *Phillyrea*), *Rheum*, *Solidago*, etc all plants of different species of the larger sorts. *Vinca*, *Cistus*, *Andromeda* and *Erica* were plants of the smaller sorts. *Cheiranthus* (syn. *Erysimum*), *Valeriana*, *Iris*, *Aster* and *Orobus* (syn. *Lathyrus*), were suitable for the intermediate gradation in shape, magnitude, colour and time of flowering and for all soil types.

- *Water plants:* They were numerous: *Potamogeton*, *Typha*, *Hippuris*, *Zizania*, *Alisma*, etc. Loudon advocated the imitation of the beauties of nature. Each type of water feature had its appropriate plants that could be used.⁶⁹

- *Plants for wild scenery, where cattle were admitted:* Loudon listed the plants which would not be touched by deer, horses, asses, horned cattle and sheep. They included ferns, *Arum*, *Digitalis*, briar roses, sloe-thorn, *Genista* and bramble. Plants which were seldom eaten were: *Acanthus*, *Valeriana dioica*, *Epilobium*, *Lathyrus*, *Astrantia*, *Ulex*, *Spartium*, *Vaccinium*, common whin, *Genista anglica*, *Salix*

⁶⁸ Synonyms of plants have been put in brackets, where there was any doubt about the names, a question mark has been added.

⁶⁹ Loudon, John Claudius: *A Treatise on Forming, Improving and Managing Country Residences*, 1806, p. 378

lapponica (syn. *S. lapponum*), *S. repens*, *S. sericeum* (syn. *S. sericans*)
and many others.

The plants listed in the last two categories were considered by Loudon as most suitable for creating picturesque scenery. With the exception of the plants listed in the category of "Plants for the polished ground", many were native or suitable for naturalising in the British countryside.

It appears that no particular colour scheme was adhered to in picturesque displays. As the overall aim was to create an image of nature, there was no place here for intricate colour schemes.⁷⁰

The Changing Landscape: The Birth of the Gardenesque

In the days before the landscape movement developed in the eighteenth century, when the ancient or geometric style still reigned, people were keen to make an impact on the untamed landscape surrounding them, by laying out their grounds in straight, formal lines. The continuing development of agricultural techniques and enclosure of fields resulted in the wild-looking landscape becoming more tamed and straightened out. As a reaction, the English landscape movement developed during the eighteenth century, enabling landowners to surround themselves by graceful curving lines and wild- or natural-looking scenery which imitated nature. By 1838 Loudon complained that it had become virtually impossible to create either type of park, geometric or picturesque, with the usual indigenous trees, because they did not stand out any more from their surroundings. Instead he suggested a third development in the laying out of parks: he recommended using exotic species, either in connection with the formal geometric style, or with the informal picturesque style, or in a combination of both, calling it the *gardenesque*. It separated the surrounding landscape from the newly created one. Art was to be in evidence throughout; it was to be found in the smoothness of the turf

⁷⁰ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol.1, 1853, p. 655

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and the high maintenance standards of the walks, but even more so in the use of exotic trees, shrubs and flowering plants.⁷¹

As far as M'Intosh was concerned, the ground could be slightly hilly or flat, the trees indigenous or exotic, the clumps or parterres could be of regular or irregular shape, and the more permanent decorations could be architectural or sculptural objects. In his case "Art" was represented in architectural features and ornaments.

Although Loudon was the first to define gardenesque planting, according to Harris the idea had been around for much longer. Joseph Spence, a gardener who advised on some fifty gardens between 1736 and 1766, had been practising the gardenesque, and had been spreading his ideas through Chambers.⁷² Harris claims that Spence, Bateman, Peter and Southcote invented the style, though it was not until the nineteenth century that Loudon came up with the term and developed the concept. It is therefore generally attributed to him.

Hughes defined the gardenesque as consisting of trees and shrubs, planted in masses or groups, far enough apart or thinned so as never to touch one another. From nearby each tree and shrub was seen distinctly, from far they would show a high degree of beauty resulting from the art which placed them where they were. The trees, shrubs and flowers chosen were exotics, grown in a highly cultivated environment, in irregular

⁷¹ Loudon, John Claudius : "Notes on Gardens and Country Seats", 1833, p. 682, *Gardener's Magazine* and Loudon, John Claudius: *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Garden Companion* , 1838, pp. 150, 162

⁷² Harris, John, "John Claudius Loudon and the Early 19th Century in Great Britain: the Imperfect Ideas on the Genesis of the Loudonesque Flower Garden", *History of Landscape Architecture* 1980, pp. 54-7, Elizabeth Macdougall editor, Washington, Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium

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groups with good outlines.⁷³ Plants were no longer crowded into dense masses, nor were they planted in straight lines.

Unlike the geometric, which was grand and richly decorated, the gardenesque offered privacy and variety, but also economy. A gardenesque garden should have:

"elegance, variety, and harmony, by the judicious contrasts in the distribution of partial flower-beds, shrubs, and plantations, with other tasteful and appropriate decorations."⁷⁴

The definitions given by Loudon, M'Intosh and Hughes indicate the gardenesque demanded a much higher horticultural standard than did the picturesque. Plants were grown to perfection.

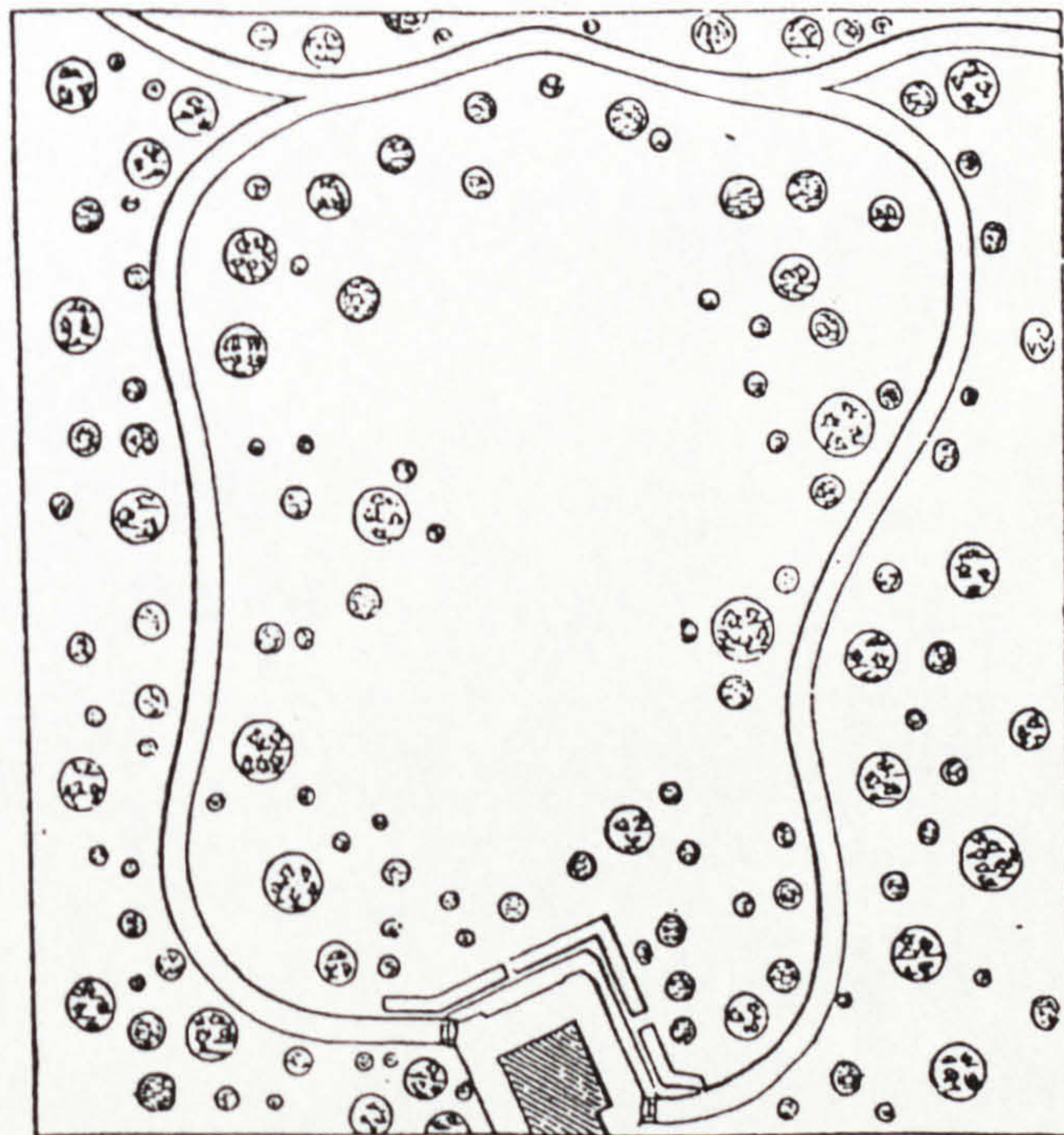
M'Intosh dedicated a whole chapter to the gardenesque in *The Book of the Flower Garden* of 1853, providing great detail about gardenesque gardens. Besides explaining how to create an overall gardenesque layout, he added many examples of different types of gardenesque flower gardens.

One of the gardens contained nicely curving serpentine walks, beds (in this case they were circular, a shape which he felt was easy to work with), having trees and shrubs dotted about (see illustration 23). The house was linked to the rest of the grounds by a terrace, which had architectural features such as vases, associated with the geometrical style. There was a broad gravel walk, with a parterre border between it and the terrace wall. It was possible to have a narrow border (eighteen inches to two feet or 0.45 to 0.60 metres) along the base of the wall with climbing plants. At the foot of these grew low-growing scented plants, which were planted to prevent soil from

⁷³ Hughes, John Arthur: *Garden Architecture and Landscape Gardening*, 1866, p.41

⁷⁴ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, 1853, pp. 655-7

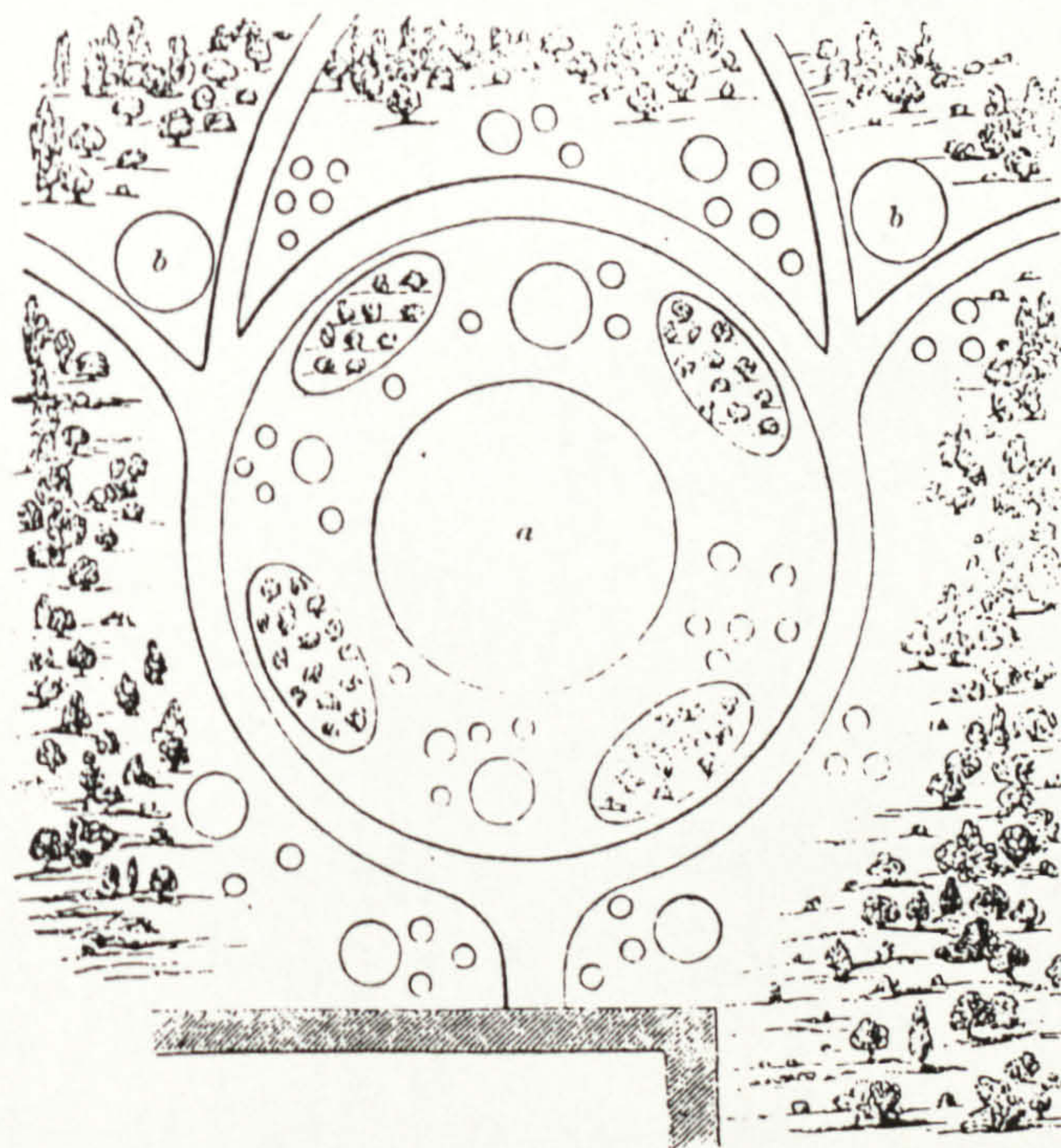
ILLUSTRATION 23: GARDENESQUE FLOWER GARDEN WITH CIRCULAR FLOWER BEDS



The lawn for this gardenesque flower garden was dotted with circular flower beds of varying size, which was all that was needed according to some of the followers of the gardenesque style, to create sufficient variety and interest. The paths led to secluded garden rooms

(M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, 1853, vol. 1, p. 655)

ILLUSTRATION 24: PLAN FOR A GARDENESQUE GARDEN



Plan for a flower garden in the gardenesque style based around a sunken circular bowling green (a) in the centre, surrounded by elliptical shrub beds and some small round gardens (b) to be subdivided into smaller compartments.

(M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, 1853, p. 655-7)

plashing on the wall in the rain. Although it was recommended to level out the soil surface, it should not be as smooth as for a geometric parterre, nor as undulating as for a picturesque display. From the house there was a main walk, from which paths would lead to the various garden rooms, hidden from the main walk. It was also inappropriate to see the gravel paths from the house. Wherever possible they should be concealed behind shrubs and trees, with just an occasional view opening out onto particular features.

The other example was of a garden without terraces in front of the house, but with a sunken circular bowling green in the centre and elliptical beds of shrubs scattered about. The layout, although with winding paths and informal planting, retains a certain order and symmetry (see illustration 24).

Besides these examples for gardenesque overall garden layouts, M'Intosh also included a list of different types of theme gardens within a pleasure ground, which could be laid out in the gardenesque style.

- *The American Garden:* This was a garden for trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants from North America.⁷⁵ On three sides it was enclosed with a belt of shrubs, the fourth side was bordered by the main path. The beds were cut out of turf, in different shapes and scrolls. The larger beds were reserved for shrubs and small trees, smaller beds were filled with perennial and annual flowers.
- *The rose garden or rosarium:* As the geometric style was not excluded from the gardenesque environment, a geometric layout could be chosen, with narrow beds so that the roses could be seen from close-by. It was completely isolated from the rest of the garden, as the cultural requirements of a rose

⁷⁵ Plants requiring acid growing conditions were usually grouped together in an area called the American garden.

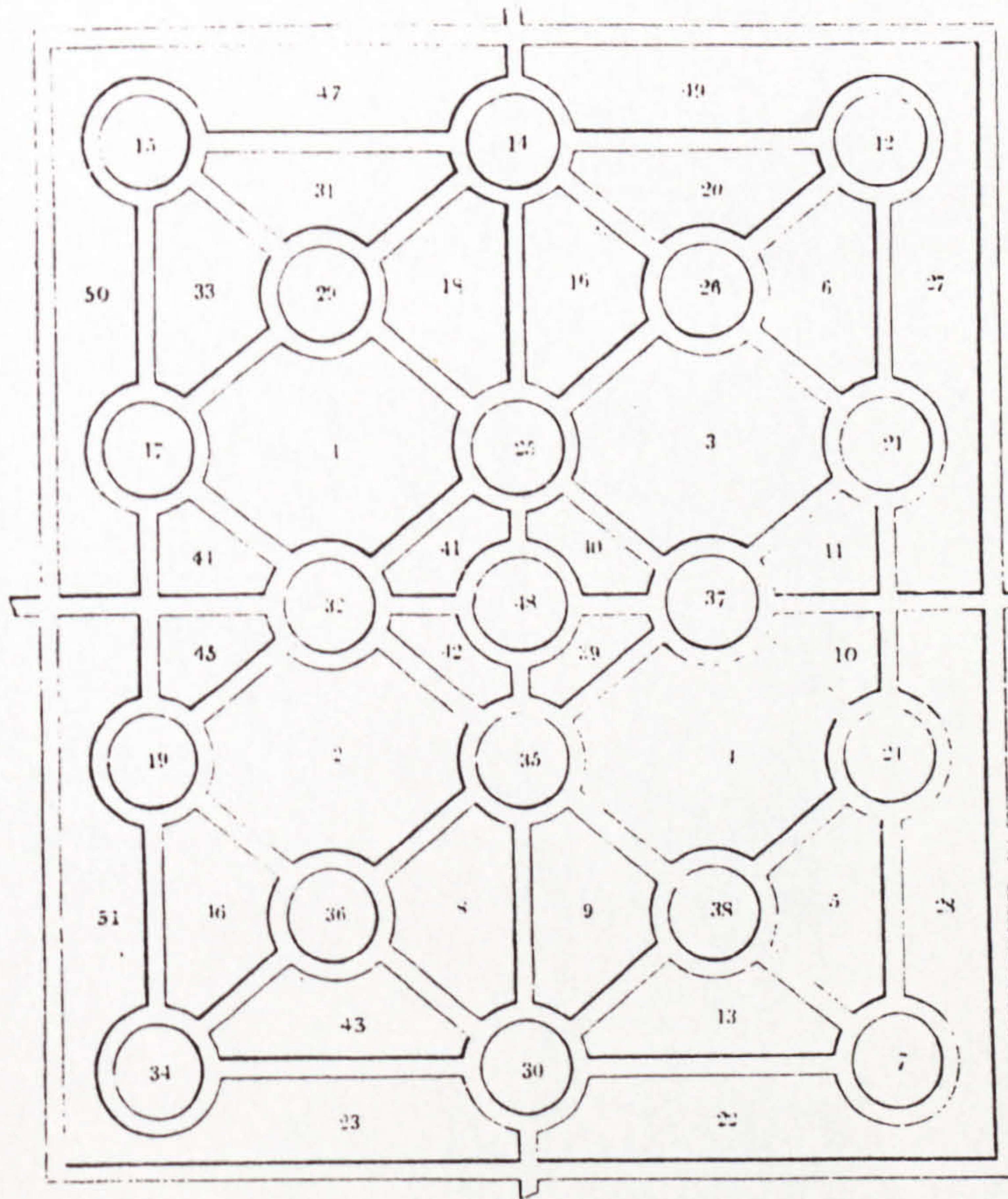
garden were not in keeping with a gardenesque flower garden. In summer they were under-planted with annuals, in spring the ground was covered with moss.⁷⁶

- *The fernery and muscarium:* This area, dedicated to ferns and mosses, was still rare, but there were some examples about. They needed a warm, moist atmosphere, such as in a ravine bottom. The ground was levelled and turfed, and then according to the moisture requirements of the ferns, they were planted in sunken areas or on slight hillocks, surrounded by stones and interplanted with mosses. Although the ruggedness made it more in keeping with the picturesque style, its high cultural demands made it a gardenesque environment.
- *The winter garden:* These were sheltered gardens, in which everything that flowered between the months of October and March could be planted out, against a background of evergreen and variegated shrubs and trees. Along the path margin winter flowering bulbs such as snowdrops and winter aconites, and perennials such as hellebores and primroses were planted.
- *The bulb garden:* In a dry, warm sheltered spot, laid out in longitudinal beds (which were easier to cover with glass or canvas to protect them from rain) all the bulbous plants could be planted together.
- *The annual flower garden:* In a sheltered, sunny position this garden was best approached from the south side to view the flowers to their full advantage. It was planted with annuals only, which would provide late summer interest.

⁷⁶ According to Tony Lord, due to popular demand, most roses grown between the 1820's and early 1880's were standards and half standards, rather than bush roses. Their unsightly habit would have contributed to the need for screening them in a separate garden area.

- *The grass garden:* This garden was considered of botanical rather than garden value, but was included because of the close link between the Gramineae and the human food chain. They were best grown in flower pots of the right proportion for their size, or if in open ground, the beds had to be divided into square areas by brick walls sunken into the ground, so that those with an invasive root system could not invade their neighbours' patch.
- *The hardy heath garden:* A garden dedicated to ericaceous plants was attractive the whole year round, and therefore did not need screening off as the rosarium. They could thus be included on the lawn in the gardenesque part of the grounds. Woburn Abbey was cited as an example, where all the beds were edged with *Calluna* and *Erica tetralix*, and then filled with one species each. The tallest heaths in the middle of the parterre, the lower ones near the edge.
- *The herbaceous plant garden:* Unless a botanical collection was wanted, the choice of plants was limited to freely flowering herbaceous perennials. Each sort was planted in groups, the size of which depended on the available space. The symmetrical plan included was considered most suitable for the subject. It contained fifty-one beds, allowing space for between ten and fifty plants of each species (see illustration 25).

ILLUSTRATION 25: PLAN FOR A HERBACEOUS PLANT GARDEN



Plan for a herbaceous plant garden in a geometric layout. It contains fifty-one beds each of which were to be filled with one genus and possibly different species, and were large enough to hold between ten and fifty plant.

(M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, 1853, p. 664-72)

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The genera suggested were:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Campanula | 27. Saxifraga |
| 2. Phlox | 28. Sedum |
| 3. Aster | 29. Silene |
| 4. Delphinium | 30. Spirea |
| 5. Aconitum | 31. Statice |
| 6. Penstemon | 32. Uvularia |
| 7. Helleborus | 33. Iris |
| 8. Alstroemeria | 34. Chelone |
| 9. Anemone | 35. Armeria |
| 10. Aquilegia | 36. Lythrum |
| 11. Cheiranthus | 37. Astragalus |
| 12. Dodecatheon | 38. Euphorbia |
| 13. Dracocephalum | 39. Helonias |
| 14. Erigeron | 40. Alyssum |
| 15. Gentiana | 41. Lychnis |
| 16. Hemerocallis and Hosta | 42. Asclepias |
| 17. Iberis | 43. Coronella |
| 18. Lathyrus | 44. Acanthus |
| 19. Liatris | 45. Fraxinella |
| 20. Lupinus | 46. Achillea |
| 21. Monarda | 47. Lathyrus |
| 22. Paeonia | 48. Yucca |
| 23. Potentilla | 49. Scabiosa |
| 24. Primula | 50. Dianthus |
| 25. Ranunculus | 51. Oenothera |
| 26. Salvia | |

As for flower parterres in the gardenesque style, the irregular shaped ones were most suitable.⁷⁷

These theme gardens had also been described for example by Joshua Major, though not in connection with the gardenesque. M'Intosh isolated these gardens so that plants could be grown to the highest perfection. But because these gardens were not always beautiful all year round, or they needed extra shelter or shade for perfect growing conditions, it was easier to screen them off from the main garden. Major's reasoning for separating off the different flower gardens was purely aesthetic. A garden appeared

⁷⁷ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, vol. 1, 1853, pp. 664-72

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smaller if the principal lawn in front of the house was cluttered up with flower beds. If they were removed away from the house, an impression of boldness was created by making the grounds seem much larger.⁷⁸

Kemp thought that in small gardens a gardenesque approach to planting was generally best suited, as individual plants made good specimens, grassing-over the areas in between, which extended the lawn to its maximum capacity.⁷⁹ This was perfectly acceptable, as in the gardenesque movement, when seen from close by, the shape and form of the plant itself were important, not the effect of the whole. However, when seen from a distance, all the plants together still had to be part of a composition, as in the picturesque.

Whereas the gardenesque style was appropriate for those who enjoyed landscape scenery as well as those that were interested in the plants like the botanists and gardeners, the picturesque movement was suited to those who appreciated landscape scenery. As the gardenesque was of relevance to more than one discipline, Loudon regarded it as more of an art to create a gardenesque ensemble.⁸⁰ However M'Intosh considered it easier than the picturesque, as in the picturesque it was necessary to achieve a higher standard in imitating nature as closely as possible, which he thought required more artistic skills, whereas the gardenesque movement required more of a horticultural skill to have every plant looking as good as possible and the overall effect being much more polished.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Major, Joshua: *The Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, 1852, p. 27

⁷⁹ Kemp, Edward: *How to Lay Out a Garden*, 1858, p. 172

⁸⁰ Loudon, John Claudius: "Gardening as an Art", *Gardener's Magazine*, Vol. 11, 1835, pp. 611-3

⁸¹ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, 1853, p. 582

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Picturesque landscape improvers were chiefly concerned with the landscaping of the setting. Shaping land, placing of rocks, water features, paths and other hard-landscaping features in the right positions and placing trees and shrubs in appropriate places and right shaped clumps were their main tasks. The position of a flower bed or flower garden could also be recommended, though planting details were not included. Flower gardening was not something they concerned themselves with. Different explanations can be found for this. Late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century landscape gardeners like Repton and Gilpin had a very good eye for design and composition, but had no real horticultural background. Their plant knowledge appears to have been chiefly limited to woody species. Even today it is unusual to find a good landscape architect who is also a good plantsman.

The other obvious reason for not including planting details, was that most of the time it was done by the gardeners, possibly under supervision of the lady of the house, often to the highest standards. Even when a landscape gardener had been commissioned to make improvements to the property, or design the flower garden, his recommendations would not have gone beyond establishing the shapes and positions of the beds, if that. As flower gardening, even with perennials, was very ephemeral and in need of regular revision, it was better left under supervision of the head gardener. Head gardeners were very highly regarded, and would certainly have had the knowledge to do the work.⁸²

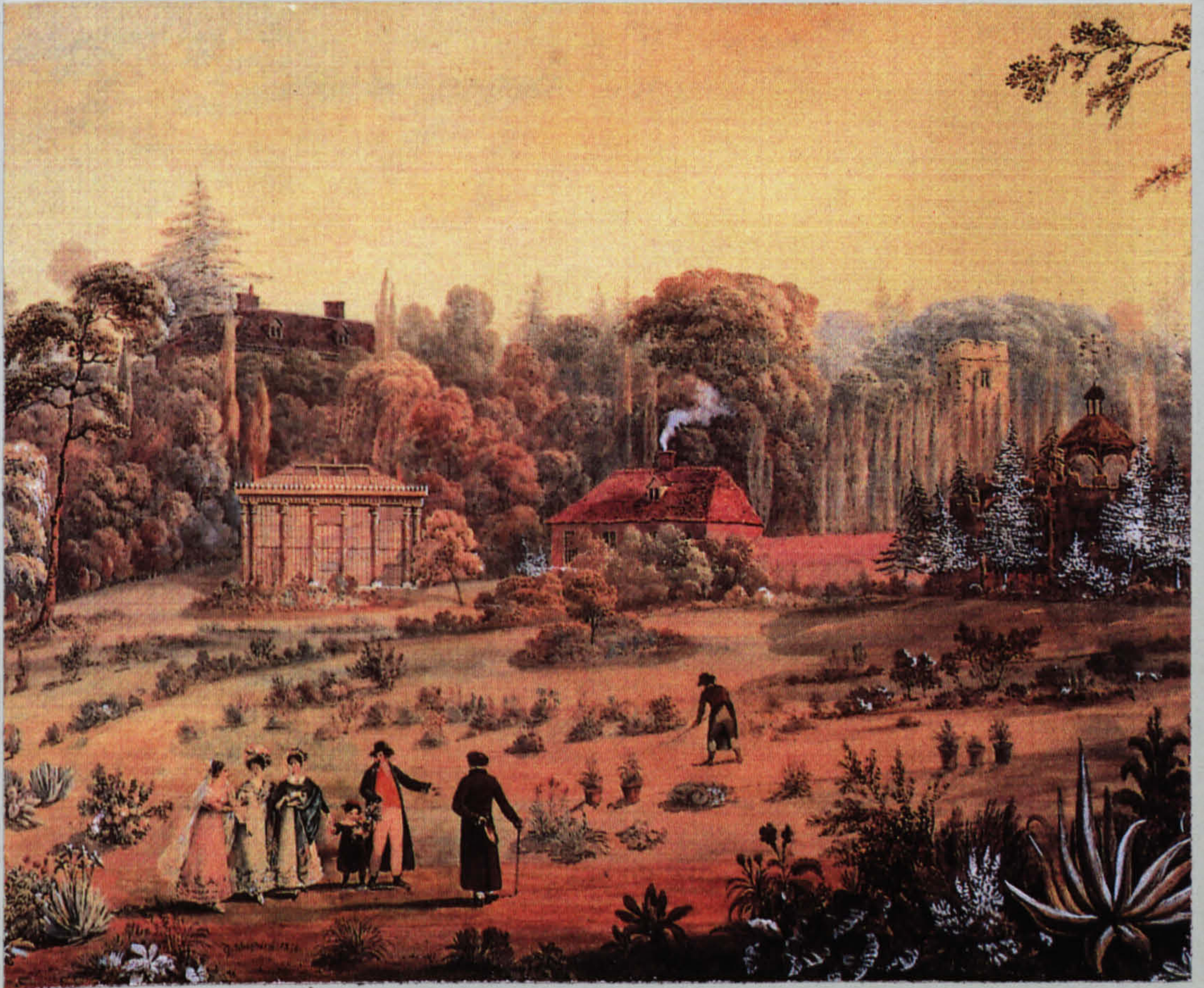
Edgings in Gardenesque Gardens

Whereas in picturesque gardens plants were planted to cover the earth and hide where beds or borders met the lawn, gardenesque gardens could not avoid this, as it was not

⁸² Loudon, John Claudius: "A Summary View of the Progress of Gardening", *Gardener's Magazine*, Vol. 15, 1839, p. 715

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ILLUSTRATION 26: A GARDEN PLANTED IN THE GARDENESQUE MANNER



(Original in colour)

George Sheperd's painting of Battlesden garden in 1818, shows a style of planting which later was termed by Loudon as gardenesque. The way in which planting was disposed was typical for the gardenesque movement with the generous spacing between the plants, allowing them plenty of space, air and light to develop perfectly.

(Hobhouse, Penelope: Plants in Garden History, 1992, p. 247)

and intricate, attaining the highest degree of elegance and polish, by using rare and exotic species, which in themselves produced a totally different effect from the indigenous species. However, care had to be taken not to select plants for their rarity rather than for effect, otherwise the garden was in danger of becoming a botanical collection instead of a beautiful display. The arboretum was the place where plants with a rarity or botanical value belonged.⁸⁵

Although it was most important to plant and manage a plantation so that trees and shrubs could fully develop into beautiful specimens with branches right down to ground level, it was permissible to mass occasionally one species in groups of three, five or seven, as the end result would be unity of a species, and not a picturesque mass of natural confusion. This was allowed in order to keep a sense of proportion in larger gardens which otherwise might have been difficult to maintain, but was only possible with those plant species which in outline tend to form a mass like a rhododendron, rather than a spire like most conifers. Illustration 27 shows these outlines.⁸⁶

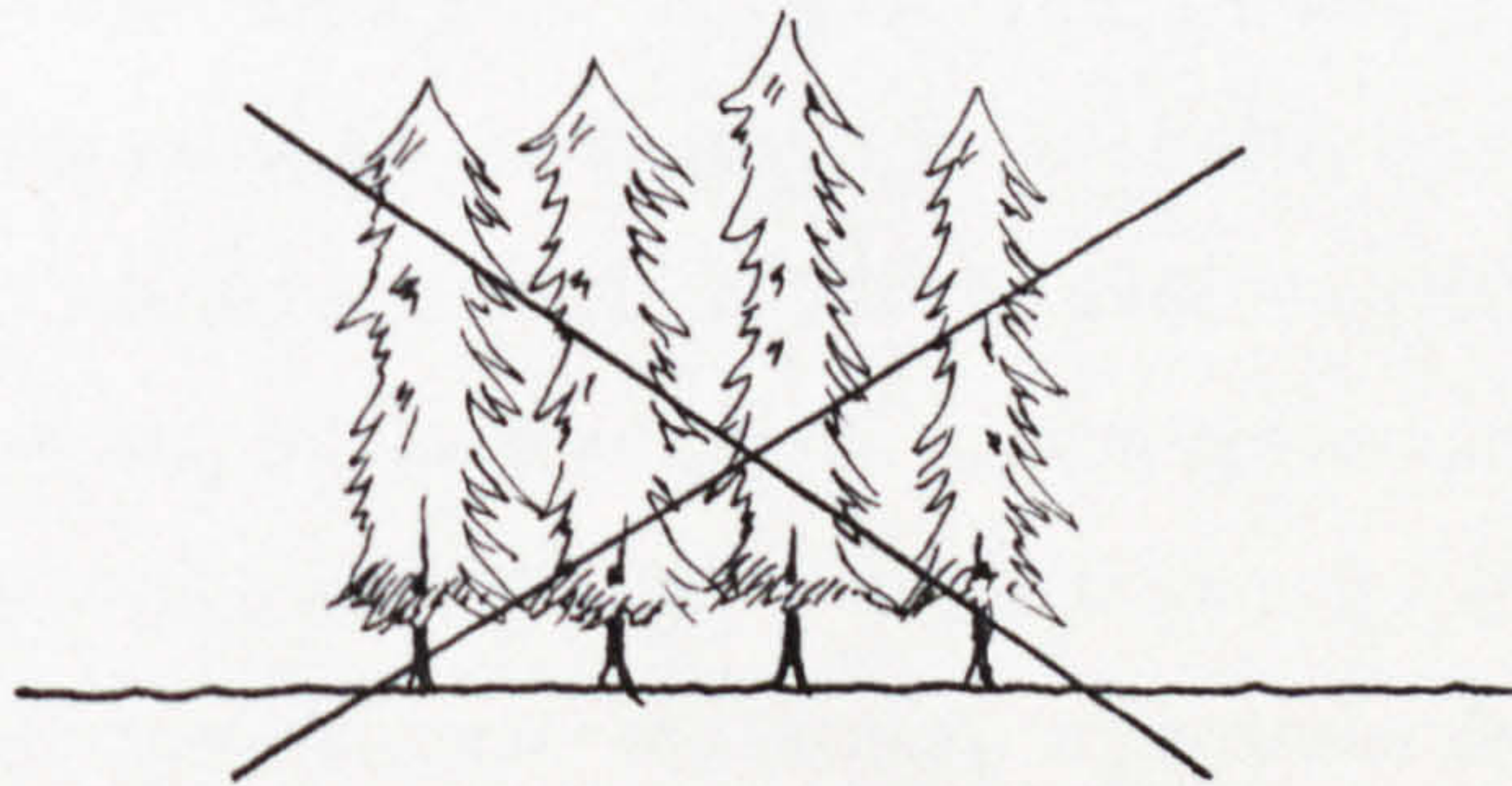
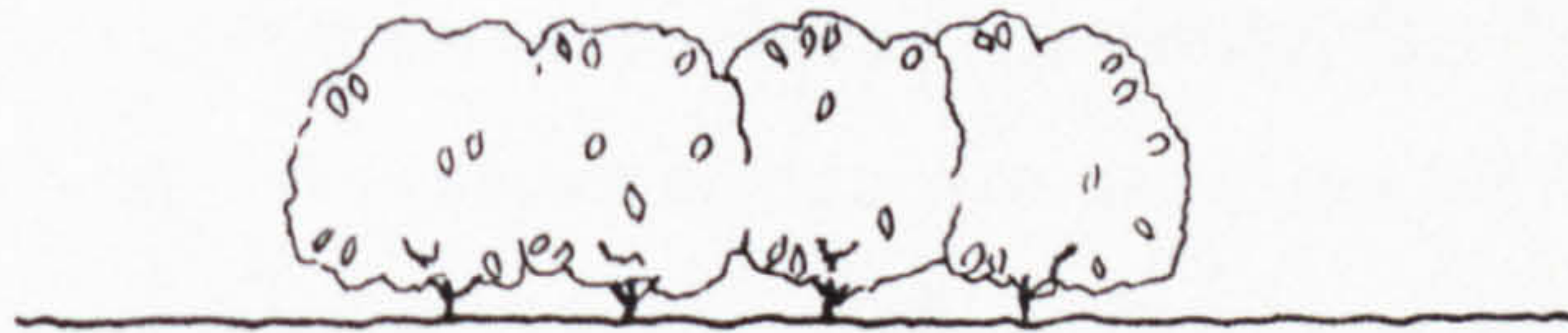
The shrubbery was vital to the gardenesque garden, but it was good practice to leave a large space of lawn free of vegetation, to allow plenty of light and good air circulation which promoted plant development. This space would also help to display the surrounding plantations to their best advantage. In order to create all-year round interest in the garden, and to relieve the monotony of green lawn, it was advisable to incorporate quite a number of evergreen shrubs in amongst the flowering deciduous shrubs and trees.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, 1853, p. 581

⁸⁶ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, 1853, p. 657

⁸⁷ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, 1853, p. 657

ILLUSTRATION 27: INTERPRETATION OF SHRUBS PLANTING IN THE GARDENESQUE STYLE



Although in the gardenesque movement plants were normally planted as individuals, if a larger scale was required it was allowed to plant several plants of one species in one larger clump. This was only possible if the plants had an even outline like rhododendrons and would make one large mass. If they were spire-like the mass effect was spoiled.

(M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, 1853, p. 657)

M'Intosh felt it was inappropriate to mix herbaceous plants in with the shrubs, as could be done in picturesque gardens. He thought they did nothing to enhance the appearance of the shrubs, and usually looked rather meagre (probably because of competition for light and nutrients). Instead he advised them to be planted in circular beds of different sizes (see illustration 24). However from Loudon's writings we can deduce that gardenesque planting was also carried through into the flower borders. Here he recommended that whatever plants were planted in a border, they had to be kept distinct and wide enough apart so as not to touch one another.⁸⁸

A drawing first shown in Robinson's *Hardy Flowers* of 1871, appeared again one year later in *The Garden* of 1872 with an article written by Noel Humphreys (see illustration 28). It proved rather popular, reappearing in several publications including in Germany. It was an engraving of a flower border backed by shrubs, planted with a great variety of old-fashioned perennials such as lilies, irises, daylilies and dycentras. Although this border could also be discussed in the chapter on *Historical Revivalism* (see chapter 3.4.6.) as the accompanying article called for a return to a more natural approach of gardening, its undisturbed and natural appearance could also make it suitable under the heading of *Wild Gardens* (see following chapter 3.2.4.3.). However when we analyse the way the border was planted, in particular the foreground, we can also interpret some of the gardenesque principles discussed above. Small clumps or single specimens of a wide range of species were grown far enough apart so they would not interfere with one another and could fully develop, showing off their individual beauty. The definition in the background of the picture is not detailed enough to be able to deduce whether or not these gardenesque principles apply throughout. As the picture only represents part of a larger garden, it is hard to establish to which extent other gardenesque ideals apply such as gently, but not too,

⁸⁸ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, 1853, p. 660, Loudon, John Claudius: *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Garden Companion*, 1838, p. 216

ILLUSTRATION 28: A MIXED BORDER OF HARDY FLOWERS



This illustration was used by Noel Humphreys to illustrate his article in *The Garden*, by William Robinson in *Hardy Flowers* and by Ruempler in his *Illustriertes Gartenbaulexikon*, 1890. It shows an informal border backed by a shrubbery, with a mixture of perennials casually planted in small groups or as individuals. Planting heights varied, and low plants were allowed to run well into the rear of the border.

(Robinson, William: *Hardy Flowers*, 1871)

undulating lawns, well kept paths and the general immaculate appearance normally associated with the style.

This case illustrates the problem of classification and interpretation, as it shows how in one border several possible styles.

According to Humphreys nature could be enhanced but not overruled by art.

"As a substitute for the fashionable geometric manes of geraniums and calceolarias how agreeable and picturesque would be the effect of a slightly inclining border such as that represented in the accompanying illustration, from which spring forth fair flowers of many kind, just as in some highly favoured natural valley, which the disturbing hand of man had never cramped into formal patches."⁸⁹

Humphreys mentions he discussed the subject one evening with Loudon, who despite being so educated and unbiased, could not visualise this and said it would not be gardening at all. From this comment we can derive that it was not gardenesque as Loudon had defined it almost forty years earlier.

3.2.4.3. The Wild Garden

Although today's concept of wild gardening did not really develop until the latter part of the nineteenth century, the principles of growing native or exotic species in a naturalised way existed some time as can be seen in a description of Dean Paul's estate dating from April 1765:

⁸⁹ Humphreys, Noel: "Home Landscapes - Hardy Flowers", *The Garden*, 1872, p. 261

"The most pleasing wild flowers should be supplied largely; all about the groves. but particularly so, towards the walks, and margins: Primroses, Violets, Cowslips, Wood-strawberries & C."⁹⁰

Similarly a few years later William Chambers wrote in his *Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* (1772):

"...the grass ... in the spring is adorned with violets, crocus's, polyanthus's, and primroses...daffodils and roses..."⁹¹

To a certain extent the picturesque landscape could be described as a forerunner of the wild garden, with its informality, rugged complexion of rocks and tangled masses of foliage, but as far as herbaceous perennials are concerned, it was not until the last third of the nineteenth century that their place was properly recognised in the wild garden. (For some examples of perennial plants used in picturesque improvements see chapter 3.2.4.2. The picturesque and gardenesque movement.)

In Britain, the person who probably did most to develop the ideas of wild gardening was William Robinson, who dedicated a book to the subject - *The Wild Garden* (first edition 1870) - and a chapter in his most important work *The English Flower Garden*, which after the first edition (1883) was much enlarged. He described the subject as:

"The placing of perfectly hardy exotic plants into places, and under conditions, where they will become established and take care of themselves."⁹²

⁹⁰ Harris, John, "John Claudius Loudon and the Early 19th Century in Great Britain: the Imperfect Ideas on the Genesis of the Loudonesque Flower Garden", *History of Landscape Architecture*, 1980, p. 54, Elizabeth Macdougall editor, Washington, Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium

⁹¹ As above: Harris: 1980, p. 54

⁹² Robinson, William: *The English Flower Garden*, 1883, p. 79

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The wild garden was distinct from all other forms of herbaceous borders, beds or groups, rock gardens, spring gardens, subtropical gardens or genuine wild flower areas in meadows or woods.⁹³

Today's interpretation of this view could be the naturalisation of non-endemic species.

The term *wild garden* was not related to the "wilderness" of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but Robinson felt it could be carried out in conjunction with it, as wild gardening often involved the underplanting of trees. He also felt it was not related to the picturesque garden, as that often required a lot of attention while the whole idea of wild gardening was that once established it would thrive without human interference. Neither was it a garden which had been allowed to run wild, nor was it the sowing of annuals in a promiscuous fashion.

In Germany, the move to nature-inspired planting started even earlier than in Britain. As early as 1858 it was suggested by Hermann Jaeger to use native and exotic species in areas resembling their natural habitats. References to the subject were repeated at regular intervals, right into the early part of the twentieth century. (See chapter 4.2.4.3.)

The whole idea behind Robinson's wild garden was to establish plants in a natural environment, usually a grass sward, and then leave them to get on with their lives.⁹⁴ The less formal the style of gardening, the greater the pleasure it gave. A reader of *The Garden* tried to imitate nature to create the desired effect, but as he rightly put it, only

⁹³ Robinson, William: *The English Flower Garden*, 1883, p. 79

⁹⁴ Robinson, William: *The Wild Garden*, 1929, p. 6

those who had attempted to imitate the simple, graceful irregularity, realised that the greatest efforts were not as good as nature's most ordinary productions.⁹⁵

Henry Bright pointed out, *cultivating* a wild garden was a paradox. Plants were to be chosen, whether exotic or native, that were suitable for the provided habitat, otherwise they would never establish themselves and naturalise without demanding too much attention.⁹⁶ Along a similar line of thought, Mrs Loftie said:

"The true secret of gardening is to make the most artistic use of those plants which belong naturally to the climate and soil."⁹⁷

Although Mrs Loftie referred to the fact that one could not pretend that "palms can grow out of table cloths", the principle remained the same: choosing the right plant for the right position made gardening much easier.

According to an article in 1911 in *Gardeners' Chronicle*, it would appear that wild gardening rapidly increased in popularity. It reported that the taste for natural or wild gardening had augmented so much that gardens such as Versailles or formal Italianate ones, were no longer considered perfect. Instead people preferred the natural grouping of flowers, so that growth appeared free and unrestrained.⁹⁸

Location of Wild Gardens

Wild gardening was a means by which the transition between manicured garden and natural surroundings could be easily made, starting within the boundary of the garden fence, and spilling over into the surrounding landscape.

⁹⁵ Oxon.: "The Wild Garden in Spring", *The Garden*, Vol. 9, 1876, p. 145

⁹⁶ Bright, Henry: *The English Flower Garden*, 1881, pp. 32-3

⁹⁷ Loftie, Mrs: *Social Twitters*, 1879, p. 74

⁹⁸ Correvon, Henry: "Some English Gardens", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, Vol. 50, 1911, p. 1

Chapter 3.2: The Types of British Flower Gardens

According to Robinson, the situation of a wild garden depended on the size of the garden: in smaller ones the location was best decided on the spot, taking into account existing features. Planting could be carried out on edges of shrubberies and plantations, and in open spaces between shrubs, instead of leaving bare dug earth.⁹⁹ Larger gardens could have wild gardens on the outer edge of the lawn, in groves, in the park, a copse, along woodland walks or drives. they were not limited to garden boundaries. In his book Robinson quoted T. Williams saying:

"The great fault to be found with most places in England is that no matter how great their capabilities may be, gardening only begins at the garden gate."¹⁰⁰

The writer suggested that where space permitted, it was as important to have a sunny walk as well as a shady one: the sunny one to walk along on a warm, sunny spring day, the cool shady one to be enjoyed on those hot summer days. If the owner could afford it, a small stream or water feature was perfect for growing many plants normally associated with water, which otherwise would not thrive.¹⁰¹

In other words, not only people's needs were accommodated in these gardens, but plants' habitat requirements also were catered for, as was done in Germany.

The Plants

According to William Robinson, wild flower gardening was a good way of using those plants which were not suited for the flower garden. The flower garden around the house could be reserved for the rarer, delicate or choice plants¹⁰², whilst the wild

⁹⁹ Robinson, William: *The Wild Garden*, 1929, p. 50

¹⁰⁰ Robinson, William: *The English Flower Garden*, 1883, p. 81

¹⁰¹ O'B., J.: "Our Native Plants and Ferns", *The Garden*, Vol. 10, 1876, p. 177

¹⁰² Robinson, William: *The Wild Garden*, 1929, p. xi

garden proved to be a welcoming home for the stouter or more invasive plants, or those whose flowers were not showy enough for the herbaceous border. Golden rods (*Solidago* spp) and Michaelmas daisies (*Aster* spp) have always been a menace to the herbaceous border, but Robinson saw them growing together in their native environment in New England, and thought they looked stunning.

Besides herbaceous perennials, bulbs played a very important part in the wild garden. Ferns and other foliage plants were vital too. Such architectural feature plants as *Gunnera manicata*, *Rheum palmatum*, *Heracleum giganteum* (syn. *H. stevenii*) and bamboos were much liked.¹⁰³

A great number of hardy exotic species came from North America. A writer in the *American Agriculturist* explained:

"My object being to commend the wild garden to every lover of wild plants. Our natives can grow there, and a large number of foreigners may be naturalised and made wild. It can be made a source of great pleasure to those who can have no other gardens, while to those who have the most formal borders it will be a pleasing change to have a nook or a corner where their favourites can be at home."¹⁰⁴

Although Americans had many attractive plants at hand to naturalise, it did not stop them from adding more exotic species.

The wild garden was also a good environment for many native plants which hitherto had no place in the garden. They could grow to their full potential without being checked. If they increased well, it was possible to remove them and plant them in the

¹⁰³ Anon.: "Wild Gardens and Pleasure Grounds", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, Vol. 19, 1896, p. 74

¹⁰⁴ American Agriculturist: "Plants for the Wild Garden", *Gardening Illustrated*, Vol. 1, 1879. p. 276

surrounding woods and fields, embellishing those parts as well as the garden. Ferns at last had a place other than the hardy fernery. They looked much better growing amongst other plants, away from the fernery, where they had often been surrounded by weak ferns, marring the view. Grasses were also to be included.¹⁰⁵

In an article in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* of 1874, Hope too had made a plea for wild plants, which according to her, too few people knew about. She gave a descriptive list of all the attractive native flora which could be found in the British countryside.¹⁰⁶

Planting of the Wild Garden and Robinson's Change of Heart

The intention of wild gardening was to provide a natural looking effect which was low in maintenance, achieved by covering the soil surface with vegetation, so that no weeding or digging was required. This vegetation blanket could be in the form of a grass sward into which bulbs and flowers were added, or, for example in the case of a woodland, a ground cover of free-growing hardy plants and evergreens could be planted. No plants needed staking or deadheading and the whole was not cut down until early spring, so that some pleasure could be had from the dried stems in winter.¹⁰⁷

Illustration 29 was used by Robinson on the title page of the first edition of *The Wild Garden*. It shows a number of perennials and bulbs growing in grass, enveloping some shrubs.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ O'B., J.: "Our Native Plants and Ferns", *The Garden*, Vol 10, 1876, p.177

¹⁰⁶ Hope, Frances Jane: "Notes and Thoughts on Gardens and Woodlands", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1881, p. 170

¹⁰⁷ Robinson, William: *The Wild Garden*, 1929, p. 50

¹⁰⁸ The same illustration was used by Eduard Andre in *L'art des Jardins* of 1879, p.691, with the heading of "picturesque use of indigenous plants".

ILLUSTRATION 29: ILLUSTRATION OF A WILD GARDEN SCENE



Title page illustration of William Robinson's *The Wild Garden*. It shows a mixture of perennials such as peonies, Solomon's seal, irises, foxgloves and a flowering ornamental rhubarb which appear to be growing out of the grass, against some shrubs.

(Robinson, William: *The Wild Garden*, 1870)

As for the actual planting style, Robinson seems to have had a different opinion on planting the wild garden from the flower garden. In *Hardy Flowers* of 1871 and later editions, he wrote that there should be no symmetry in planting, adding in brackets "placing quantities of things at regular intervals from each other"; instead he preferred the opposite, particularly for the flower border. This suggests he favoured the old 'dotting' way of planting borders.¹⁰⁹ However, when one reads *The Wild Garden*, it appears that he thought differently about the style of planting most appropriate for the wild garden because he wrote in the first edition:

"The flowers [...] are of the highest order of beauty, especially when seen in numbers. An isolated tuft of one of these seen in a formal border, may not be considered worthy of a place at any time - in some wild glade, in a wood, associated with other subjects, its effect may be exquisite."¹¹⁰

In later editions he wrote:

"If the wild garden is to be carried out on the old dotting principle of the herbaceous border, its charming effects cannot be realized. To do it rightly we must group and mass as nature does."¹¹¹

Similarly he had commented in his chapter on the wild garden in *The English Flower Garden*:

"All planting in the grass should be in natural groups or prettily fringed colonies,...Lessons in this grouping are to be had in the woods, copses, heaths and meadows, by those who look about them as they go. At

¹⁰⁹ Robinson, William: *Hardy Flowers*, 1871 and 1888, p. 7

¹¹⁰ Robinson, William: *The Wild Garden*, 1870, p. 13

¹¹¹ Robinson, William: *The Wild Garden*, 1929, p. 59

first many will find it difficult to get out of formal masses, but they may be got over by studying natural grouping of wild flowers."¹¹²

By closely observing the way plants naturally occurred in drifts, growing in a sward of turf, the planter could see how nature intended the plants to appear. Herbaceous plants ought not to be planted in small patches or as individuals, as had been the practice in herbaceous borders with the old dotting fashion. They had to occur in large enough numbers to be effective. This effect was what William Robinson aimed at in his wild garden and later also in his flower garden as can be seen in his account of Gravetye Manor:

"If the bed is to be well planted it is absolutely essential that it should be large to enable the adoption of the grouping system and the forming of bold and picturesque masses... Plants carefully grouped in picturesque ways are far more beautiful and interesting than if set out in the common mixed way."¹¹³

Flower meadows were part of the wild garden movement. One of the most effective ways of planting perennials in a natural fashion, was by planting them in tall grass sward. He thought many of our garden plants associated best with grasses, as they would grow naturally on mountain slopes, some sticking their flower heads tall above the grass flowers, others tucked below the surface. Besides looking good, flower meadows were also very labour saving: the grass would only be cut once in late summer, like a hay meadow. The result was much more pleasing than a short cropped lawn, which had to be mown frequently. Robinson pointed out that surely it was

¹¹² Robinson, William: *The English Flower Garden*, 1893, p. 48

¹¹³ Robinson, William: *Gravetye Manor*, 1912, p. 20

enough to have one portion of lawn "as smooth as a carpet at all times", leaving many parts unmown so that many beautiful plants could be grown.¹¹⁴

As an example he mentioned the meadows around his house at Gravetye. There he had planted bulbs and flowers in the meadows near the house. The bulbs would come up long before the grass started growing, and by the height of summer when the hay had to be cut, they had died back. He found his flowers were increasing annually, giving a good display. If anything it was actually considered better practice to leave the dying foliage at the end of the season. In case they became unsightly, the stems could be bent down, or if smothering a neighbouring plant, moved out of the way. In any case, it was better to leave them to protect the plant in winter and shelter possible seedlings growing at the base of the plant.¹¹⁵

Despite Robinson's detailed descriptions of various wild garden scenes, he was rather vague about the quantities of plants required to achieve the desired effect, even though this would have depended on the site, and plants used. He was specific enough to say no bare earth should show, so at least one knew it was necessary to plant closely.

Planting schemes did not have to be complex. Even the simple naturalising of daffodils and snowdrops in parklands and woodlands was considered most beautiful. In smaller gardens bulbs such as snowdrops (*Galanthus* spp), *Eranthis hyemalis*, *Narcissus* spp, *Anemone* spp, *Scilla* spp and other similar flowers, could be planted under trees. Sunny garden spots could be planted with *Macleaya cordata*, *Polygonatum x hybridum*, *Acanthus latifolius*, *A. mollis*, *Heracleum giganteum* (syn. *H. stevenii*) and hardy fuchsias. Mossy banks could be adorned with *Primula vulgaris*, *P. elatior*, *P.*

¹¹⁴ Robinson, William: *The Wild Garden*, 1929, p. 105 and *The English Flower Garden*, 1893, p. 46

¹¹⁵ Robinson, William: *The Wild Garden*, 1929. p.11, O'B., J.: "Our Native Plants and Ferns in the Wild Garden", *The Garden*, Vol. 10, 1876, p. 178

auricula, *P. polyanthus*, *Hepatica* spp, *Gentiana* spp, *Cyclamen* spp, *Erythronium dens canis*, *Convallaria majalis* and *Colchicum* spp.

Robinson included a description of one of the best wild garden effects he had ever seen. It was the most brilliant summer planting of a green bay in a plantation, covered with long grass, within which grew many oriental poppies (*Papaver orientalis*), closely together with lupins (*Lupinus* spp) and columbines (*Aquilegia* spp).¹¹⁶ The plants which produced effect in this description were all exotics, although lupins and columbines can be naturalised readily.

Resumé

Perennials were used in many types of garden. In some they played the lead role, in others they performed in the background, providing visual support for other plants.

It has been falsely claimed that in the gardens of the less affluent, perennials survived whilst the wealthy in society spent their money on bedding-out schemes. Here, as in the kitchen gardens, they were often grown in association with fruit and vegetables. They could also be found in areas of the garden specifically dedicated to the growing of flowers for the recreation of the benefactors of the garden. We have seen however that the not so wealthy were also encouraged to raise annuals from seed and use them for bedding out.

Formal gardens may have been host to bedding out schemes using colourful masses of bedding plants, they were also home to borders and beds of perennials, in association with beds of bedding plants or used in separate areas. Informal flower gardens fitted the character of perennials better. Those which were specifically laid out for growing perennials resembled flower gardens seen at the end of the eighteenth

¹¹⁶ Robinson, William: *The Wild Garden* 1929, p. 99

Chapter 3.2: The Types of British Flower Gardens

century as at Nuneham and Hartwell. Associations of informal beds set in lawns were planted up with perennials. Perennials were also used in picturesque and gardenesque gardens, though especially in picturesque gardens they quite often only played a secondary role.

The late nineteenth century development of wild gardening particularly encouraged the use of perennials. If well chosen to suit the site, perennials would be allowed to grow and develop without too much interference from man. It was a naturalistic low-maintenance form of gardening.

CHAPTER 3.3: MAIN DESIGN ELEMENTS OF BRITISH FLOWER GARDENS

Following an analysis of some of the main garden styles of the nineteenth century, the different components of the gardens which were related to gardening with perennials are now investigated.

Any flower garden comprised different elements, but in most cases the main components were flower beds or borders, formal or informal. In her book *The Ladies' Companion to the Flower Garden* of 1842, Jane Joudon distinguished between a bed and a border as follows: "A border differs from a bed in having a walk only on one side." These beds or borders were set in grass or gravel near the house, or situated in their own privately enclosed space elsewhere in the garden. The overall appearance of the flower garden depended on which of the different components were used and how they were placed in relation to one another. The proportions of bed, grass and gravel would influence the appearance of the garden, but so would the use of statuary, urns, fountains, architectural features and seating.

The planting style which developed in conjunction with the wild garden was different, in that beds or borders were not used. Instead, plants were either incorporated into a grass sward, or alternatively, planted to cover an entire area, such as the woodland floor. For more details of the wild garden see chapter 3.2.4.3.

The juxtaposition of the flower garden components in association with the planting style would determine the final image created by the flower garden. For the different planting styles which were used in association with these components see chapter 3.4.

3.3.1. Beds

A bed was a free standing area of prepared earth, like an island, usually surrounded by grass or gravel. It could be viewed from all sides. Beds could be informal, as in picturesque displays with curvilinear shapes, or they could be formal or architectural, in the shape of circles, ovals, squares or any other geometric form. Unless space was restricted, in most geometric gardens beds were made up of more elaborate and complicated patterns (see illustration 30), but even when informally displayed, they could be part of a larger display. (See illustration 31.)

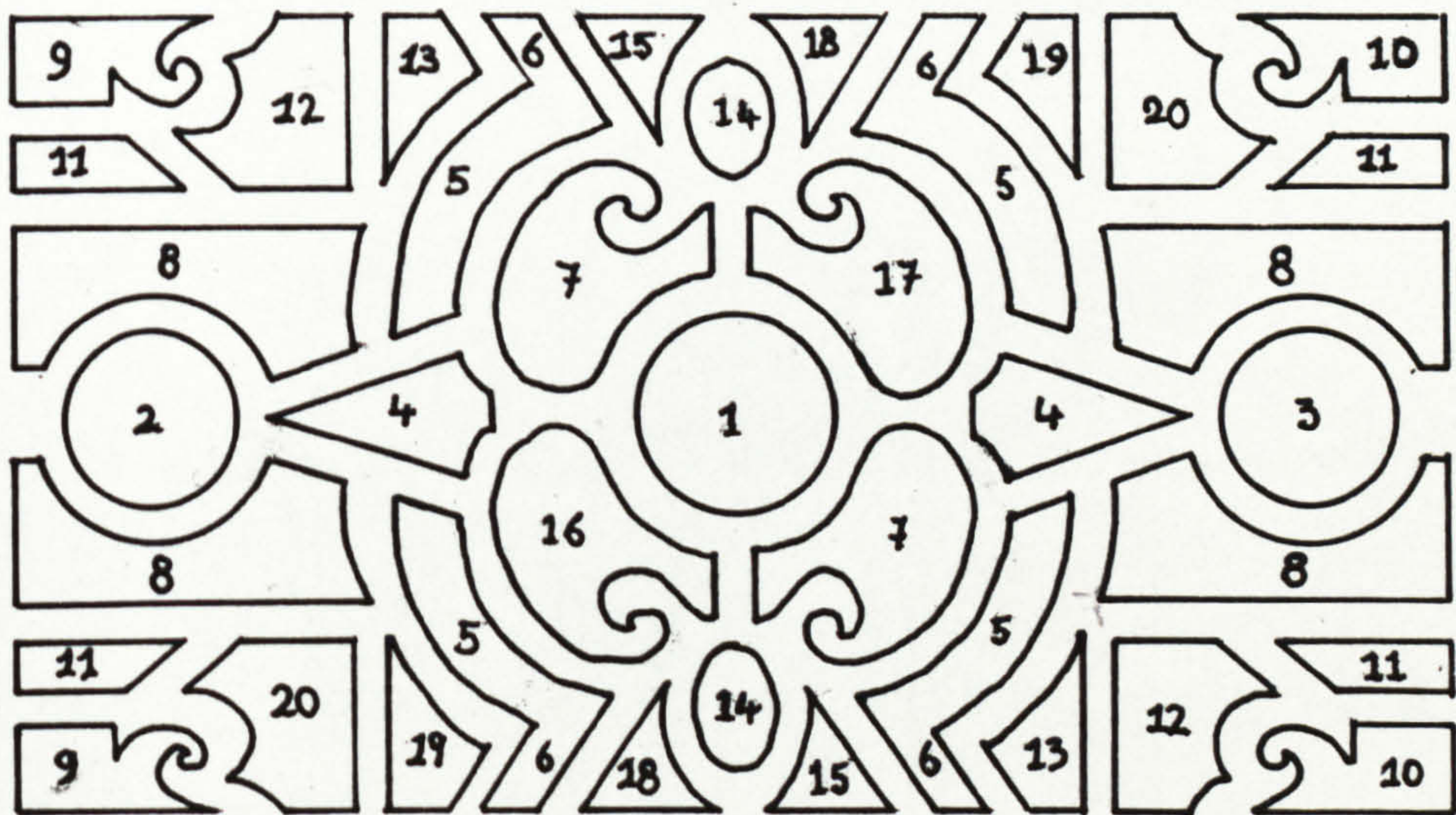
3.3.1.1. Formal Beds

As in mid nineteenth century Germany, parterres with formal displays of flower-filled beds provided rather popular.

Formally shaped beds, usually filled with bedding plants, were commonly edged with a soil retaining edge of masonry, basket work, stone or other rigid material as they needed to be cultivated regularly, every time the display of flowers was changed. Without edging, it would have been too easy for a bed to lose its all important sharp outline shape every time it was dug over and prepared to take its next display of plants. Particularly in such formal displays, overall neatness and tidiness was of paramount importance in order to give a crisp appearance. Untidy edges would not have been acceptable.¹ This was in strong contrast with the picturesque, informally shaped beds Loudon mentioned (see further on) where one was not supposed to see where the bed edge finished and where the lawn or gravel took over.

¹ Johnson, George William: *A Dictionary of Modern Gardening*, 1846, p. 83

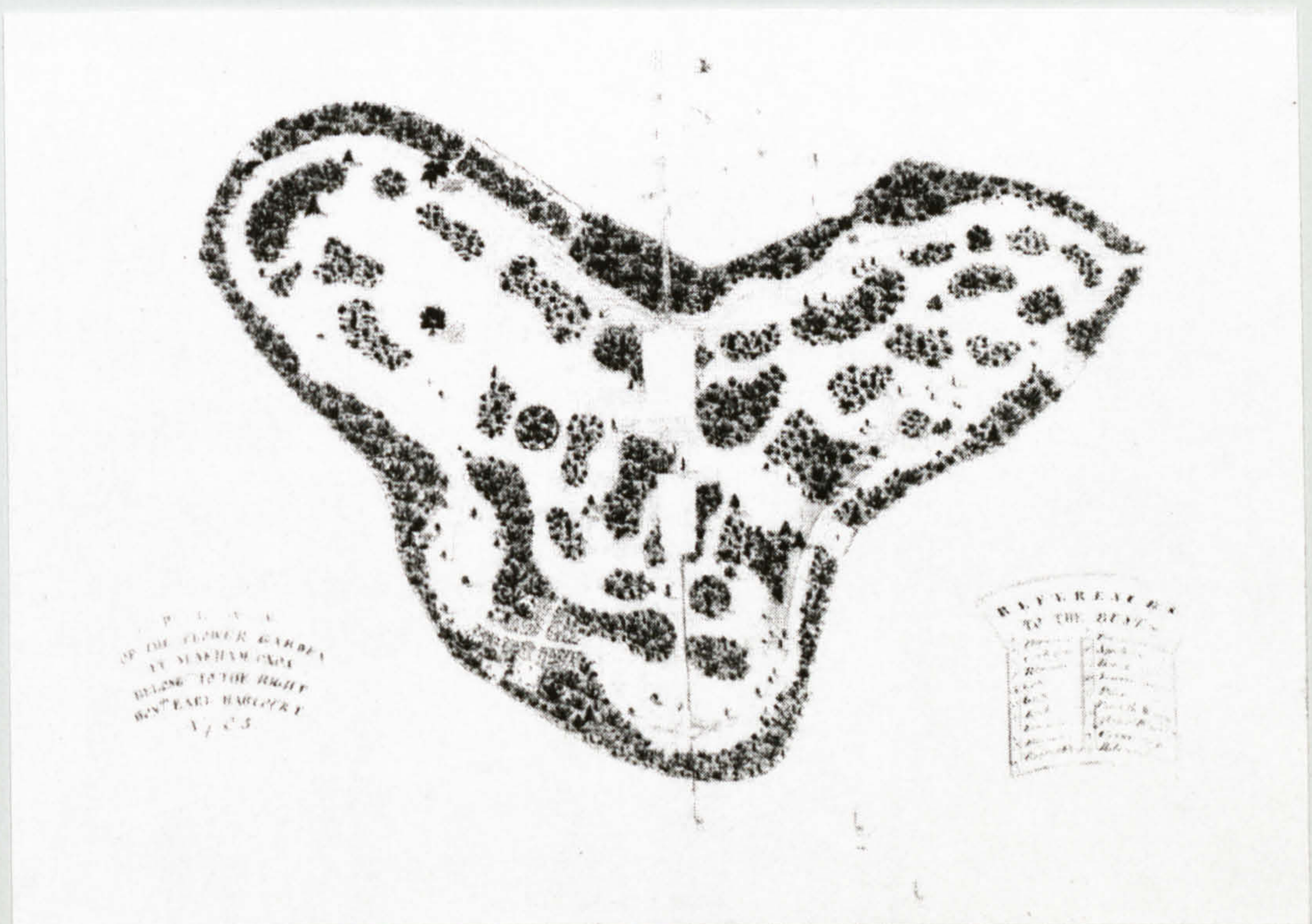
ILLUSTRATION 30: PLAN FOR A GEOMETRIC FLOWER GARDEN



Plan for a geometric flower garden, of which some of the beds were destined for perennials, the others for bedding out plants.

(M'Intosh, Charles: *The Flower Garden*, 1838, p.33)

ILLUSTRATION 31: PLAN OF THE FLOWER GARDEN AT NUNEHAM COURTENAY (1785)



The plan of the informal flower garden at Nuneham Courtenay shows the irregularly shaped flower beds scattered on the lawn, along with some solitaire plants. The garden was enclosed by a thick belt of trees and shrubs. the beds were not as irregular as those shown by Maria Elisabeth Jackson (see illustrations 15 and 16).

(Batey, Mavis: "Two Romantic Picturesque Flower Gardens", *Garden History*, vol. 22, no. 2, 1994, p. 201)

Several illustrations of formally shaped, geometric garden layouts have been found, which were wholly, or partially intended for the display of hardy herbaceous perennials. A plan was published by Edward Kemp² for a geometrical garden layout divided into four quarters. The two beds closest to the house were designed to display bedding plants, whereas the two furthest away were for mixed herbaceous plants. (See illustration 32.)

An example in *The Flower Garden* by Charles M'Intosh was a plan for a very elaborate flower garden, of which some beds were designated for perennials. (See illustration 30.) The beds numbered seven, twelve, fourteen and fifteen contained herbaceous perennials, the remaining ones were mostly filled with spring bulbs followed by tender plants later in the season.³

The flower garden at Audley End is a similar contemporary example, where a number of the beds were filled with perennials, whilst others were bedded out. Although the original bed layout has been re-created, the surviving planting details were incomplete.

The present planting is a reflection of contemporary planting ideas. See illustration 34 for original plan and illustration 33 for photograph of today's planting.

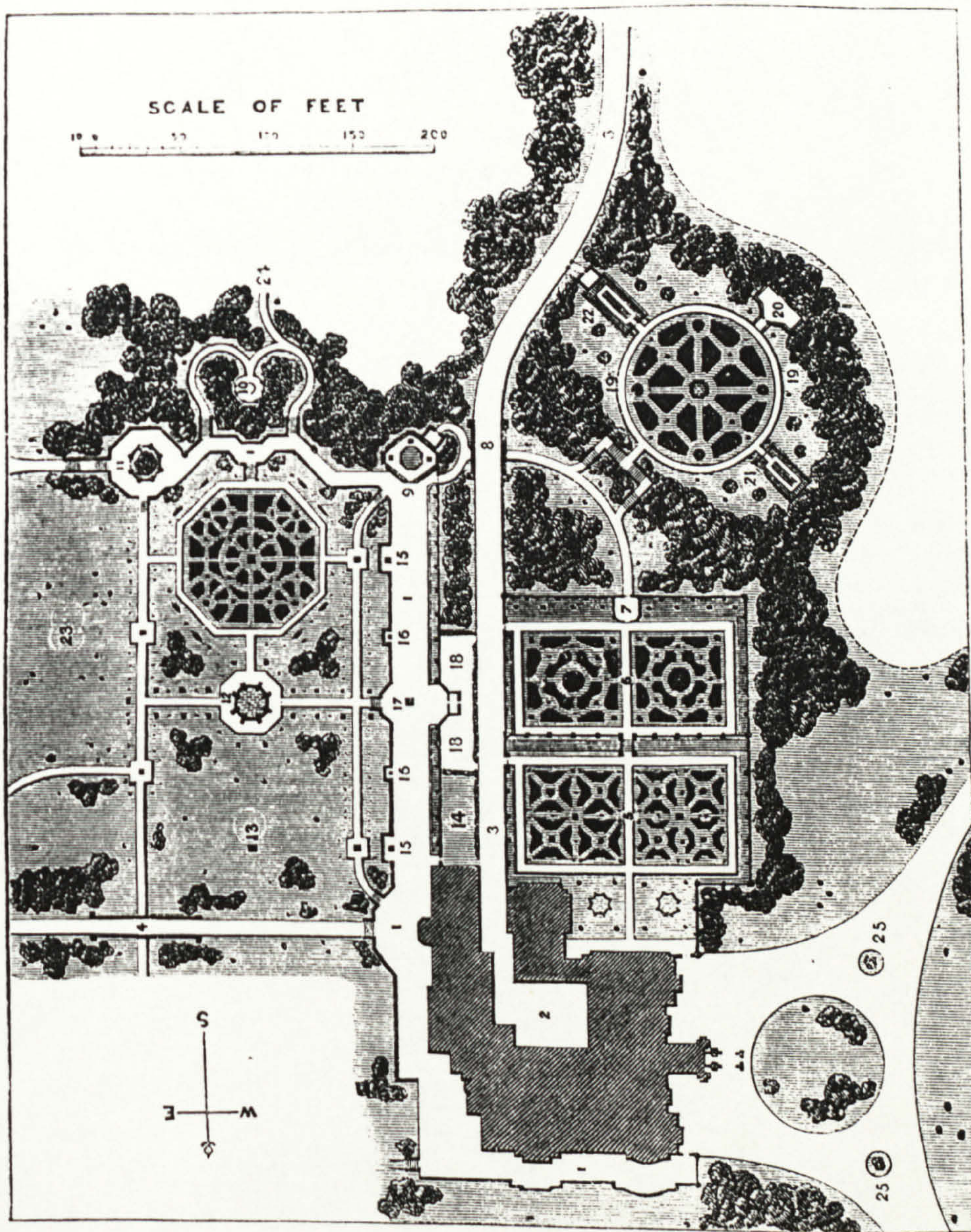
"C.D.", a regular contributor to the *Gardener's Magazine* edited by John Claudius Loudon, produced in the 1831 volume a plan for a formally shaped flower garden, placed in a recess of the lawn or shrubbery. It was a geometric circular design of thirty feet (9 metres) in diameter, intended to be surrounded by a grass strip of no less than five feet (1.50 metres) and the whole framed by a border of low American shrubs.⁴ (For illustration and an analysis of the planting see chapter 3.4.1.2. Mingled Beds)

² Kemp, Edward: *How to Lay Out a Garden*, 1858, p. 187

³ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Flower Garden*, 1838, p. 33

⁴ According to Brent Elliott, 'C.D.' may have been Christie Duff, head gardener at Eaton Hall in Cheshire, though this has not yet been proven.

ILLUSTRATION 32: PLAN FOR A GEOMETRIC FLOWER GARDEN WITH PERENNIALS



Edward Kemp published this garden plan which shows a formal geometric garden divided into four rectangular parterres. The two lower parterres nearest to the house were used for summer flowers, planted in beds of one colour. The two upper ones were for mixed herbaceous planting, combining mingled and massed styles.

(Kemp, Edward: *How to Lay Out a Garden*, 1858, p. 187)

The same magazine carried another very different example of a geometric flower garden. This plan had been drawn up by the same 'C.D.', and was in the ancient or geometric style⁵. On the lawn in front of the house and all along the walled kitchen garden were a succession of beds in a variety of geometric shapes.⁶ (For illustration and an analysis of the way in which the beds and borders were planted see chapter 3.4.1.1, The Mixed or Mingled Border.)

Siting

Judging from the literary references and plans consulted, it would appear that formal beds were best placed near the house. This way they could more easily be enjoyed by the house occupiers, either from the windows of the house, or following a short walk. The formality and geometry created by formal flower gardens best suited the artificial surroundings of the house and created a suitable progression into the more informal surrounds of the pleasure ground.⁷ If for any reasons the formal flower garden was not located near the house, then it was usually placed somewhere in the garden where it would be laid out in conjunction with a building such as a conservatory.

⁵ Some authors like Loudon used the term 'ancient' to refer to the formal garden layouts, in contrast to the 'modern' layouts which were informal.

⁶ D., C.: "Plan for a Flower Garden", *Gardener's Magazine*, Vol. 7, 1831, p. 33; Baillie, W.: "Plan and Select List of Plants for a Flower Garden", *Gardener's Magazine*, Vol. 7, 1831, p. 298

⁷ Lovell, George: "Mixed versus Massed Flower Beds", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1849, p. 483

3.3.1.2. Informal Beds

The Florist's Manual by Maria Elizabeth Jackson⁸, a garden writer often quoted by John Claudius Loudon in his *Encyclopaedia*, illustrated just two examples of flower garden. Both were for flower gardens separated from the house; both had informal beds set in an enclosed space, screened by shrubs. The same illustrations were used by Loudon in his *Encyclopaedia*, together with a similar description of a flower garden, of which the surrounding shrubbery was also edged with flowers⁹.

Although little evidence remains of these flower gardens, when we gather all the available information it becomes clear that they must have been quite popular, especially during the earlier part of the nineteenth century. Thomkin's paintings of the Elysium at Audley End showing flower beds, and Paul Sandby's illustration of the flower garden at Nuneham Courtenay (see illustrations 14 and 22) give us an idea of what flower gardens with informal beds looked like.

The proportions of these beds in relation to the lawn and the overall space was considered all-important. According to Jackson, the area between the surrounding shrubbery and the outer bed margin had to be a minimum of six feet (1.80 metres). In between the beds a grass strip of four feet (1.20 metres) to six feet (1.80 metres) had to be allowed. If for any reason the space was wider, the scale could be reduced by introducing a basket bed, painted dark green, with ever-blowing¹⁰ roses and carnations. The bed length could vary between twenty-three feet (6.90 metres) and twenty-five feet (7.50 metres). All beds were raised. (See illustrations 15 and 16, Chapter 3.2.)

⁸ Jackson, Maria Elizabeth: *The Florist's Manual*, 1816

⁹ Loudon, John Claudius: *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, 1822

¹⁰ 'Ever-blowing' was a term commonly used during the nineteenth century, in this case referring to perpetual-flowering roses.

Jackson considered the bed marked two in illustration 16 as particularly good for showing off the effects of the planting.

Although few people gave explicit details about the shape informal beds could take, Joshua Major suggested that beds were preferably longitudinal, of various elegant forms, produced by ample and elegant curves. The beds seen in the examples shown by Maria Elizabeth Jackson were also more or less longitudinal (see illustrations 15 and 16 in Chapter 3.2). Major added that none, other than the circle, should be repeated more than once. The beds were best started parallel to a walk, rather than at an angle. He felt beds should be grouped together so they would harmonise with one another, mixing the large ones with the smaller ones and leaving expanses of lawn in between of no less than five or six feet (1.50 metres or 1.80 metres) wide.¹¹

Gilpin explained with the help of an illustration which was the best way of displaying flower beds. An effect of spottiness was easily obtained if beds were placed wherever there was room. Instead they had to be arranged in the same way as shrub beds. Although the beds were grouped together, they had to respect the glades of lawn. In the upper sketch of illustration 33, Gilpin showed a pencil outline of where beds would be if they were just placed where space was available, cluttering up the lawn entirely. The lower sketch showed small groups of beds thus positioned that there were still some open areas of lawn.¹²

Gilpin stated that shrubs could not be accompanied by flowers which needed frequent digging. By these he presumably referred to annuals or bedded-out plants, for which the soil needed to be prepared every time they were replaced. Peonies, roses, hollyhocks and others of sufficient height or large enough size were planted to mingle

¹¹ Major, Joshua: *The Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, 1852, p. 28

¹² Gilpin, William Sawrey: *Practical Hints upon Landscape Gardening*, 1832, pp. 62-3

ILLUSTRATION 33: GILPIN'S SKETCH OF HOW TO LAY OUT AN INFORMAL FLOWER GARDEN



William Sawrey Gilpin included two sketches showing how informal flower beds should be dispersed on the grass, respecting the surrounding land and shrub planting, whilst retaining some open glades of lawn.

(Gilpin, William Sawrey: *Practical Hints upon Landscape Gardening*, 1832, p. 63)

with the shrubs, without showing any bare earth in between. The edges of newly planted beds could be concealed with low ground-covering plants such as periwinkle or St John's wort, so that no harsh line would be visible.

This idea of planting to show no bare earth contradicts the way mingled beds or borders were planted (see chapter 3.4.1). For these planting at sufficient distance was generally recommended to allow plants to develop properly. This same rule was applied to gardenesque planting, where widely spaced planting was one of the main characteristics.¹³

It was not uncommon for writers to suggest the centre of the beds should be slightly raised. This way the flowers could be displayed to the greatest advantage and the overall height of the display was increased too. The amount by which it could be raised varied considerably depending on opinion, though it did depend also on the size of the bed.

To raise a circular bed centre by two to six inches (50mm to 150mm) seemed quite a reasonable amount. If the centre was made too high then the gradient became too steep, making it harder to maintain an even slope. If the bed itself was on a slope, it was not unknown to raise it on one side only to offer a better view.¹⁴

3.3.2. Borders

Traditionally a border tended to be a rectangular, long and relatively narrow stretch of dug earth, part of a more elaborate parterre consisting of grass, clipped box

¹³ Gilpin, William Sawrey: *Practical Hints upon Landscape Gardening*, 1832, p. 55-7

¹⁴ Robson, J.: "Hardy Herbaceous Perennials and their Neglect", *The Cottage Garden*, 1859, p. 26

hedging, and coloured gravels or earth. (See illustration 6, Chapter 3.1). During the nineteenth century the term usually became linked to wider stretches, filled with a larger selection of flowers, often backed by a wall, hedge, shrubbery or cordon-trained fruit trees, as was often seen in kitchen gardens.

Johnson defined a border as a:

" narrow division of the garden which usually accompanies each side of a walk in the pleasure grounds and to the narrow bed which is close to the garden wall on one side, and abuts on a walk on the other."¹⁵

The borders could be on the outside of the walled garden as was the case at Arley Hall, or on the inside, as in the flower garden at Calke Abbey, which was part of a larger complex of walled enclosures also containing the physic and kitchen gardens. There they were often seen on either side of the main path.

When part of a more elaborate flower garden, borders were usually placed around the periphery of the scheme. They were also found in pleasure grounds, as part of shrubbery plantations. Borders could be straight or with a gently undulating curve, for example when backed by a shrubbery, or following the line of a path. (See illustrations 21, 22 and 28, Chapter 3.2.)

Borders which could be viewed from both sides were not unusual, their descriptions and references to them keep on recurring in both German and British literature.

¹⁵ Johnson George, *William: A Dictionary of Modern Gardening*, London, 1846, p. 83

An example can be found in Charles M'Intosh's description of a narrow border ¹⁶ which was no more than two to three feet wide (0.60-0.90 metres), and which was just wide enough to hold two rows of plants. He suggested to plant a taller and a lower plant alternately in order to prevent one hiding the other when the observer walked past. From this can clearly be concluded that his border was also intended to be viewed from two sides.

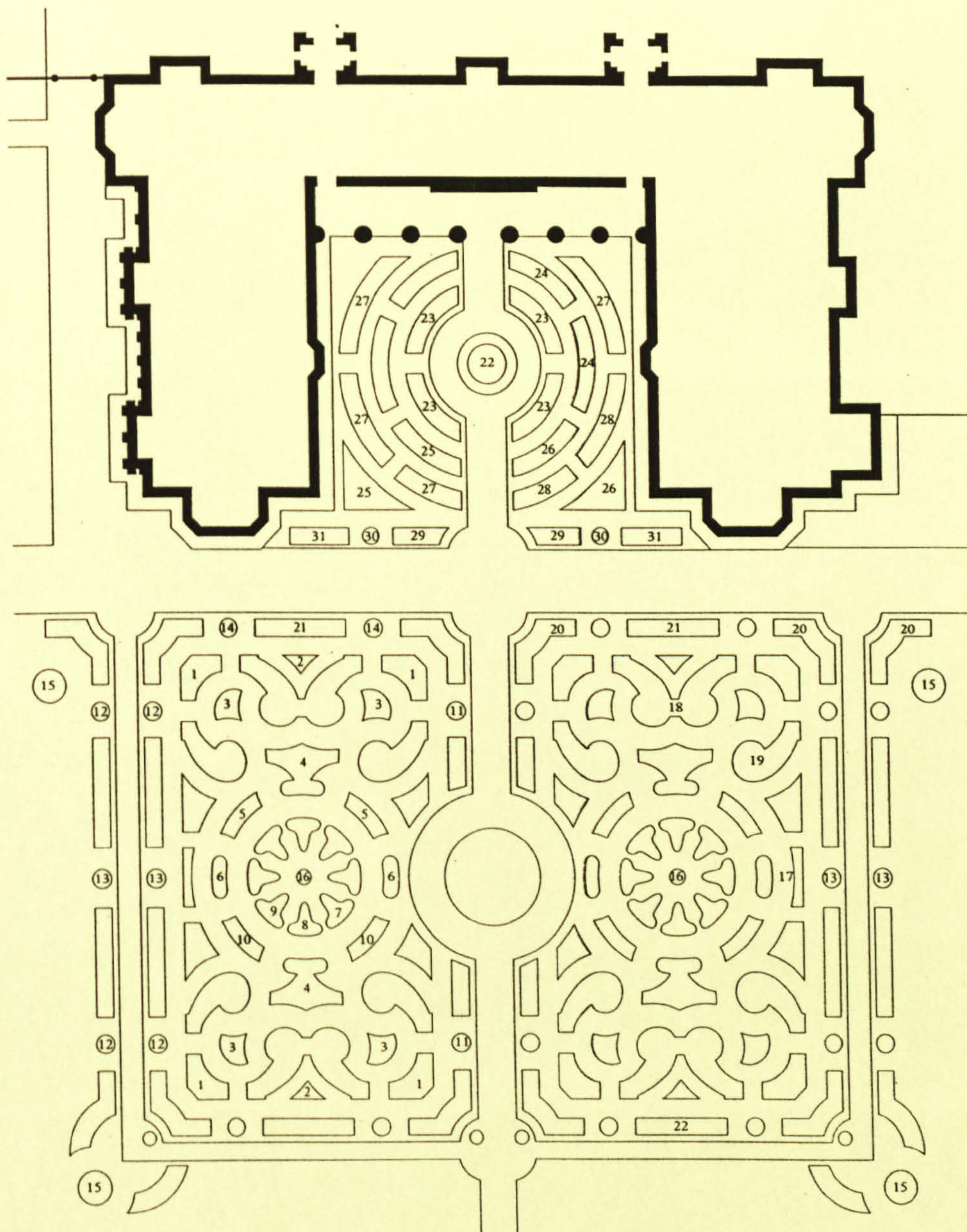
Another example of a scheme where beds and borders were used to grow perennials and bedding plants could be found at Audley End in the parterre. This has been restored in recent years. It consisted of an elaborate geometric pattern of beds with borders edging the paths. Most of the beds were planted with one type of bedding plant, but bed numbers two and eight were to be planted with herbaceous plants. None were specified, making a mixture of plants most likely. (See illustration 34 for the plan and illustration 35 for a photograph.)

Maria Elizabeth Jackson suggested three different ways of displaying flower beds. If the beds were placed end on to the main direction of viewing, the path between the beds would cause a visual interruption to the whole, which was not permitted. This appearance of a whole would also have been destroyed if any beds of a single species of plant had been introduced in the flower garden. The layout she recommended was created with straight beds (or borders) laid out sideways, across the main direction of viewing rather than in line with it. This, she felt, was the easiest way of achieving the desired effect of a rich display of mixed colour.

Whichever way the borders were placed, they had to form an entity. To enhance the effect of unity he recommended planting at least two of each plant in each border. The effect of unity could easily be destroyed if beds planted with one genus, such as

¹⁶ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Flower Garden*, 1838, p. 33

ILLUSTRATION 34: THE AUDLEY END PARTERRE PLANTING SCHEME



The parterre planting scheme of Audley End originally laid out in the early eighteen thirties, was used to reinstate the flower garden. It gave little information on the planting of perennials, only referring to beds 2 and 8 as being planted with herbaceous plants. The other were planted with roses or bedding plants.

(Audley End Guide Book, English Heritage 1995)

ILLUSTRATION 35: THE AUDLEY END FLOWER PARTERRE



(Original in colour)

The flower garden at Audley End House consists of formal beds, some of which are filled with bedding plants, others are planted with perennials, similar to the example in illustration 30.

(Author's collection)

primulas, hepaticas or pinks, were added to the scheme¹⁷. (See chapter 3.4.1 for more details.)

As in beds, the soil level of borders was usually raised too, with the soil level at the rear of the border being higher than at the front. If borders were viewed from both sides, the level was highest in the middle, where the tallest plants were grown. In either case, plants were exhibited to their fullest advantage¹⁸ and the effect was more dramatic.

Size of Borders

The seventeenth century borders enclosing formal parterres were only narrow strips, allowing sufficient space for a few plants. Although gradually widening as time went on, borders of the earlier part of the nineteenth century still appear to have been rather narrow. Loudon's scheme for a mingled border (1825) (see chapter 3.4.11) allows for four rows, allocating spaces of less than 0.5m per plant. This border would have been little more than 2m deep.

By the middle of the nineteenth century border depth started to increase. Johnson wrote that flower borders were unsatisfactory if they were too narrow, no matter how well planted, as they would never create an impression of grandeur and boldness. The wider they were, the better. The borders seen in the seventeenth century formal gardens were narrow, and relatively thinly planted. There was none of the lushness which Johnson apparently tried to aim at in his flower border effects. The borders shown on the 1846 Arley Estate Plan (see illustration 100) were, and still are, 5m deep.

¹⁷ Loudon, John Claudius: *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, 1822, p. 905

¹⁸ H., F.: "Planting Herbaceous Borders", *Gardening Illustrated*, Vol. 54, 1932, p. 151

Although recommendations for border sizes varied from person to person, they also depended on the site and situation. Borders which could be viewed from one side only, required sufficient depth to provide a bold display. Proportion was most important: the larger the border, the wider it ought to be. An 1895 article in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* suggested that three to four yards would provide sufficient depth to build up a good height in planting, whereas by 1905 an article suggested a border should be three to eight yards deep.¹⁹

Jekyll's main flower border at Munstead was eighteen feet (6m) deep with a two and a half feet (0.75m) wide path to access the rear planting.

If the scale of the garden was very large, border design had to be in the right proportions. An example quoted was a garden in Hertfordshire where a border edged a lawn of several acres. The border was several hundred yards long and twenty-five feet deep (8.30 metres). In order to create sufficient height it was backed by a wire trellis six feet tall (1.80metres) covered with climbing roses.

Siting

Borders had been a common feature of the kitchen garden, but as they became increasingly popular during the second half of the nineteenth century, they were considered a worthy feature for the pleasure ground. Sited not too close to the house and its formal displays, borders made a useful connection between the ornamental and utility parts of the grounds. They were best placed in a sunny spot sheltered by a bank of evergreen shrubs, whose evergreen backdrop helped to set off the varied colours

¹⁹ Wadds, Bailey : "The Flower Garden", 1895, p. 12;
Miller, W. A.: "The Flower Garden", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1905 (i), p. 23

of the flowers.²⁰ Their increasing popularity did not stop them from being used in walled gardens (see chapter 3.2.2, Kitchen Gardens).²¹

In the smaller suburban garden space was restricted, creating certain limitations on the placing of borders. For example they could be situated round the edge, or down the centre of the garden. Alternatively, to gain space, there could be one on either side of a rose-covered trellis.²²

Resumé

The principle design components of British flower gardens were beds, both formal and informal, and borders. All of these could be used for displaying perennials. Examples of the earlier half of the nineteenth century show that it was not uncommon to have formally laid out flower gardens, of which at least part of the beds was used for perennials. Informal beds, often placed in the pleasure grounds, were more likely to be used for growing perennials, as their character fitted the informality of the surroundings. Borders around the edges of formal gardens, making the transition in the pleasure ground between the formal and the informal, or used in the kitchen garden, were a common feature throughout the nineteenth century, gaining in popularity as the century progressed.

²⁰ Niven, J. C.: "Hardy Flowers, Alpine Plants and the Wild Garden", *The Garden*, Vol. 7, 1875, p. 98; Anon.: "Hardy Flower Borders", *Gardening Illustrated*, Vol. 1, 1880, p. 726

²¹ Miller, W. A.: "The Flower Garden", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1905 (i), p. 23

²² Loudon, John Claudius: *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion*, 1838, p. 248

CHAPTER 3.4: PLANTING STYLES IN BRITAIN

Throughout the nineteenth century herbaceous perennials could be found in many British gardens. It was the way in which they were laid out which could vary and evolved as time went on. As no detailed planting plans have come to light in the course of this research, little primary source evidence is available showing how herbaceous borders and beds could have been planted. Therefore contemporary books and magazines have been used as main sources of information to build up an image of the plants used and the way in which they were planted.

Although certain recurring trends can be identified, it is impossible to provide one set rule applicable to every planting style as each case was different, depending on site, taste and personal input of the gardener. It is possible to distinguish two very characteristic approaches in the actual way of planting herbaceous perennials. One involved the planting of a species grouped together in large numbers, known as the massing style. The other represented the display of a variety of plants of different colour, flowering height and period, as single plants or in small groups. Low plants were planted near the front, close to the viewer, the tall ones furthest away. This was known as the mingled or mixed style.

The massed style mainly involved tender bedding plants, which flowered for a longer period of time than most hardy perennials. It consisted of a bold geometric exhibit of usually one or a few varieties of plants per bed, which was changed more than once a year. The mingled style tended to be associated with the planting of mainly hardy herbaceous perennials and was usually of a more permanent nature, with most plants remaining *in-situ* for two or more years. Perennials were arranged in such a way that they provided an evenly distributed mixture of colour throughout the year.

The overall effect of both styles was very different, one was bold with large areas of colour which made a large impact, the other was more mottled and subtle, as not every plant in the display was in flower at the same time. Because the styles were so different they had two distinctive groups of followers.

The Pro and Contra Herbaceous Perennial Debate

Many references to the mixed or mingled style can be found in contemporary British literature. Some were positive, others rather negative, depending on the author's idea of what style was most effective.

Some regarded the mingled style as dull and far inferior to the massed style, but admitted it was cheaper to run as the plants could stay *in-situ* for several years. It was described as monotonous and the sight of herbaceous plants strapped to stakes was considered untidy in autumn. As long as the display of perennials was complemented with a selection of annuals and other (bedding) plants to fill the gaps left by the early spring flowers, an interesting succession of bloom could be achieved. Despite the effort, it was still judged as a poor contribution to the design of a garden¹. It was not only the way of planting which was criticised; the lack of attention given to the consideration of plant choice was seen as another problem. Thought was given only to plant height, ignoring flowering period², colour harmony and contrast.

Another argument which could be used against planting mingled borders, was the fact that many country residences were only occupied by their owners at certain times of the year, and therefore did not require a colour display throughout the year. In this

¹ Thomson, David: *Handy Book of the Flower Garden*, 1868, pp. 9, 155

² This was not necessarily the case if one considers the way Loudon divided his plant selection into periods of flowering and colour.

case it was easier for the gardener to produce a stunning massed display of flowers during the periods his employers were in residence. The rest of the season, those beds could be kept with a minimum level of maintenance. This certainly would have been more impressive than a mingled border which was going through its planned succession of plants flowering at any one time.³

Edward Kemp (1817-1891) was one of those garden writers who wrote about perennials in a rather derogatory tone:

"the lower tribes [herbaceous perennials] might be consigned altogether to those back borders, which faced the side walks and were not seen from the lawn, or to such other parts of the pleasure grounds as did not come into view from the house,..."⁴

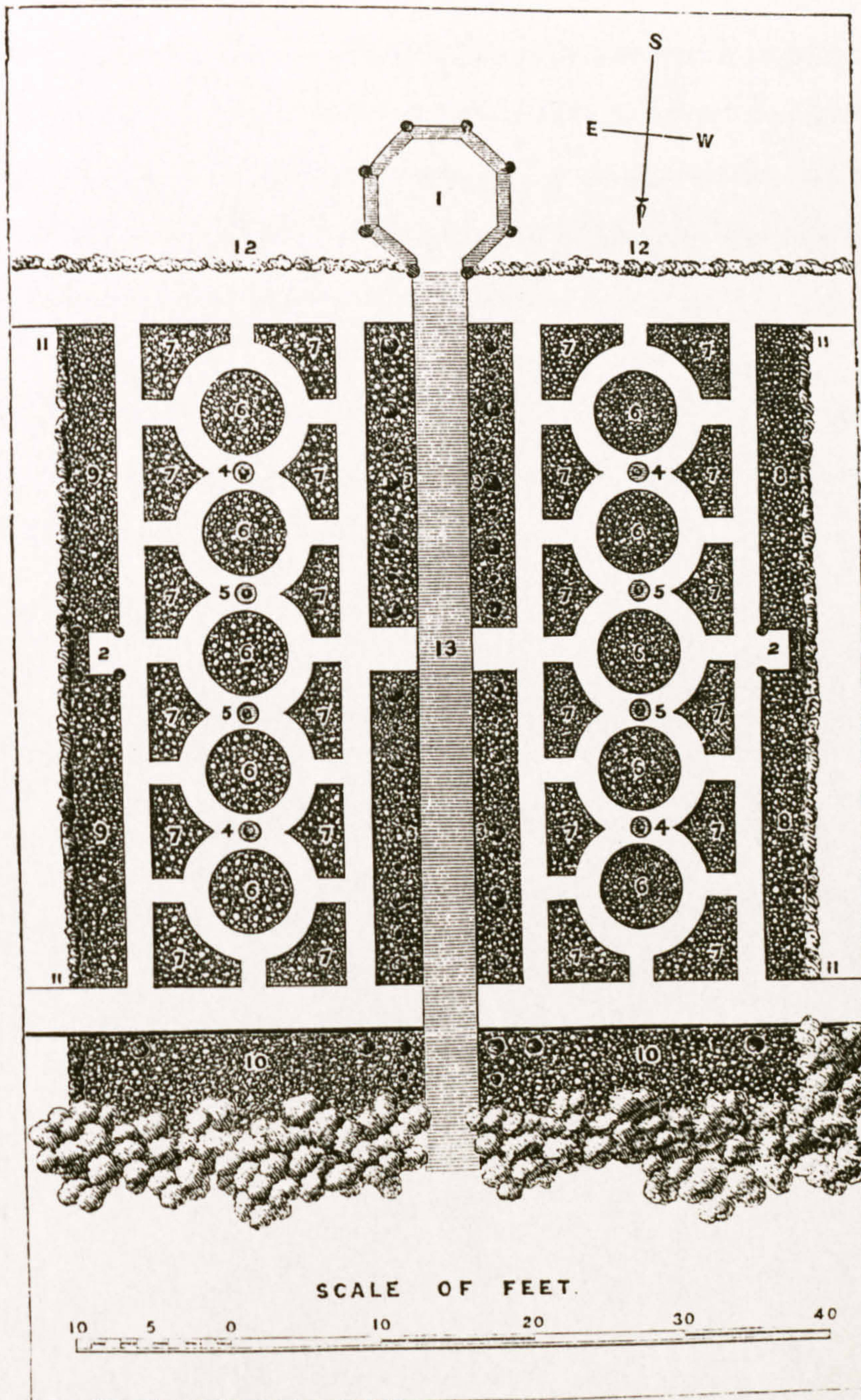
The tone and choice of words made it almost sound shameful to have such plants in the garden. He thought strips of herbaceous plants were very bland, often untidy and dull in winter. Despite these remarks, he did include a few designs in his book which contained herbaceous planting schemes. Illustration 36 shows a design for a formal garden, in which all, or two thirds, of the beds numbered seven could be planted with mixed flowers, or summer flowers, one sort to a bed. (See also illustration 32 in Chapter 3.3.)

Ten years later, in 1868 David Thomson was even more negative about the idea of cutting unshapely figures out of the grass and filling them with shrubs and herbaceous plants. Many of the herbaceous flowers used in the beginning of the nineteenth century had, in Thomson's eye, only botanical value and were far less pleasing than the many newly introduced species available on the market by the middle of the

³ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Flower Garden*, 1838, p., 33

⁴ Kemp, Edward: *How to Lay Out a Garden*, 1858, pp. 239-40

ILLUSTRATION 36: PLAN FOR A MASSED FLOWER GARDEN WITH PERENNIALS



This plan shows a flower garden in the massed style which contained some beds of mixed herbaceous planting.

(Kemp, Edward: *How to Lay Out a Garden*, 1858, p. 267)

nineteenth century. The florists' flowers were the best available at the time, and according to Thomson received a disproportionate amount of attention.⁵

But the mid-nineteenth century critics did not only disapprove of some plants and planting styles. In 1838 Charles M'Intosh criticised the asymmetrical shapes of some flower gardens, which did not complement the formal symmetrical residences they adorned. Unless done skilfully, they risked "sacrificing the requisite breadth and repose, and injuring what it is intended to adorn"⁶.

A comparison of herbaceous perennials displayed in the mingled border, with bedding plants used in the massed style raised a number of points.⁷ The advantages of the mingled style could be listed as follows:

- a permanent flower display all year round, by using winter flowering plants such as Christmas roses, aconites and hepaticas;
- never a completely empty bed;
- use of a wide variety of plants, including scented plants;
- possibility to combine perennials, annuals, biennials, roses and bulbs into one harmonious display;
- no need to bulk up large amounts of any one plant prior to planting;
- low labour requirements;
- low plant budget, as there was no annual need to propagate large quantities of plants.

⁵ Thomson, David: *Handy Book of the Flower Garden*, 1868, pp. 3-4

⁶ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Flower Garden*, 1838, p. 18

⁷ Anon.: "Forming Flower Borders", *Gardening Illustrated*, Vol. 1, 1880, p. 801, and above references

The disadvantages of the mingled style could be summed up as follows:

- the plant selection was often monotonous, more of botanical than horticultural value;
- no consideration for harmony or contrasting effects, only flower colour, height and time of flowering were taken into account;
- hard to plan the flowering periods so as to avoid gaps and ensure an even distribution of flower colour.

Not everyone shared these strong feelings about perennials and bedding plants. As in Germany where this never was an issue, a number of people felt that each type of plant had its appropriate use. Massed areas of bedding plants grouped in a geometric parterre suited, according to many, the geometric lines of architecture and were therefore best used near the house. Herbaceous perennials were better planted in large masses in an irregular way in the transition area between formal parterre and informal pleasure ground⁸. This could be done in borders as seen in illustration 37, where massed bedding plants fill the beds, and mixed perennials are planted in the surrounding borders.

Furthermore, which style was chosen depended also on taste, surroundings and on the style of the accompanying architecture as not all houses were suitable for parterres. A residence built in the Grecian or Italian style was best accompanied by a parterre made up of beds planted in the massed style, whereas a building built in the Gothic or English style was best associated with beds planted up in the mingled style.⁹

⁸ Bailey, Henry: "Mixed Flower Gardens Versus Beds", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1849, p.308

⁹ Kemp, Edward: *How to Lay Out a Garden*, 1858, p. 252

**ILLUSTRATION 37: ILLUSTRATION OF A FLOWER GARDEN SHOWING
BEDDING PLANTS AND PERENNIALS**



(Original in colour)

This undated painting shows a section of a formal flower garden, where bedding plants were planted in the inner beds, edged with a low box or grass trim, and the outer border in the back ground planted with mixed perennial planting.

(CBE 36198 "Hollyhocks" by Henley, Lionel Charles, (c. 1843-1893), Chris Beetles Ltd, London, London/Bridgeman Art Library, London)

The Planting Options

The manner of planting herbaceous plants as well as shrubs in a flower garden depended jointly on the style and extent of the setting. With this in mind, Loudon summed them up into the following four classes:

- *General or mingled flower garden*: this contained a selection of flowers, so as to provide a flower display of different colours throughout the season. Depending on the size of the garden, it could also include flowering shrubs.
- *Select flower garden*: was designed to display a particular kind of plant, such as florists' flowers, American plants, annuals and bulbs. Occasionally two classes could be mixed such as annuals and bulbs, but the best effects were obtained if only one class was used.
- *Changeable garden*: all plants for the changeable flower garden were reared in pots in the flower nursery or reserve ground. When they came into flower they were plunged into the flower bed, and removed as soon as they had finished flowering. Loudon considered this as the most complete form of gardening as the garden never showed any blanks or weak spots, and could combine the advantages of the mingled flower garden as well as those of the select flower garden.
- *Botanic flower garden*: the plants were arranged for botanical study purposes, not in any way to create an ornamental display of bloom or colour.

In addition to these four categories, herbaceous perennials were used to a lesser extent in bedding-out schemes for their foliage effect, or for their spring flowers.

3.4.1. The Mingled or Mixed Style

The mixed or mingled style was mostly applied to borders, though occasionally it was also used to plant beds. The mixed or mingled borders of the nineteenth century

looked different from the mixed borders we are familiar with today, though they could be regarded as their forerunners.

Although several variants of the mixed or mingled planting style could be found, they all had certain characteristics in common:

- the lowest plants were grown near the edge, the tallest at the back, or in case of a border viewed from both sides, in the centre;
- plants were set out in longitudinal rows, or even in grid squares;
- there was an equally dispersed mixture of colour across the border;
- plants of the different flowering periods were evenly distributed, so that the flower display was uniformly spread across the border throughout the year;
- the plants were planted far enough apart to allow each one to develop to its full potential, without hampering its neighbour;
- plants were planted singularly, or in small groups if they made a low visual impact;
- there was no incentive to create special colour or foliage effects.

3.4.1.1. The Mixed or Mingled Border

The mixed or mingled border as it was often planted in the early nineteenth century, appears to have its roots further back in history. Evidence has shown that planting borders in longitudinal rows dates back to the early eighteenth century, if not earlier. (See plan of Richard Bradley, illustration 5.) Mark Laird and John Harvey's interpretation of the 1735 instructions for setting out the flower border at Goodwood, indicates a border set against a wall, low plants growing at the front, taller ones at the back. The front row was made up of crocuses set four inches (0.10 metres) from the edging, two inches apart (0.05 metres). Nine inches (0.225 metres) behind these grew hepaticas, anemones and irises planted at six inches (0.15 metres) distance. This

planting sequence was repeated every three to four feet (0.90 to 1.20 metres). The third row consisted of twenty-two flowers, repeated every twenty-one feet (6.30 metres) along the 450 feet (129m) long border. Consequently, the back row of plants contained twenty-one repeated sections of flower, the middle row eighty-six.¹⁰

In the late eighteenth century, Mason mentioned a planting scheme, which he described as new. It was intended for positioning near the house and was based on what he called a natural and picturesque principle. It involved using the brightest and hardiest of native flowers¹¹, put together into what he called "trinal combinations" with flowers of red, blue and yellow colours and hues produced of these colours. These combinations were to follow rigid patterns, yellow in the centre, with on the left a red and on the right a blue flowering plant. Where the secondary hues were used, the order was crimson, orange and purple. They were then so arranged that each group of three were all of the same height and would flower simultaneously. When they had faded the adjacent three would come into flower. These flowering groups were to be spread out at convenient but not equal distances. In between these trinal combinations a few single plants could be planted too.¹² There was no space for annuals or biennials in this scheme as these flowers would have had a much longer flowering period, upsetting the patterns Mason tried to achieve.

¹⁰ Laird, Mark & Harvey, John : "A Cloth of Tissue of Diverse Colours", *Garden History*, Winter 1993, pp. 158-205

¹¹ Mason's understanding of what was a native flower may not correspond with what we regard today as a native flower. It could have been a plant which was introduced into Britain quite some time ago, and had become widely established.

¹² Bending, Stephen: "William Mason's", *Journal of Garden History*, Vol. 9, no. 4, 1989, pp. 217-20

Although the above described planting effect was different from Loudon's ideas on planting mingled borders, the concept of planting in lines according to rigidly recurring patterns (see below) is very similar.

The main aim of the mixed or mingled border was to create a colourful effect for as long a period as possible. The plants used were primarily herbaceous perennials, which on the whole would stay *in situ* for more than one year¹³, depending on the species and position. This was considered one of the chief advantages of the mingled style, as it required a much smaller labour and material input. Many of the hardy border flowers preferred not being disturbed at the root for many years. Others required lifting and dividing every two to three years. A third group which consisted of vigorous plants, benefitted from lifting and dividing annually.¹⁴

Many suggested enriching the border by adding bulbs for early spring effect and annuals for late summer, in the gaps left by the bulbs. This extended the flowering season considerably, and added more variety to the border.¹⁵ Where possible though Maria Elizabeth Jackson thought it was best to have a separate flower garden dedicated to growing annuals, which could be combined with bulbs, as most spring flowering bulbs finished flowering and were ready for lifting, or had died back by the time the annuals were ready to start their display in the garden.¹⁶

The mixed or mingled border, as described by Loudon, was intended to be seen as a whole, with flower and colour evenly distributed throughout. Little or no attention

¹³ Thomson, David: *Handy Book of the Flower Garden*, 1868, p. 157

¹⁴ Anon.: "Calendar of Operations", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, Vol. 5, 1850 p. 328

¹⁵ Jackson, Maria Elizabeth: *The Florist's Manual*, 1816, p. 68 and Thomson, David: *Handy Book of the Flower Garden*, 1868, p. 157

¹⁶ Jackson, Maria Elizabeth: *The Florist's Manual*, 1816, p. 21

was paid to the merits of individual plants, or such design elements considered important today such as texture, shape and plant associations. Plants were selected for their flower colour, height and time of flowering, giving preference to plants with large flower heads or a multitude of flowers in order to create the biggest impact. The aim was to have a very colourful display of all the main colours, evenly spread across the border with some plants of each colour flowering at any time.

Planting Distance

The late twentieth century tendency has been to plant herbaceous perennials at a relatively close distance, in order to create a rich, dense mass of flowers and foliage. The reason for today's close planting is not only aesthetic, but also based on husbandry: when the soil surface is covered with vegetation, weed seeds are less likely to germinate due to the lack of light and the soil will not dry out as quickly.

The close planting practice of today has caused people to take a biased approach when planting supposedly nineteenth-century mingled style schemes. Today everybody is used to seeing densely planted borders, and people assume that is how it was always done.

The herbaceous border at Packwood House (see illustration 38), is a prime example of a border supposedly representing the early nineteenth century mingled style, planted in a twentieth century interpretation.

The linear planting, placing low plants along the front edge, gradually grading the height up to the rear, the disregard for colour schemes and the use of small clumps or individual plants are all correct. However, the planting is much too dense, which has resulted in one solid mass of plants. The effect is very attractive, but projects a

Chapter 3.4: Planting Styles in Britain

ILLUSTRATION 38: THE PACKWOOD HERBACEOUS BORDER PLANTED IN THE MINGLED STYLE

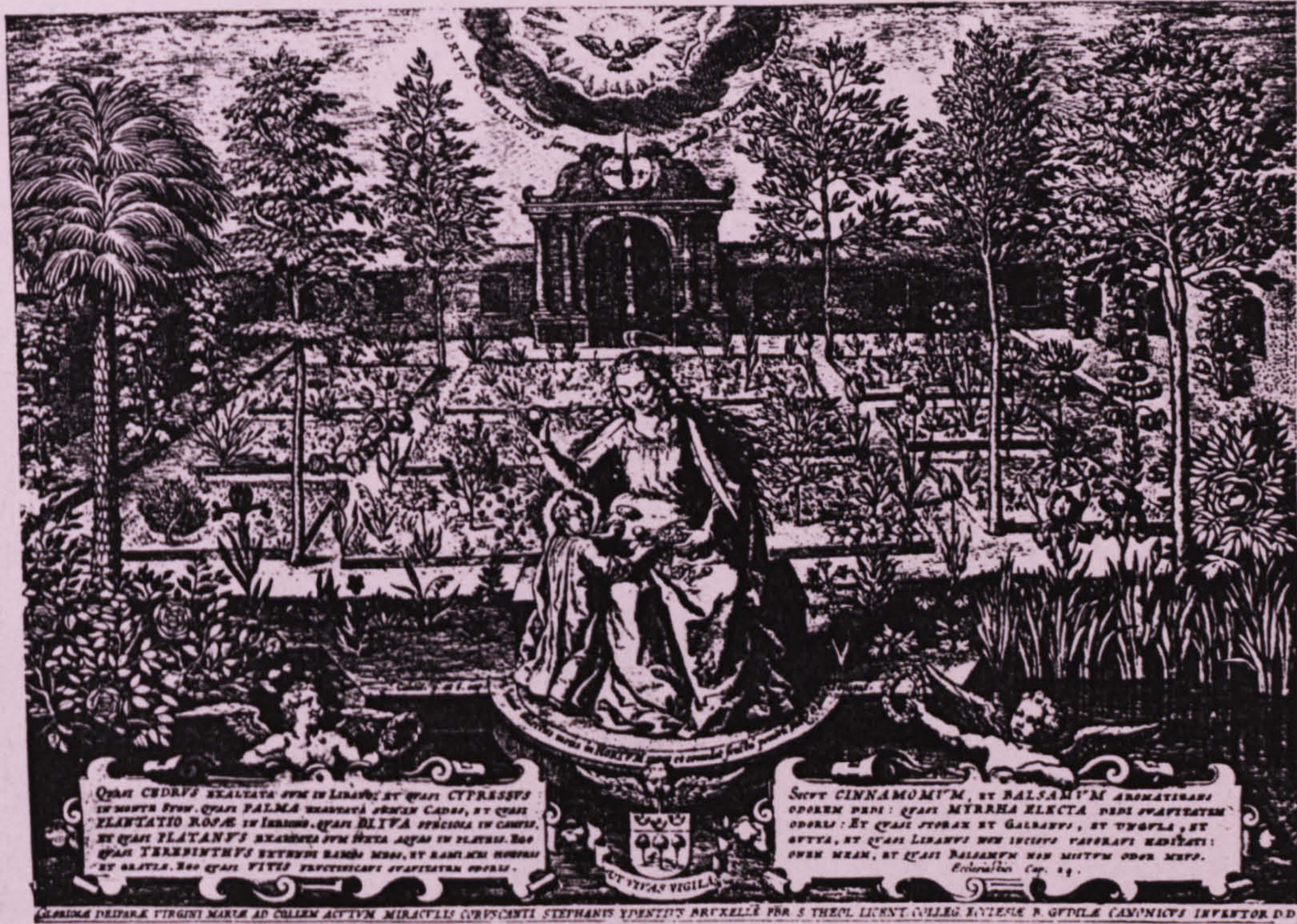


(Original in Colour)

The borders at Packwood House in Warwickshire, have been planted in a style which reflects the early nineteenth century mingled style. The lowest plants have been placed near the front, grading up to the tallest ones at the rear. Plants are used in small clumps, repeated at regular intervals. There is no particular colour scheme. The only point in which it differs from the mingled style described by contemporary authors, is the very close planted. Most nineteenth century garden writers were in favour of planting at generous distances.

(Author's collection)

ILLUSTRATION 39: EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY FLOWER GARDEN



This Brussels tapestry, approximately dated 1601, shows an enclosed garden with a simple arrangement of square, raised beds and borders around the edge. They contain a great variety of flowers, including different lilies, irises, fritillaries, tulips, violets, lily-of-the-valley, pinks and peonies. Typical for the period, the plants are all planted at considerable distance.

(Crisp, Sir Frank: *Mediaeval Gardens*, 1966, fig. 131)

totally different image of what it would have looked like in reality. Plants would have been allowed to develop their own character much more.¹⁷

Planting distances were quite different in the past. If we look at sixteenth or seventeenth century illustrations it is quite clear that plants were spaced far apart. (See illustration 39.)

Labour was cheap and plentiful, but many plants were rare and costly so that they were spaced to show off their full beauty, to the highest standards possible. This ambition was also found in the nineteenth century for example in the gardenesque movement where plants were allowed ample space. (See chapter 3.2.4.3 for more details on the gardenesque style.)

The benefits of generous spacing were described by John Robson, who mentioned one of the best herbaceous borders he had ever seen, in which the plants, which had been allowed sufficient room apart, flowered with a luxuriance not often witnessed elsewhere.¹⁸

Precise planting details such as distance between plants and the number of plants used within a group are rare. Most contemporary authors were often very vague about practical information. Unfortunately, it is precisely this information which is particularly important when one tries to put their theories into practice. However, it is not only today that this lack of information is a problem, it was even commented

¹⁷ The use of modern cultivars stresses even further the twentieth century impression of the border.

¹⁸ Robson, J.: "Hardy Herbaceous Perennials and their Neglect", *Cottage Gardener*, 1859, p. 26

on by contemporaries like Donald Beaton who complained that none gave enough information to enable a gardener to plant his garden following their instructions: ¹⁹

" ...the literature of the mixed bed and border is among the poorest of all the subjects treated of in our language. Only a glimpse here, and a snatch there, without a system;...a shapeless mass, out of which the best writer among us could hardly make out a decent calendar for each of five months out of the twelve. "

Group size (see below) and planting distance were two practical details which played a major role in determining the overall appearance, which were most often ignored by the authors. Walter Nicol was one of those who assumed everybody knew the size of a patch, suggesting perennials could be planted "in patches around the borders".²⁰ Loudon commented on the importance of respecting the appropriate planting distance, saying how important it was to allow a plant to develop naturally to its full size, so that it could flower all over on all sides from top to bottom, something which was impossible if it was crowded together with its neighbours.

Jane Loudon said the same: planting distance should depend on a plant's breadth, not height, allowing a few inches in between every plant²¹. Even in the beginning of the twentieth century when planting several plants of one kind together, it was considered

¹⁹ Beaton, Donald: "The Systematic Arrangement of Mixed Borders", *The Cottage Gardener*, Vol. 15, 1855, p. 214

²⁰ Nicol, Walter: *The Villa Garden Directory*, 1809, p. 99

²¹ Loudon, Mrs: *The Ladies Companion to the Flower Garden*, 1865, p. 33

important to leave sufficient space in between the plants to allow them to develop properly.²²

In the accompanying illustration a schematic representation is shown of planting distances recommended in an article in the *Journal of Horticulture* of 1862. The further back in the border, the larger the plants became, the wider the spacing became. (See illustration 40.)

It was contrary to good culture and the beauty of art and design to plant too close. Despite the recommendations of various authors, it is clear that not everybody respected this principle of good planting, and that even in such places of expected high horticultural standards, such as the garden of the Horticultural Society at Chiswick, plants were placed far too close together²³. Even Loudon himself made the mistake when describing how to plant mingled borders, saying all plants had to be planted at fifteen inches (0.45 metres) distance, a generous distance for small plants at the front of the border, but insufficient for the taller ones at the rear. (See below.)

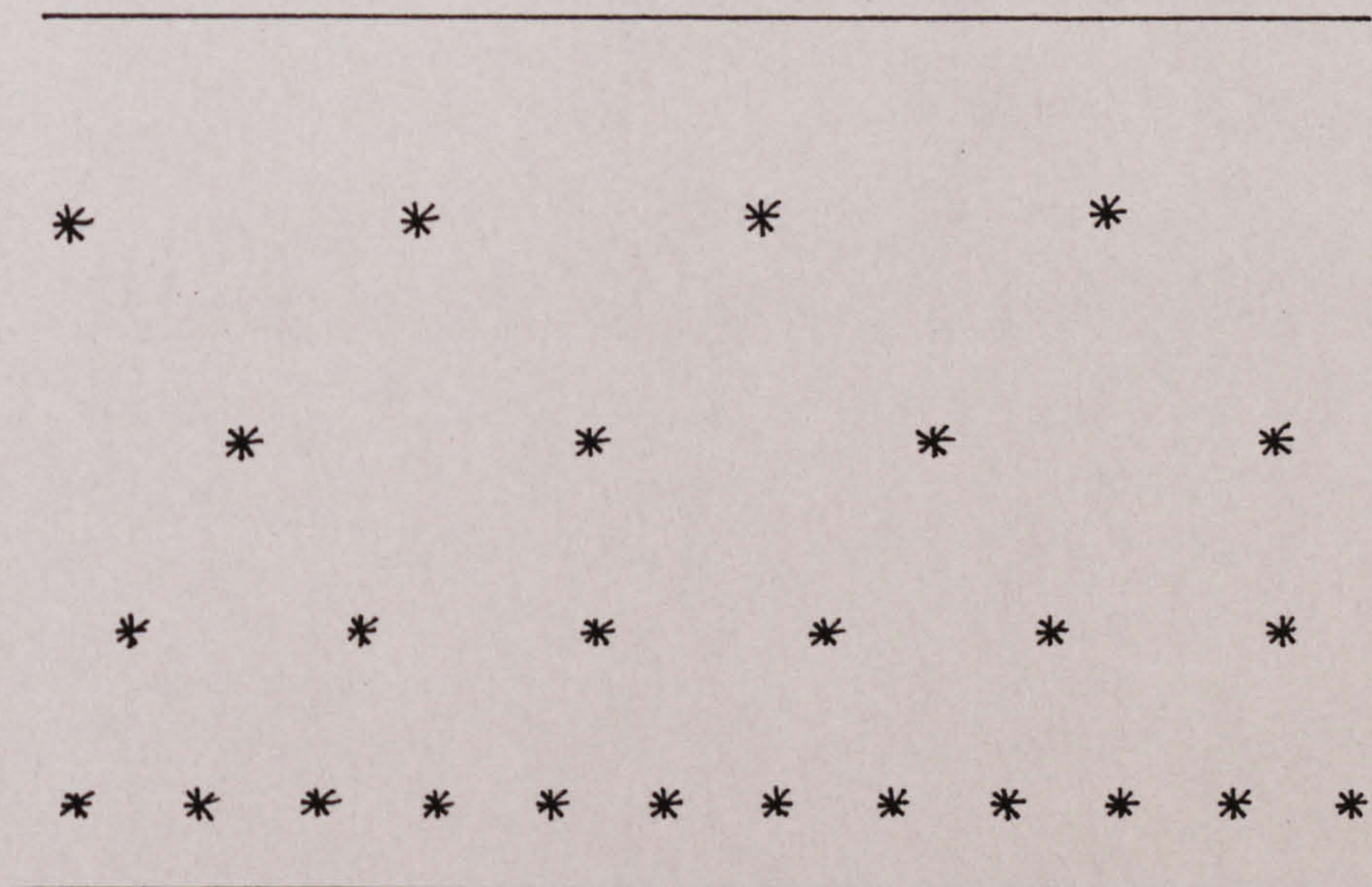
The other extreme was James Cuthill²⁴, who also complained about people always planting too closely; he recommended plants should be planted three feet apart (0.90 metres), allowing plenty of space for manuring and digging in the winter months. He did have an ulterior motive, as bedding plants such as verbenas, calceolarias, petunias and scarlet geraniums could be added in the resulting spaces, a practice also mentioned by Beaton. (See below.)

²² H., F.: "Planting Herbaceous Borders", *Gardening Illustrated*, Vol. 54, 1932, p. 151

²³ Loudon, John Claudius : "On Mixing Herbaceous Flowering Plants", *Gardener's Magazine*, Vol. 11, 1835, p. 412

²⁴ Cuthill, James : "A mixed Flower Garden", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1849, p. 261

ILLUSTRATION 40: POSITIONING OF PLANTS IN A BORDER



Front of the border

Interpretation of planting positions and distances of plants in a border, based on a description in the *Journal of Horticulture*, showing the linear planting style popular until late in the nineteenth century. The front row contained low plants, the rear was home to the tallest plants.

(Appleby, T.: "The Distances in the Rows", *Journal of Horticulture*, 1862, p. 436)

This point clearly illustrates one of the dilemmas encountered when replanting borders or beds according to the mingled style. Should one follow the instructions given in a few books and articles and plant far enough apart, to allow plants to show themselves on all sides, leaving a few inches in between plants? Alternatively should one follow apparent reality and plant closer, as seems to have been done by the Horticultural Society? Opting for the wider spacing, Mrs Loudon's advice would seem the soundest, leaving a few inches in between; Mr Cuthill's recommendations are fine for larger plants, but would hardly seem appropriate when dealing with smaller ones such as *Aquilegia*, which would look rather lost in a large sea of earth or bedding plants.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, planting distances seemed to become smaller as can be seen in S. Kercheval Marsland's description of his kitchen garden borders (see chapter 3.2.2), saying he packed his borders closely. Jekyll's planting plans show tight spacing, as do many illustrations of borders from the late nineteenth century onwards.

Size of Planting Group

Ideas on the size of planting group would strongly differ, from one plant per space to a group of plants per space. It all depended on the overall size and more importantly on the overall impact of the flower. When dealing with large, bold-flowered species usually one plant was sufficient to create the desired effect. If the same-sized space was to be filled by a more slender or discreet flowering plant, a larger number of plants was needed. Jackson recommended planting a minimum of two plants per group, the total number depending on the impact of the colour. When using strong dominant colours, fewer plants were needed to retain the balance in the border.²⁵

Although Loudon suggested planting single plants, most other early nineteenth century authors preferred planting in small groups, unless when using bold plants. M'Intosh recommended using one plant of the showier sorts, but for the small plants such as snowdrops, crocuses, or primroses, he suggested groups of a dozen or more. He was convinced groups were more effective than single plants, unless the actual flowers of the plants were large and showy like dahlias or hydrangeas. Especially for small plants like primroses or dwarf bulbs, a dozen or more were needed for a good display²⁶.

From George Glenny's month by month account of what to do in the garden²⁷ we can get some idea of group size. Dahlias for example, were planted singly or in groups of no more than three plants. Being usually bold plants with bright colours and many flowers for a long period, few were needed to create the right effect in a display. Slender *Gladiolus* on the other hand, were planted in groups of six. Another report which recommended filling gaps in a border with annuals, suggested the size of the groups should be six to nine inches wide and four to six inches deep (0.15 to 0.225 metres wide by 0.10 to 0.15 metres deep) if the gap was near the front of the border, or deeper if it was towards the rear of the border. There was no mention of making it wider if placed towards the rear.²⁸

Despite the lack of precise details, the above figures help us to conclude that on average enough plants of one species were planted together to fill a space less than one square metre, possibly half that.

²⁶ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Flower Garden*, 1838, p. 33

²⁷ Glenny, George: *The Gardener's Everyday Book*, 1856

²⁸ Anon.: "Flower Gardens", *Cottage Gardener*, Vol. 11, 1853, p. 498

Group sizes gradually increased towards the latter part of the nineteenth century. The 1889 Elgood painting of the Arley border (see illustration 101) shows small groups of plants. The early twentieth century *Country Life* photographs show bolder plant groups. Jekyll's planting plans use generous drifts of plants, and Robinson too endorsed the use of larger groups of perennials (see also chapter 3.2.4.3, Wild Gardens: Planting of the Wild Garden and Robinsons' Change of Heart). The description of the planting at Shrubland Park (see illustration 48) illustrates the increased generosity in planting groups: "The plants are not in little dots, but in easy bold groups here and there running together."²⁹

Shape of Planting Groups

Even less information appears to have been written on the outline of plant groups within a border. Judging by the above mentioned details, it would appear that the shape was probably rather regular, either square or rectangular, possibly circular or oval.

Especially when borders were planted in longitudinal lines as was the norm for a good part of the nineteenth century (see below for examples of Loudon's and Beaton's borders), the depth of a group would have been restricted by the spacing of the rows. This explains the dimensions for the group size mentioned above, which were wider than deep, which would have been easier to accommodate within a row. The idea of planting in irregularly shaped drifts did not come into vogue until the latter part of the nineteenth century, when Gertrude Jekyll produced her plans showing what she called *drift planting*:

"Many years ago I came to the conclusion that in all flower borders it is better to plant in long rather than block-shaped patches."

²⁹ Anon: "The New Flower Garden at Shrubland Park", *The Garden*, Vol.42, pp.378-9

She considered this not only more pictorial, but also less obtrusive when a plant died down, there were no large empty patches visible.³⁰ (See illustration 41.)

Although Jekyll's plans are the first ones to show irregular drifts of plants, the possibility that others had done this before her should not be excluded, but to date no evidence has been found. Nor is there much evidence of it being used widely after she launched the style. Many gardeners talk about it, but in practice, few apply it. First of all the impact must be considered. A narrow drift of flowers will not create as bold an effect as a clump. Jekyll is right in saying that the space left by a drift of flowers when they have faded, is quickly filled by neighbouring plants. However, plant height can cause problems with these overlapping drifts which tended to run diagonally across a border, either by tall flowers hiding smaller ones behind, or others being smothered by overhanging plants.

Even Robinson, who was in favour of planting natural looking, irregular drifts in the more informal settings of the wild garden or in meadows, produced a planting plan for a section of a border, which was planted in longitudinal lines. Although he had moved away from the repeating pattern of plants, he was still planting in lines increasing in height towards the rear of a border. (See illustration 42.)³¹ This practice continued as can be seen in other planting plans such as those published in *Gardening Illustrated* in 1879 by 'J.D.'³²

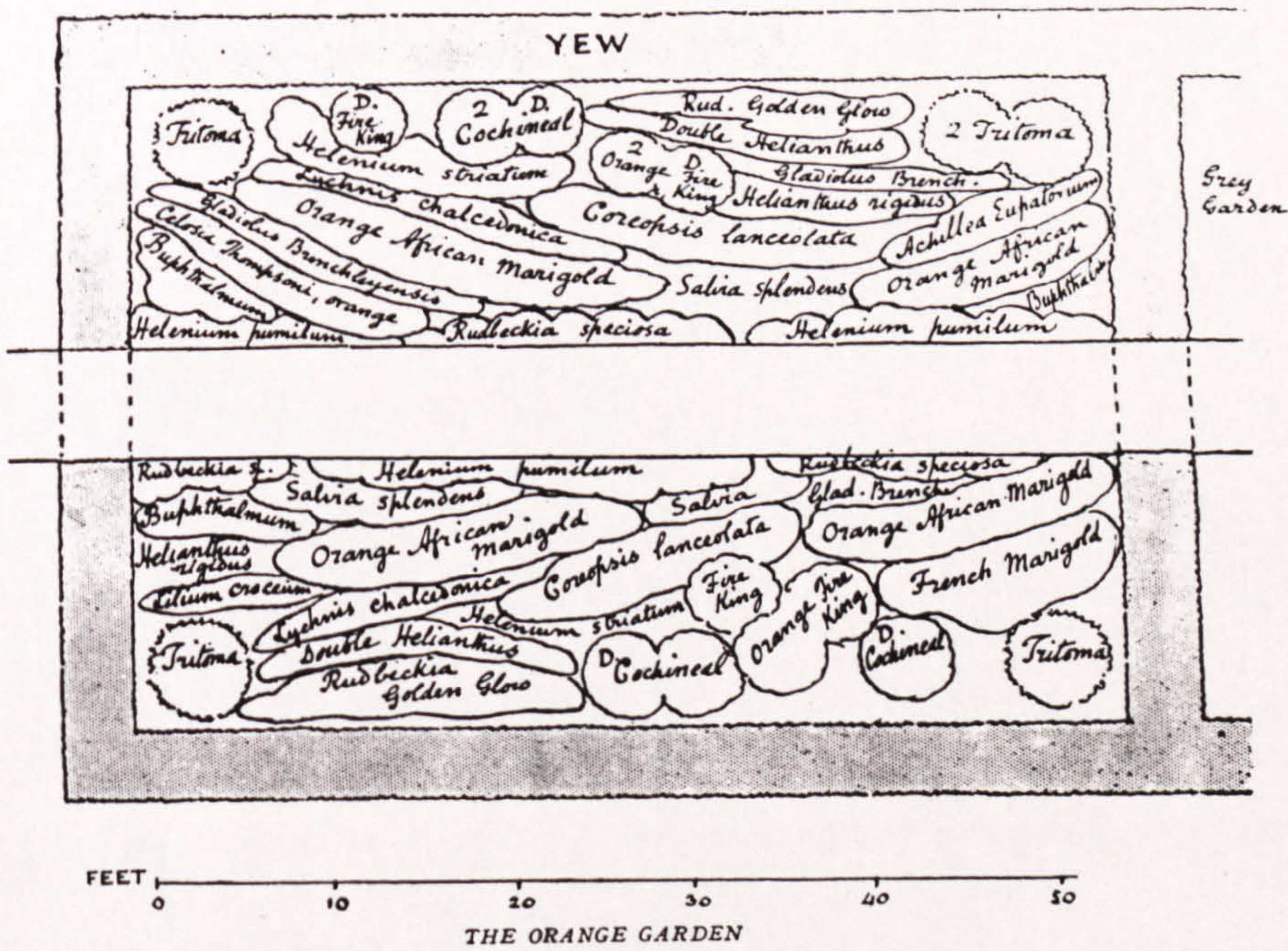
Photographic evidence shows us that by the end of the nineteenth century linear planting had become a thing of the past. Analysing the photographs of Robinson's

³⁰ Jekyll, Gertrude: *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*, 1936, p. 66

³¹ Robinson, William: *Hardy Flowers*, 1871

³² D., J.: "Borders of Herbaceous Plants", *Gardening Illustrated*, Vol. 1, 1879, p. 362

ILLUSTRATION 41: GERTRUDE JEKYLL'S DRIFT PLANTING

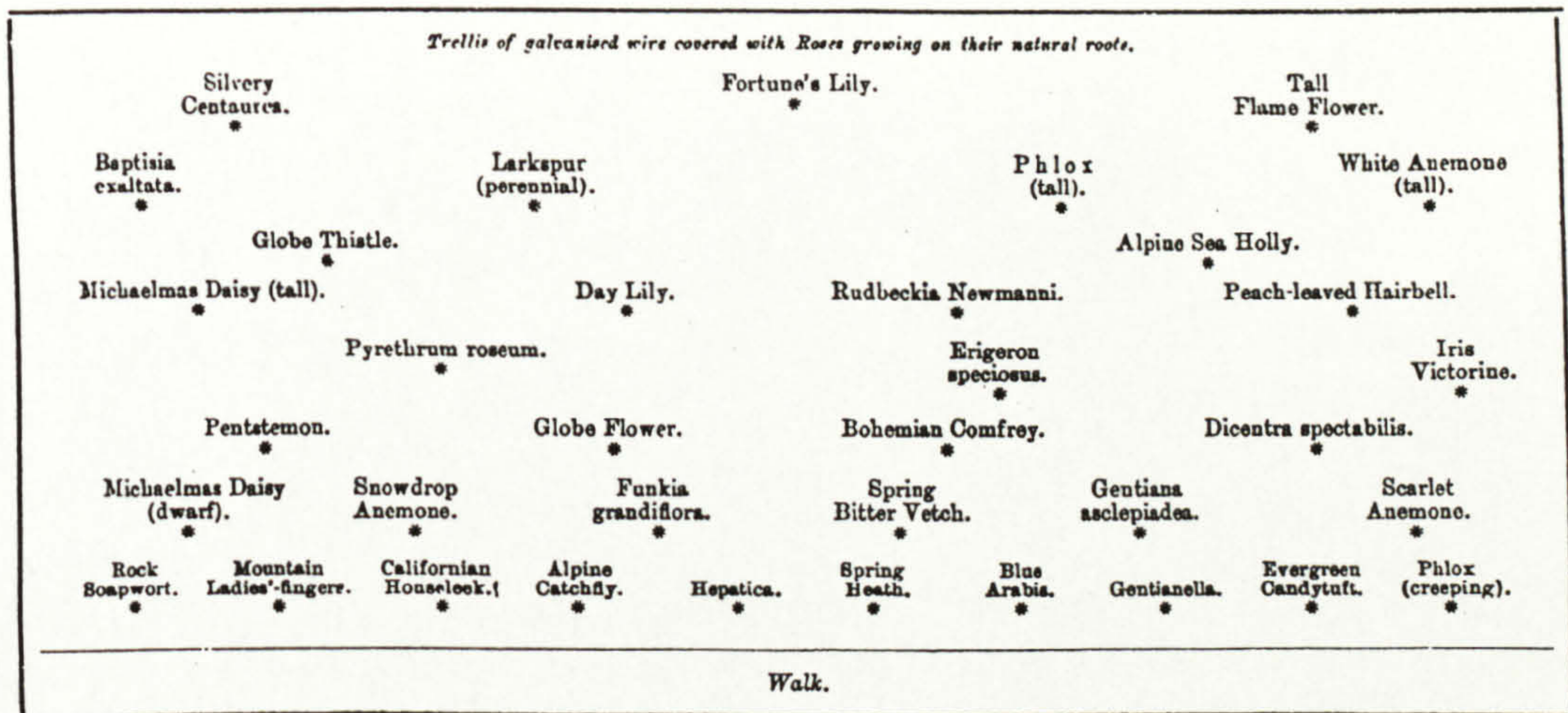


Gertrude Jekyll was the first person to practice drift planting on a large scale. She preferred this to the traditional clumps of planting as it left less of an open space in the border when the plants finished flowering.

(Jekyll, Gertrude: *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*, 1936)

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ILLUSTRATION 42: PLANTING PLAN FOR A MIXED BORDER,
PUBLISHED BY ROBINSON



Robinson published a planting plan for a section of a mixed border, which later was reprinted in *Gardening Illustrated*. Despite his recommendations on planting in natural-looking drifts and observing nature, he obviously had not yet abandoned the linear planting which had been about for at least 250 years.

(Anon.: "A Border of Hardy Flowers", *Gardening Illustrated*, 1879, p. 162)

ILLUSTRATION 43: THE FLOWER GARDEN AT BLICKLING HALL



The flower garden at Blickling Hall in Norfolk had a rather formal pattern of beds, planted with a great variety of plants, including perennials. The four main square beds were filled with a mixture of small groups of flowers, planted so that the outline was dome-shaped. around these rectangles was an assortment of smaller beds, all placed in a geometric pattern.

(Anon.: "Blickling Hall", *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1894, p. 533-4)

flower garden at Gravetye, it appears that he gave preference to planting in loose groups. The early photographs of the flower garden at Blickling hall show the beds planted with small groups, possibly just one plant per group. (See illustration 43.) Likewise, the early photographs of the borders at Arley show that planting was done in small groups. (For more details and illustrations of Gravetye and Arley see case studies in chapters 7.1 and 7.2.)

Rhythm in Planting

Especially when dealing with a long stretch of border, repeating elements brought a certain rhythm, which in turn created visual relief by making the effect more restful. Particularly when the actual size of the groups was small, a border could be very restless to look at. When certain feature plants were added at regular distances, or the planting sequence was repeated, an element of balance was introduced. A repeating element which recurred through the border, helped to create a visual link from one end to the other.

As could be seen in the Goodwood example of 1735 (see above), repeating a planting pattern within one border was not unknown. It was also mentioned by several of the nineteenth century writers. For good effect, Jackson recommended frequently repeating some flowers throughout the scheme. Loudon suggested planting at least two of each plant in each border, repeating the particularly attractive ones more frequently. Kemp too felt that some repetition was advantageous but recommended planting specimens of Irish yew and *Viburnum tinus* at regular intervals.³³

³³ Jackson, Maria Elizabeth: *The Florist's Manual*, 1816, p. 6;
Loudon, John Claudius: *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, 1822, p. 905, and
Kemp, Edward: *How to Lay Out a Garden*, 1858, p. 264

Examples: John Claudius Loudon's Scheme for a Mingled Border (1825)

Of the many recommended ways of planting a mingled border, Loudon has probably left us the most detailed schematic description of how he thought a border in the mingled style should be laid out. His intention was to provide a colourful display, evenly spread across the border for as long as possible. The planting recommendation he came up with is very reminiscent of the one for Goodwood (see above), with plants laid out in rows, at specific regular distances, repeating the same planting sequence. Loudon had worked out a very strict system for laying out mingled borders³⁴, which worked beautifully on paper, but upon closer inspection has proved to be far from realistic as will be shown below. He divided the border lengthways into four or eight lines, depending on whether it was to be viewed from one or both sides³⁵ (see illustration 44). The tallest plants were placed at the rear, or middle if viewed from both sides. Each plant was allocated fifteen inches (0.45 metres) space, effectively creating a grid system.

The flowers were divided into the following six flowering seasons:

February - March (1), March - April (2), May - June (3), July (4), August (5),
September - October (6)

They were also divided into four main colour groups³⁶:

red, white, blue, yellow.

³⁴ Loudon, John Claudius: *An Encyclopedia of Gardening*, 1825, p. 798

³⁵ If the border was to be viewed from both sides, the other half became a mirror image.

³⁶ In view of Loudon's schematic approach to this planting recommendation, it is quite safe to assume that the suggested colour range was simplified. It was not until the latter part of the 19th century that the use of colour hues and tones in borders became relevant. Prior to that pinks were for example included under the heading of reds, as can be seen in illustration 47.

ILLUSTRATION 44: CROSS SECTION OF A FLOWER BED BY LOUDON



Loudon's plan above shows the cross section of a flower bed, showing the perfect dome shape, achieved with mixed planting of flowers, using the lowest plants along the edge, tallest ones in the centre. Loudon used the same outline for borders.

(Loudon, John Claudius: *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, 1824, p.881)

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Flowering season and colour were then paired up. In order to avoid one plant flowering as soon as its neighbour had finished the flowering sequence was mixed up, thus preventing a predictable progression of flowers. He suggested putting the plants in the following order of flowering periods:

- 1 February - March : red
- 6 September - October : white
- 3 May - June : blue
- 5 August : yellow
- 2 March - April : red
- 4 July : white

And so it would continue down the row: 1 blue, 6 yellow, 3 red, 5 white, 2 blue, 4 yellow, 1 red, 6 white, 3 blue, 5 yellow, 2 red, 4 white, 1 blue, 6 yellow, 3 red...

In plan view the effect was as follows:

BACK OF BORDER

1B 6Y 3R 5W 2B 4Y 1R 6W 3B 5Y 2R 4W 1B 6Y 3R 5W 2B 4Y 1R 6W 3B 5Y 2R 4W 1B 6Y
3R 5W 2B 4Y 1R 6W 3B 5Y 2R 4W 1B 6Y 3R 5W 2B 4Y 1R 6W 3B 5Y 2R 4W 1B 6Y 3R 5W
2B 4Y 1R 6W 3B 5Y 2R 4W 1B 6Y 3R 5W 2B 4Y 1R 6W 3B 5Y 2R 4W 1B 6Y 3R 5W 2B 4Y
1R 6W 3B 5Y 2R 4W 1B 6Y 3R 5W 2B 4Y 1R 6W 3B 5Y 2R 4W 1B 6Y 3R 5W 2B 4Y 1R 6W

FRONT OF THE BORDER

However upon closer analysis, the practicality of this scheme should be questioned. Firstly, his allocation of space was not realistic. A space of fifteen inches (0.45 metres) would be very generous for a small primula or other dwarf plant growing at the front, but exceedingly tight for a large *Gypsophila paniculata* let alone a *Lythrum salicaria* planted towards the back. This contradicts his idea that plants should be positioned far enough apart to allow each to develop properly.

Secondly, when analysing the result of the display on a monthly basis, it became clear that only two colours would flower in any one period. This too contradicts his theory of having some plants of every colour flowering at any one time. The way Loudon's suggested scheme works, only red and blue flowers would have been out from March till June, and yellow and white ones from July to October. The following break-down shows which coloured plants would have flowered in which month:

1. FEBRUARY - MARCH

B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----
 ----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----
 --R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----
 R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----

2. MARCH - APRIL

----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----
 --B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----
 B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----
 ----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----

3. MAY - JUNE

--R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----
 R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----
 ----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----
 -B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----R----B----

4. JULY

----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----
 --Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----
 -Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----
 ----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----

5. AUGUST

---W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----
 -W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----
 ----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----
 --Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----

6. SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER

-Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y
 ----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----
 ---W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----
 -W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W----Y----W

The problem could be rectified by creating for example a seventh flowering period, to make an uneven number. The suggested month to add is June, a period during which a wide range of perennials flower:

- 1 February - March
- 2 March - April
- 3 May
- 4 June
- 5 July
- 6 August
- 7 September - October

Allocating these periods to the four main colours red, white, blue and yellow in the order of 6, 3, 5, 2, 4, 7, 1 would create a border with the following effect:

BACK OF BORDER

6B 3Y 5R 2W 4B 7Y 1R 6W 3B 5Y 2R 4W 7B 1Y 6R 3W 5B 2Y 4R 7W 1B 6Y
 5R 2W 4B 7Y 1R 6W 3B 5Y 2R 4W 7B 1Y 6R 3W 5B 2Y 4R 7W 1B 6Y 3R 5W
 4B 7Y 1R 6W 3B 5Y 2R 4W 7B 1Y 6R 3W 5B 2Y 4R 7W 1B 6Y 3R 5W 2B 4Y
 1R 6W 3B 5Y 2R 4W 7B 1Y 6R 3W 5B 2Y 4R 7W 1B 6Y 3R 5W 2B 4Y 7R 1W

FRONT OF THE BORDER

If we highlight for example all the plants flowering in June (our added flowering period) we can observe which colours would be flowering where in the display:

BACK OF BORDER

6B 3Y 5R 2W 4B 7Y 1R 6W 3B 5Y 2R 4W 7B 1Y 6R 3W 5B 2Y 4R 7W 1B 6Y
 5R 2W 4B 7Y 1R 6W 3B 5Y 2R 4W 7B 1Y 6R 3W 5B 2Y 4R 7W 1B 6Y 3R 5W
 4B 7Y 1R 6W 3B 5Y 2R 4W 7B 1Y 6R 3W 5B 2Y 4R 7W 1B 6Y 3R 5W 2B 4Y
 1R 6W 3B 5Y 2R 4W 7B 1Y 6R 3W 5B 2Y 4R 7W 1B 6Y 3R 5W 2B 4Y 7R 1W

FRONT OF THE BORDER

This way all colours can be on show in any one stretch of border, but the achieved effect can still not be considered perfect. Flowering plants would have appeared in diagonal lines. If the border was seen from a distance at a right angle, the desired effect of a whole mass of colour could possibly be achieved, but if the border was observed by walking past it, it would have been inevitable to see the diagonal lines of planting.

Although Loudon described his theory in great detail, it is doubtful if anybody would have followed it to the letter, when putting it into practice. If anybody did follow his instructions, would they have left it untouched for long?

Charles M'Intosh's Narrow Border (1838)

In 1838 M'Intosh described briefly how to deal with a narrower border, two to three feet wide (0.60 metres to 0.90 metres), viewed from both sides. These narrow borders could only be planted with two rows of plants, as single specimens or in groups. M'Intosh suggested when planting narrow borders, to plant taller and lower plants alternatively, so that the low plants were not hidden behind the taller ones, and the same view could be had from either side.³⁷ This recommendation suggests a certain symmetry in planting.

Donald Beaton's Linear Border Interplanted with Annuals (1855)

Loudon was not the only one to describe in great detail how to lay out a border. Donald Beaton gave a very detailed description in the *Cottage Gardener* of 1855, which was much more realistic.

37

M'Intosh, Charles: *The Flower Garden*, 1838, p. 33

Like Loudon, Beaton divided his border into lines, but not into a grid, which makes it quite reminiscent of ribbon borders³⁸. However, Beaton did make allowance for the expected plant size: the larger plants growing at the back of the border were spaced at greater distances. He would not list in great detail all the plants that could be used, as everybody had their own opinion on the subject. More importantly, he explained the principle on which he based his planting. The example used was a border edged with a row of box plants after which came a succession of plants, increasing in height as they progressed to the back.

The following was the progression of rows, graded according to height, *row 1* being the lowest one:

Row 1, placed two inches (0.05 metres) from the hedge was planted with three kinds of bulbs: single snowdrops, double snowdrops and dog's tooth violet planted alternately, no more than three inches (0.075 metres) apart. The snowdrops were planted three to a hole, but the dog's tooth violets, owing to their high cost, were planted singly.

Row 2, planted six inches (0.15 metres) away from the box, was a continuous row of very closely spaced mixed crocuses.

Row 3, placed one foot from the box (0.30 metres) was a continuous row of polyanthuses and auriculas, planted at the rate of two polyanthuses to one auricula.

Rows 4, 5 and 6 occupied the next three feet (0.90 metres), and were filled with three rows of herbaceous plants and bulbs, none of which were higher than three feet (0.90 metres).

³⁸ Ribbon borders were borders planted with bedding plants in longitudinal rows.

Row 7 was filled with hybrid perpetual roses on their own roots, spaced thirty inches apart (0.75 metres). This way they would form an almost continuous line of flowers, but due to their habit no stiffness in appearance would be noticeable.

Row 8, thirty inches (0.75 metres) behind the roses, was reserved for herbaceous plants taller than three feet (0.90 metres), but allowing some spaces for annuals such as purple and white *Malope grandiflora* (syn. *M. trifida*).

Row 9 was reserved for strong growing roses like the hybrid perpetual and bourbon types. In between these roses more spaces were left for different annuals and taller dahlias.

Row 10 was fully occupied by hollyhocks, though by this stage the rows were no longer in such straight lines as the lower ones near the front were.

Background: The hollyhocks in turn were backed by a screen of evergreen shrubs of miscellaneous heights, planted at differing distances so as to create an irregular and informal pattern.

Beaton then continued his article suggesting the whole could be made even better by adding annuals to the above scheme:

"I consider this a vast improvement on any mixed border I ever saw; but a greater improvement is to be told in a very few words. The whole space between the box edging and the first row of roses is now, or will, very shortly be double planted."

Annuals, flowering in May which were raised from seed in August and September or which were self-sown, were planted close together in between the rows of the perennials:

between rows 1 and 2: *Limnanthes douglasii*

between rows 2 and 3: *Nemophila insignis* (syn. *N. menziesii*) and *N. maculata*, mixed in three rows

behind row 4: *Silene pendula alba*

behind row 5: *Silene pendula* - pink

behind row 6: *Collinsia bicolor*

behind row 7: mixed purple and white *Clarkia pulchella*

When these were past their best, they were followed up with more annuals sown in April.

Beaton concluded his article by saying he considered this an excellent arrangement, and a new move for the mixed border, though beds could be planted after the same fashion.³⁹

Although this example may have been one of the earlier ones, this way of planting rows of annuals in between rows of perennials was not unique.

David Thomson's Description of the Borders at Bothwell Castle (1868)

In 1868 Thomson's perfect mixed border was still a rather linear, regimented structure. He extolled the virtues of the mixed border at Bothwell Castle in Scotland, where he had done his apprenticeship, as the finest in the country. His description however, does not correspond with his own recommendations on how to lay out a mixed border.

For all season effect he recommended planting a spring flowering plant, then a summer flowering plant and next an autumn flowering one, mixing them as height and colour would allow, avoiding big empty spaces at any one time of the year. The principle was the same as Loudon's, though much more simplified. Instead of six flowering periods, he only used three, avoiding any problems of overlapping by keeping to vaguely defined three flowering seasons of spring, summer and autumn. The chance that a plant flowering in May would be succeeded by its neighbour

³⁹ Beaton, Donald: "The Systematic Arrangement of Mixed Borders", *The Cottage Gardener*, Vol. 15, 1855, pp. 214-5

flowering in June was remote⁴⁰. He also did not go in for the complicated system Loudon had devised of mixing flowering sequence in order to avoid a gradual progression of bloom through a border.

The effect of the border could be enhanced if crocuses, snowdrops, tulips and other bulbs were lifted with a good rootball when they had finished flowering, and were replaced in June by annuals and half hardy plants for the late summer display.

The border at Bothwell Castle⁴¹ in Lanarkshire certainly had impressed Thomson. Bothwell seems to have had quite a reputation for its borders, as in her Journal⁴² Dorothy Wordsworth described her visit to the ruined Castle of Bothwell on 22 August 1803:

"we came up to it, I was hurt to see that flower-borders had taken place of the natural overgrowings of the ruin,..." "

Thomson described the border as 100 yards long (90 metres) and twelve feet wide (3.60 metres). Plants were put in five rows, the height grading upwards from the front to the back of the border:

Edge: Gazania splendens (syn. *G. rigens*), variegated alyssum, *Lobelia x speciosa* and a few *Centaurea ragusina*.

line 1: Phlox omniflora (?) breed, intervals filled with scarlet flowering and variegated pelargonium (*Pp.* 'Tom Thumb', 'Frogmore' and 'Brilliant').

line 2: Phloxes (taller ones), double white feverfew, yellow calceolaria of sorts.

⁴⁰ Thomson, David: *Handy Book of the Flower Garden*, 1868, p. 156

⁴¹ Thomson, David: *Handy Book of the Flower Garden*, 1868, p. 326

⁴² Princ. Shairp (ed.): 1874 - *Ordnance Gazetteer* p. 180

line 3: Chiefly double white and peach rocket, *Valeriana rubra* (syn. *Centranthus ruber*), *Delphinium grandiflorum*, phloxes, dwarf dahlias, gladiolus and moderate growing tropaeolums near the rockets to cover their space when they had finished flowering.

line 4: *Delphinium formosum*, *D. barlowii*, *D. hendersoni*, phloxes, veronica, variegated lythrum and dahlias of mixed colours.

line 5: Tall phloxes, *Lysimachia tomentosa* (syn. *L. tomentosa*), *Aconitum*, delphiniums, dahlias (especially yellow); the back line was not too densely planted.

wall: roses and shrubs, tropaeolum (especially crimson)

There were more plants used in the border, but Thomson only listed these main ones.

Borders of Hardy Flowers by 'J.D.'⁴³

In the first volume of *Gardening Illustrated* there were two very interesting examples of mixed borders. The first one published in one of the May issues was a reproduction of the plan published by Robinson in *Hardy Flowers* of 1871. (See illustration 42.)

One of the points the author made was that in any good border no six feet (1.80 metres) of its length should resemble any other stretch of the same border, thus rejecting the practice of repeating patterns. There was a wide enough choice of plants available to provide variety and interest.

In August of the same year an article appeared by 'J.D.' with two planting plans for herbaceous borders. In stark contrast to the earlier example, the planting of these was based on repetition. (See illustration 45.)

⁴³ Anon.: "A Border of Hardy Flowers", *Gardening Illustrated*, Vol. 1, 1879, pp. 161-2, and D., J.: "Borders of Hardy Herbaceous Plants", *Gardening Illustrated*, Vol. 1, 1879, p. 362

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ILLUSTRATION 45: TWO PLANS FOR BORDERS, ONE PLANTED IN LINES, THE OTHER IN GROUPS

Wall or fence covered with Ivy.

2	4	3	5	1	4	3	5	2	4	3	5	1	4	3	5	2																			
7	10	9	11	8	10	9	11	6	10	9	11	8	10	9	11	6	10	9	11	8	10	9													
12	15	14	16	13	17	14	15	12	16	14	17	13	15	14	16	12	17	14	15	13	16	14	17	12	15	14	16	13	17	14					
21	13	21	20	22	19	23	20	21	13	21	20	22	19	23	20	21	13	21	20	22	19	23	20	21	13	21	20	22	19	23	20				
27	25	24	23	25	30	27	26	23	23	25	30	27	26	23	23	25	30	27	26	23	23	25	30	27	26	23	23	25	30	27	26	23	23	25	30
.....																																			
Edging of Rockwork, 1 ft. high.																																			

Arrangement of border of hardy flowers for south to west aspect.

Wall covered with Ivy.

	1		4		3		4		2		4		3		4		1		1	
	1	1			3	3		2	2		3	3				1	1			
6	1		6	5	3	5	6	2	6	5	3	5	6	1	6					
			8		10		7		7		10		8							
9	9	9	8	8	10	10	7	7	9	9	7	7	10	10	8	8	9	9	9	
			8		10		7		7		10		8							
11		11		11		11		11		11		11		11		11		11		11

Arrangement of border of hardy flowers for north to east aspect.

Border A had plants laid out in rows, one of each in the traditional way. **Border B** showed a break with tradition, planted in small clumps of one, three or four plants. The front was edged with bedded out plants, behind which perennials, roses and dahlias were placed in a regular pattern. 1. hollyhocks (group), 2. delphiniums (group), 3. tall lilies (group), 4. chrysanthemums, 5. hybrid perpetual standard roses, 6. pyrethrums, 7. iris (group), 8. gladioli (group), 9. phloxes, 10. dahlias, 11. pelargoniums, fuchsias and balsams, in winter evergreens plunged in pots.

(D.,J.: "Borders of Hardy Herbaceous Plants", *Gardening Illustrated*, 1879, p. 362)

Plan A was for a border in which the plants were arranged in lines, plan B was arranged in clumps or masses. The plants for list A were the following:

1. *Campanula pyramidalis*
2. *Delphinium Wheeleri* (?), bright blue
3. Foxglove, Crimson and white
4. Pyrethrum, various
5. Chrysanthemum, various
6. Standard Roses, various
7. *Tritoma Uvaria* (syn. *Kniphofia uvaria*) or Torch Lily, orange and scarlet
8. *Lilium superbum californicum* (syn. *L. pardalinum* 'Californicum') crimson, orange
9. *Lilium tigrinum splendens* (syn. *L. lancifolium splendens*)
10. *Delphinium Hermann Stenger*, blue and rose
11. Mixed Phloxes, various
12. Mixed Columbines, various
13. English and Spanish Iris, mixed blue, purple and white
14. Gladioli, mixed, various
15. White Lily
16. Antirrhinums, mixed
17. Cuphea, mixed
18. *Campanula medium calycanthema*
19. Crown Imperial, yellow
20. Mixed carnations
21. *Polyanthus Narcissus*, yellow and white
22. *Oenothera Fraseri* (syn. *O. glauca*), yellow
23. Sweet William
24. Tulips, various
25. Group of Hyacinths, followed by *Gazania elegans* mixed
26. Group of Spring Tulips
27. *Oenothera taranacifolia* (syn. *O. acaulis*)
28. Mixed Pinks
29. Dwarf Wallflower
30. *Iris pumila*

Plan B was decorated with the following flowers planted in groups:

1. Group of Hollyhocks
2. Group of Delphiniums
3. Group of tall Lilies
4. Chrysanthemums and Pompones
5. Hybrid Perpetual Standard Roses
6. Pyrethrums
7. Group of Iris
8. Group of Gladioli
9. Phloxes
10. Dahlias
11. Zonal Pelargoniums, Fuchsias and Balsams, succeeding plunged pots of evergreen shrubs

3.4.1.2. Mingled Beds

Although the mingled or mixed style of planting perennials was mainly associated with borders, it could also occur in beds. Because beds had no front or back, but could be viewed from all sides, the lowest plants were near the edge and the tallest in the middle of the bed, such as the planting schemes seen at Nuneham Courtenay and Hartwell (see illustration 13, chapter 3.1). No reference was made to their popularity, but several descriptions have been found for planting such mixed beds. Furthermore there are the examples of Nuneham and Hartwell, the informal beds at Arley (see case study, chapter 7.1) and the illustrations published by Maria Elizabeth Jackson (see illustrations 15 and 16 in chapter 3.2), which all indicate that they were not uncommon.

Despite being generally in favour of the massing style, Kemp provided his readers with some alternative planting designs especially if the house was of the irregular

shaped English or English Gothic style. He considered beds of mixed flowers best suited to that type of architecture.⁴⁴

However, beds part of a formal display could also be planted in the mingled style. He gave the example of a garden near Welshpool, where he created a formal garden divided into four quarters. The two lower quarters, nearest to the house were filled with summer flowers in beds of one colour in the massing style. The two upper quarters, four feet (1.20 metres) higher, were designed to take mixed herbaceous planting. (See illustration 32, chapter 3.3.)⁴⁵

Example: A Formal Mingled Bed by 'C.D.' (1831)

As mentioned in chapter 3.3. *Main Design Elements of British Flower Gardens*, 'C.D.' published in the *Gardener's Magazine* of 1831⁴⁶, a description of a geometric circular shaped flower garden placed in a recess of the lawn or shrubbery (see illustration 46). Unlike most examples of mingled planting, this one was arranged according to a strict colour scheme. The eight longitudinal beds were planted according to colour in yellow, red, white or blue. The circular beds were treated differently:

- *circular bed a*: Roses and bulbs: China roses, including semperflorens, sanguinea and noisettiana roses, with a standard purple noisette in the centre, and the gaps filled with mixed bulbs. The bed was edged with mixed hyacinths.
- *longitudinal beds b*: red-flowering herbaceous plants and bulbs, edged with aimable rosette hyacinths.
- *longitudinal beds c*: white flowering herbaceous plants and bulbs, edged with white crocuses.
- *longitudinal beds d*: blue flowering herbaceous plants and bulbs, edged blue or purple crocuses.
- *longitudinal beds e*: yellow flowering herbaceous plants and bulbs, edged with yellow crocuses.
- *circular beds f*: variegated horse-shoe geraniums, alternated with mixed hyacinths, and edged with mixed crocuses.
- *circular beds g*: variegated ivy-leaved geraniums alternated with mixed tulips, and edged with mixed crocuses.

⁴⁴ Kemp, Edward: *How to Lay Out a Garden*, 1858, p. 252

⁴⁵ Kemp, Edward: *How to Lay Out a Garden*, 1858, p. 187

⁴⁶ D.,C.: "Plan for a Flower Garden", vol. 7, 1831, pp. 33-5, *Gardener's Magazine*

- *circular beds h*: *Fuchsia coccinea* or any favourite tender annual or greenhouse plant, alternating with mixed narcissus and edged with mixed dog's tooth violets.
- *circular beds i*: heliotropes or other favourite tender annual or greenhouse plant, alternated with mixed *Iris xiphium* and edged with *Scilla verna* and *S. biflora* (syn. *Ornithogalum biflorum*) (blue, red and white ones).

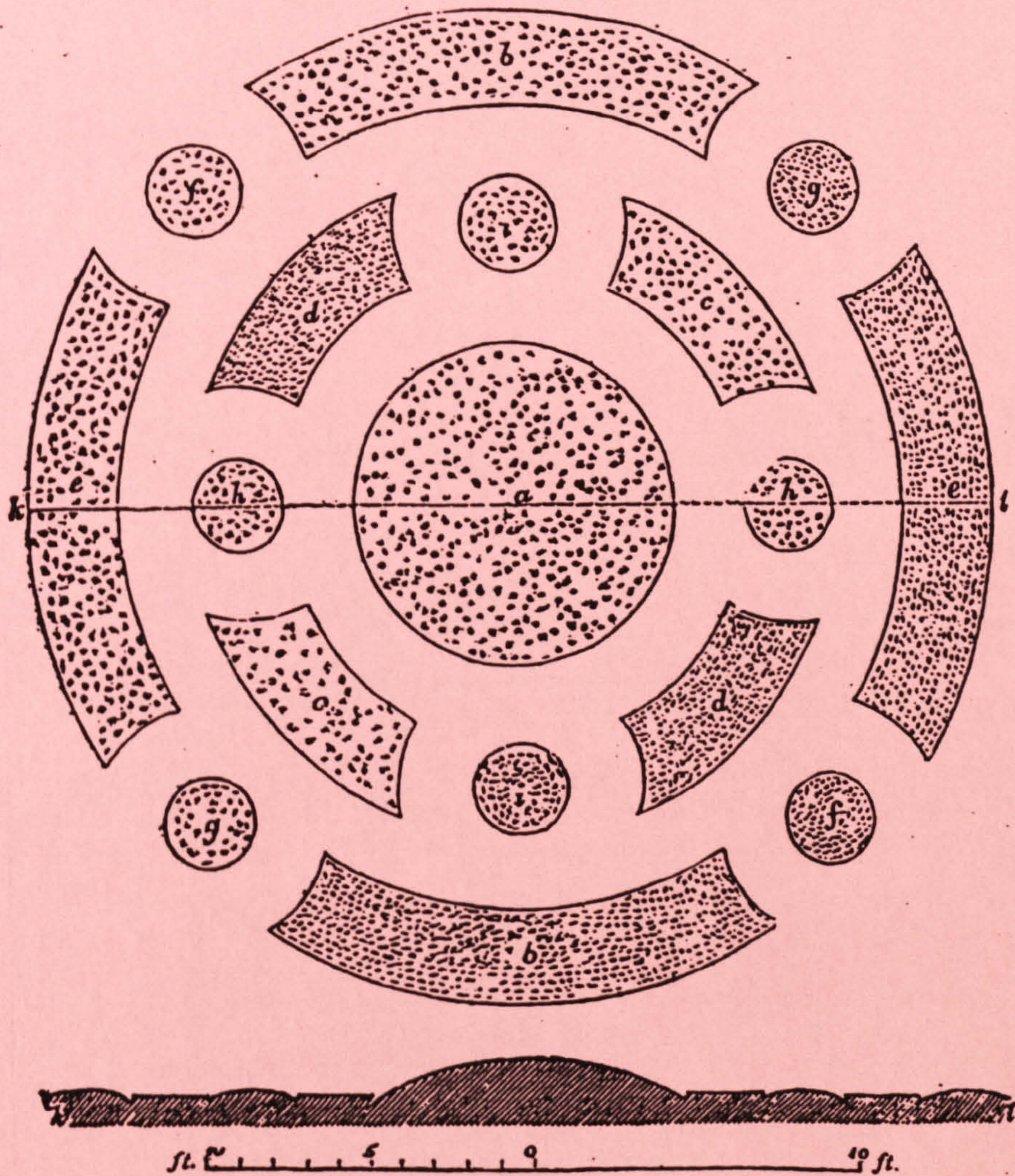
Beds *b* to *e* were filled with herbaceous plants and bulbs. They contained three rows of herbaceous plants, with a row of bulbs planted in between each. Every bed was edged with one species of bulb, which would have died back completely by the time early summer arrived. The plants in the outside rows were supposed to reach between six inches (0.15 metres) and eighteen inches (0.45 metres). The ones in the central row would reach between eighteen inches (0.45 metres) and two feet six inches (0.75 metres).

Within the rows, the plants were spaced one foot (0.30 metres) apart, whereas in between the rows the spacing was a little more generous to allow for the bulbs. This lack of space makes it quite safe to assume that only one specimen of each was planted, except perhaps for the smallest ones such as *Hepatica triloba* and *Primula allionii*, simply for the reason they would not have been able to fit in more. No plants were repeated in any of the borders. As in Loudon's plan, plants were grown rather closely together.

An month by month analysis of the spread of flowering plants, shows flowering plants far apart. There is a possibility that plants were cut back after flowering to tidy up and allow space for its neighbour to develop, though no mention was made of any such maintenance details.

'C.D.' included a detailed plan and list of plants for one of the beds as an example. Bed *b* was destined to have red flowering herbaceous plants and bulbs, edged with aimable rosette hyacinths. Although all were described as red coloured, the tones varied considerably, today some would be classed as pink. They were selected to provide a continuous display of colour from March to November, starting with six flowering plants in February, climaxing with thirteen at the height of the season in June and July, and then dropping again to seven by November. The flowers were evenly distributed across the border. Compared with the circular beds filled with bedding plants, the overall effect would have been rather subdued. (See illustration 47.)

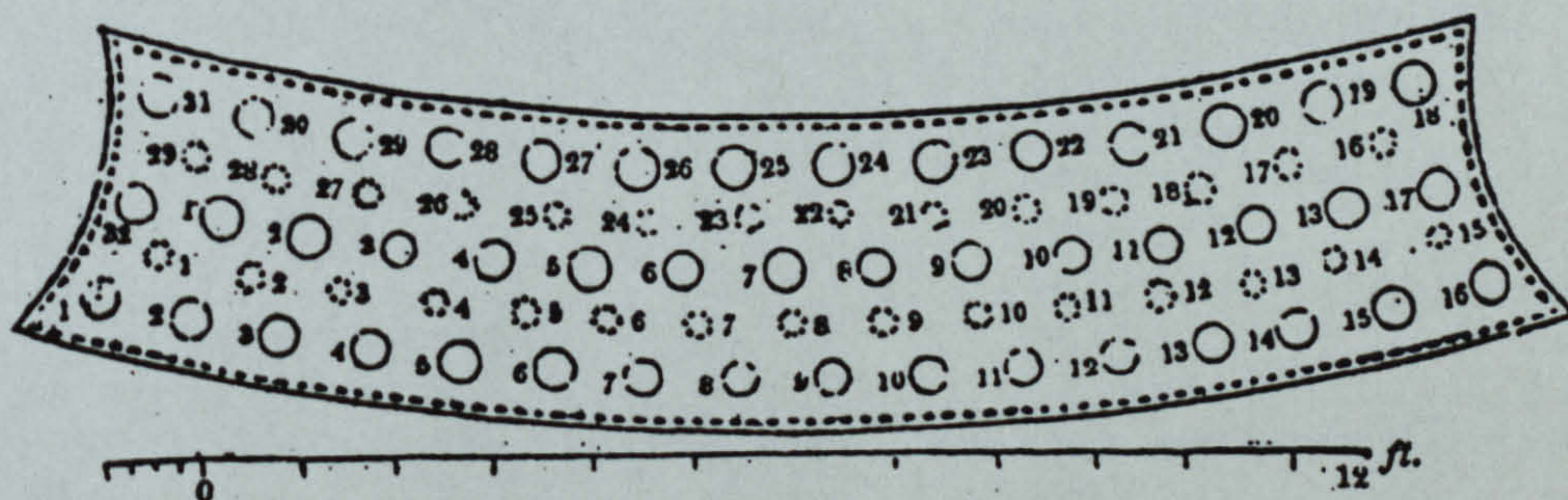
ILLUSTRATION 46: PLAN FOR A FORMAL CIRCULAR FLOWER GARDEN, PLANTED IN THE MINGLED STYLE



The circular formal flower garden was situated in a recess of the shrubbery lawn. The longitudinal beds were planted with perennials and bulbs in the mingled style, the large circular bed was planted with roses, the smaller ones with bedding plants. The cross section below shows the shaping of the soil.

(D., C.: "Plan for a Flower Garden", *Gardener's Magazine*, vol. 7, 1831, p. 33)

ILLUSTRATION 47: PLANTING DETAIL OF A PLAN FOR A FORMAL CIRCULAR FLOWER GARDEN, PLANTED IN THE MINGLED STYLE



Detail of the circular flower garden depicted in illustration 37. The bed was planted in the mingled style, perennials planted in three rows, interplanted with two rows of bulbs. Unlike other contemporary schemes, this one was arranged according to colour. This particular bed was intended for red-coloured flowers.

(D., C.: "Plan for a Flower Garden", *Gardener's Magazine*, vol. 7, 1831, p. 33)

Chapter 3.4: Planting Styles in Britain

The list of plants for beds *b* with red flowering plants which 'C.D.' included was:
Outside rows:

1. Phlox subulata; April
2. Lychnis Viscaria and flore pleno (syn. *L. chalconica* Flore Pleno); May
3. Antirrhinum medium (syn. *A. striatum*); June
4. Phlox glabberima; July
5. Penstemon angustifolius (Syn. *P. angustifolius*); August
6. Aster salicifolius (syn. *A. praealtus*); September and October
7. Primula Alionii (syn. *P. allionii*); April
8. Aquilegia canadensis; May
9. Betonica grandiflora (syn. *Stachys macrantha*); June
10. Chelone barbata (syn. *Penstemon barbatus*); July
11. Epilobium angustissimum (syn. *E. angustissimum*); August
12. Lobelia fulgens; September and October
13. Cortusa Matthioli; April
14. Penstemon Richardsoni (syn. *P. richardsonii*); May
15. Dianthus caucasicus (syn. *D. sinensis*); June
16. Physostegia speciosa (syn. *P. virginiana speciosa*); July
17. Malva moschata; August
18. Aster vimineus (syn. *A. laterifolius*); September and October
19. Phlox setacea (syn. *P. subulata*); April
20. Phlox pilosa; May
21. Geranium Wallichianum; May
22. Phlox amoena (syn. *P. procumbens*); July
23. Statice oleifolia (syn. *Limonium virgatum*); August
24. Epilobium latifolium; September and October
25. Hepatica triloba (syn. *H. nobilis*) (red, single and double); February and March
26. Lychnis coronata (syn. *L. coronaria*); May
27. Phlox subulata; June
28. Veronica carnea *Donn's Hort. Cant.* (syn. *Hebe x carnea*); July
29. Gentiana incarnata (syn. *G. ochroleuca*); September and October
30. Viola Krockeri (syn. *V. arenaria*); February and March
31. Pulmonaria officinalis; May

Middle row:

1. Asperula taurina; April
2. Geranium anemonefolium (syn. *G. palmatum*); May
3. Calamintha grandiflora; June
4. Lathyrus grandiflorus; July
5. Phlox undulata (syn. *P. paniculata*); August
6. Stevia purpurea (syn. *S. eupatoria*); October
7. Dodecatheon Meadia; April
8. Valeriana rubra (syn. *Centranthus ruber*); May
9. Dictamnus ruber; June
10. Chelone barbata (syn. *Penstemon barbatus*); July
11. Hibiscus roseus; August
12. Lobelia Tupa; September and October
13. Papaver bracteatum (syn. *P. orientale var. bracteatum*); June

Bulbs for the intermediate rows:

1. *Trichonema Bulbocodium*(syn. *Trychonema bulbocodium*); March
2. *Claytonia caroliniana*; April
3. *Trillium erythrocarpum* (syn. *T. undulatum*); May
4. *Lilium chalcedonicum*; June
5. *Allium rubellum*; July
6. *Colchicum autumnale*; August and September
7. *Cyclamen coum*; March
8. *Allium amoenum*; April
9. *Lilium concolor*; May
10. *Gladiolus byzantinus* (syn. *G. communis byzantinus*); June
11. *Tulipa montana*; July
12. *Allium globosum*; August and September
13. *Scilla bifolia* var. *rubra*(syn. *S. bifolia* red form); March
14. *Allium incarnatum* (syn. *A. roseum* var. *carneum*); April
15. *Arethusa bulbosa*; May
16. *Lilium Pomponium*; June
17. *Gladiolus cardinalis*; July
18. *Allium serotinum* (syn. *A. senescens* ssp. *montanum*); August and September
19. *Scilla non scripta* fl. *rubro* (syn. *Hyacinthioides non-scripta*); March
20. *Fritillaria latifolia*; April
21. *Lilium aurantiacum*(syn. *L. bulbiferum*); May
22. *Allium Pallasii*(?); June
23. *Zephyranthes rosea*; July
24. *Colchicum arenarium* (syn. *C. umbrosum*); August and September
25. *Lilium andinum*(syn. *L. philadelphicum*); July
26. *Fritillaria meleagris*; June
27. *Allium pulchellum* (syn. *A. carinatum* ssp. *pulchellum*); July

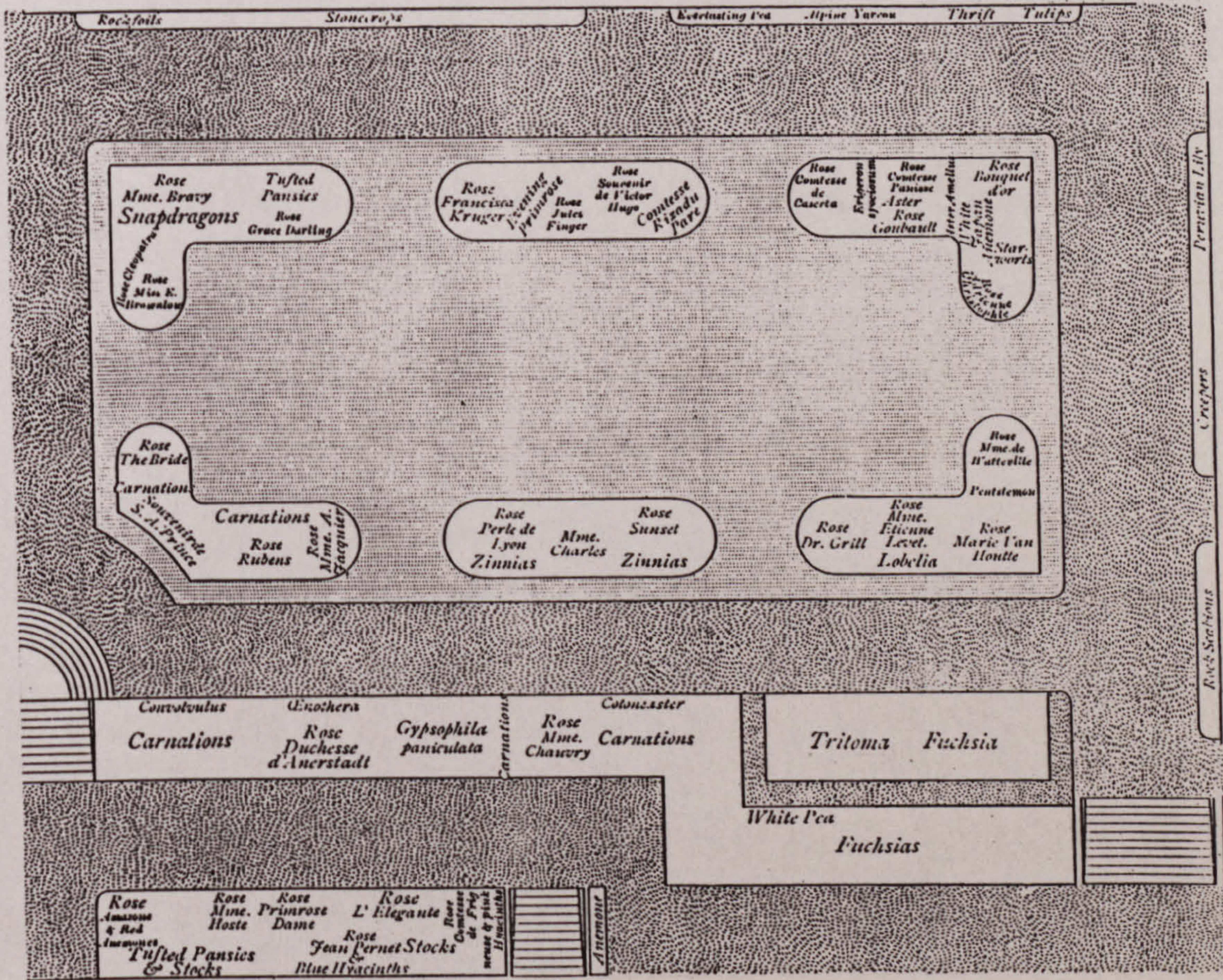
Flower Garden at Shrubland Park

Illustration 48 shows the flower garden at Shrubland Park, which was laid out in a very simple but rather formal way, with large borders following the edge of the lawn, the edge of the walls and along the terrace. The formality of the design was broken by the planting, as this was done in easy, bold masses. The plan simply showed which perennials as well as bedding plants were planted in between the roses, without giving an indication of exact positions or quantities. Carnations, *Aster amellus*, Evening primroses, starworts, white Japanese anemones and penstemons were planted in the beds on the lawn. Along the walls were rockfoils, stonecrops, everlasting peas, alpine yarrow, thrift, tulips Peruvian lily and rock scabious. Along the terrace were more carnations, tritomas, fuchsias, *Oenothera*, *Convulvulus*, and *Gypsophila paniculata*.⁴⁷

47

Anon: "The New Flower Garden at Shrubland Park", *The Garden*, vol. 42, 1892, pp. 378-9

ILLUSTRATION 48: FLOWER GARDEN PLAN AT SHRUBLAND PARK



The new flower garden plan at Shrubland Park, parts of which are shown above, consisted of a simple but rather formal pattern of beds. In each bed the names of plants were listed, and although the plan made them look rather formal, they were actually planted in easy, bold groups as opposed to little dots.

(Anon.: "The New Flower Garden at Shrubland Park", *The Garden*, pp. 378-9, vol 42, 1892)

3.4.2. The Massed Style

In 1806 Loudon had complained that few gardeners seemed capable of dealing with the idea of grouping, preferring to use plants as single specimens in a mixed display.¹ This attitude changed over the years: as new plants were introduced into the country, and as improved varieties became available people became more interested in these than in the old familiar faces of the hardy perennials and annuals known until then. Many of these novelties were tender plants recently brought in from far removed and exotic countries and were therefore displayed in the most prominent parts of the garden, ideally outside the windows of the best rooms of the house.

It was more than just a whim of fashion which made people move towards planting massed displays with new plant introductions. It was also a reaction against flower gardens filled with plants chosen for their rarity or botanical value, rather than their beauty. Repton for example, wrote in *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* first published in 1803, that a flower garden should have "rare plants of every description", providing the right soil and environment for all these different plants were available.² This type of flower gardening was greatly criticised by later gardeners, including M'Intosh, who summed up the developments in flower gardening as follows:

"Great progress has been made of late years in the arrangement of both form and colour in the disposal of our first-rate flower gardens; the first step to which was, grouping the plants in masses, thereby producing a much grander and more decided effect than the old method of planting them in the promiscuous manner. Grouping also

¹ Loudon, John Claudius: *A Treatise on Forming, Improving and Managing Country Residences*, Vol. 1, 1806, p. 335

² Repton, Humphry: *The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphry Repton Esq.* a new edition by J. C. Loudon, 1840, p. 215

led to a much more judicious taste in the selection of plants..." The crowds of "weed-like annuals were replaced by just a few."³

In the second volume he also wrote:

"No doubt that ten out of every twelve sorts of annuals thus grown were useless trash, weedy in appearance, and producing none of those brilliant effects for which our modern flower gardens are so conspicuous: and the same may be said of the perennial plants existing in those days...[the gardeners] great aim was to possess a collection of species and genera; without much regard to the beauty of individuals, or the effect they were capable of producing."⁴

Planting schemes for parterres ranged from the relatively simple to the most elaborate. The bedding out era saw a rapid evolution of planting styles, all based on one common theme: the provision of a splendid and immaculate colourful display, which was changed more than once a year. This planting involved using the latest novelties, mainly tender plants, arranged in the most fashionable way. There were variants such as ribbon borders, which were long beds planted up in rows of different plants, or pin cushion beds, which were pairs of matching round beds filled with a great variety of plants.

The eighteen-sixties saw yet another novelty: the introduction of subtropical gardening. This consisted of displays of exotic-looking plants used for their attractive foliage, rather than flowers, such as cannas, banana trees and palms. (See chapter 3.4.4.) By the end of the nineteenth century carpet bedding had made its introduction. This was an assimilation of low-growing plants, mainly *Crassulaceae*, which were

³ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, 1853, p. 593

⁴ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 2, 1855, p. 815

selected for their foliage properties rather than flower, and were utilised to depict a wide variety of motifs on the ground. Originally they were two-dimensional, but later became three dimensional and remained popular into the twentieth century.

In massed displays flowering plants were grouped according to kind, form and colour. Often only one plant per figure or bed was planted, unless the area was large enough or of longitudinal shape in which case more than one sort would be utilised. It was not the aim to display a great variety of plants. Instead the beds contained a few well chosen varieties, which created harmony or contrast in form and colour, and which would produce a good overall impression. The objective of massed planting was precisely as its name indicated, to create a mass effect rather than allowing plants to be enjoyed for their individual beauty.

Especially in the smaller geometric gardens restraint and simplicity in plant selection was regarded as important, using the three primary colours red, yellow and blue. These could be complemented by green foliage or grass and white or brown gravel surfaces. Only in the larger designs did M'Intosh suggest using secondary colours, which were planted to harmonise or contrast with the primary coloured neighbouring plants.⁵

The quantity of plants used in a massed display depended on bed shape and size, pattern of planting and size of plants used. Numbers could be as little as half a dozen in a bed, to three or four dozen or more. Formal displays could contain several tens of thousands of plants. The ultimate aim was to cover the ground; the larger the display, the more plants needed.⁶

⁵ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, 1853, p. 581.

⁶ It was not uncommon in the past to pin herbaceous plants back down to ground level to encourage the production of flowering shoots. The tendency of late has been to stake plants to keep vertical stems as upright as possible, so that the plant

Perennials in Massed Displays

Herbaceous perennials found their way into massed flower displays too, where they were treated like bedding plants used in regularly changing displays.

Reviewing the evolution of gardening in the nineteenth century in the *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener* of 1863, W. Keane referred to an article in the *Gardener's Magazine* of May 1834, describing the garden of the Misses Garnier at Wickham near Fareham. It consisted of a large area with bold masses of brilliant-coloured flowers, one or two kinds per bed, producing a landscape of the most radiant kind. A few of the beds were planted with herbaceous plants in the mixed style.⁷ The example of Audley End 'C.D.' (see chapter 3.3.4.1) showed another such garden, where some of the formal were planted with bedding plants in the massed style, and a few were planted with mixed perennials.⁸

Perennials used in massed displays with bedding plants, were treated accordingly. They could be plunged in beds or borders upon reaching their prime, to be removed as soon as they had finished flowering. Although this practice was not exclusively reserved for the massed style, it was also done in mingled planting schemes to fill gaps in borders or beds. An alternative to plunging perennials was to bed them out in the same way as their non-perennial cousins, and remove them to the reserve garden as soon as their flower show was over. This practice was suited to foliage plants such as *Cerastium tomentosum* and spring flowering perennials, which would flower at a

would not interfere with its neighbour.

Loudon, John Claudius: *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, 1822, p. 936, and Mrs Loudon: *The Ladies' Companion to the Flower Garden*, 1865, p. 38

⁷ Keane, W. : "The Progress of Flower Gardening", 1863, p. 200, *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*

⁸ D., C. & Baillie, W. : "Plan and Select List of Plants for a Flower Garden in the Ancient Style", Vol. 7, 1831, pp. 298-302, *The Gardener's Magazine*

time when most of the annuals were not yet ready and tender plants could still suffer from frosts. Perennials often were considered as reliable colour providers until July when the bedding plants had established themselves and started flowering.⁹

Due to the lack of evidence and detailed instructions it is hard to discern how common this practice really was. Contemporary authors did not always specify whether they intended plants to be left permanently in the soil or not.

Bedding plants remained favourites for massing until the late nineteenth century, when it appears that the lobby for perennials tried to make it acceptable to make massed displays with perennials. An article in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* reported that grouping herbaceous perennials in bold beds on the lawn or in borders was much better than dotting them about or banning them to the kitchen garden. Herbaceous perennials were by then considered sufficiently importance to justify their use in most select parts of the garden.¹⁰ For more details on this see chapter 3.4.6 on Historical Revivalism.

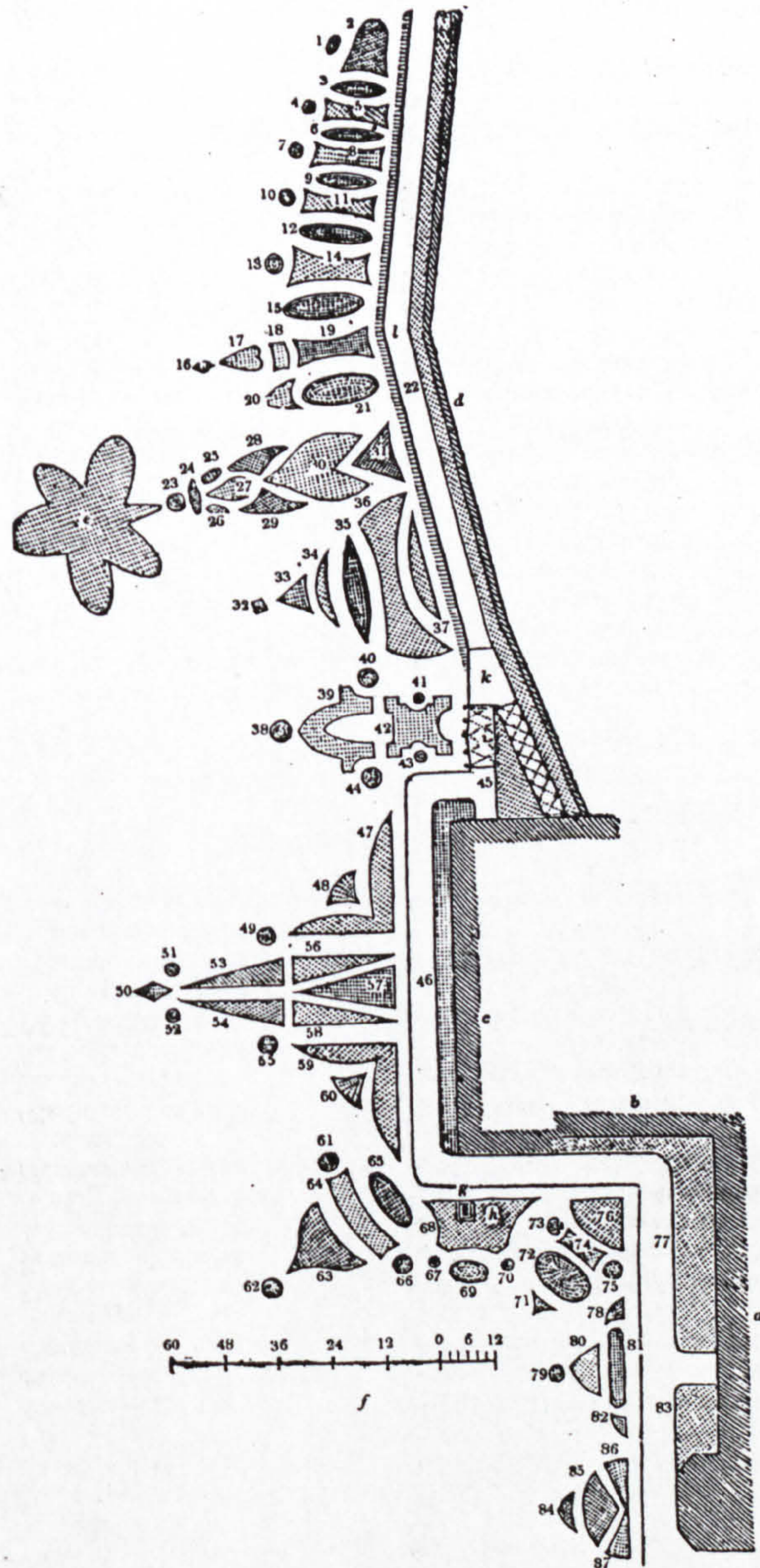
A Flower Garden with Masses of Perennials and Bedding Plants by 'C.D.' (1831)

The plan published by 'C.D.' (see illustration 49) showed eighty-seven beds and borders. Three were mingled flower borders, one herbaceous border, and three were said to contain herbaceous plants. The accompanying list of plants suggested one or more plants for winter and spring effect and for summer and autumn. It consisted mostly of bulbs for spring and bedding plants for summer, though some beds only had one plant all year round. The article did not specify whether all the beds were replanted each season. It is possible that in the beds with perennials for summer effect,

⁹ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 2, 1855, pp. 815-816

¹⁰ J.: "Planting Perennials", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1890, p. 271

ILLUSTRATION 49: PLAN FOR A FLOWER GARDEN IN THE ANCIENT STYLE



This flower garden was spread out on the lawn in front of the house. It consisted of eighty-seven flower beds and borders. A small proportion of the beds was planted with perennials, as were the borders along the walls.

(D., C.: "Plan and Select Lists of Plants for a Flower Garden in the Ancient Style", *Gardener's Magazine*, vol. 7, 1831, p. 298)

the plants stayed all year and were interplanted with bulbs for spring effect. In which case the perennials would not have been mentioned in the spring list, because they were not in flower at that time. On the other hand, it is possible that the perennials were heeled in in the reserve garden until late spring. Not every perennial would have taken very kindly to having its root system upset when in full growth, but the sensitive plants could be grown in pots.¹¹

The following plants were listed for spring and summer displays (spelling as published):¹²

Summer and autumn

Winter and spring

1. <i>Lobelia unidentata</i>	1. <i>Scilla amoena</i>
2. <i>Helianthemum</i>	2. <i>Helianthemum</i>
3. <i>Pelargonium Bethelinum</i>	3. <i>Oxalis cernua</i> , plunged in pots
4. <i>Anagalis grandiflora</i>	4. <i>Scilla praecox</i>
5. <i>Pentstemon pulchellus</i>	5. <i>Pentstemon pulchellus</i>
6. <i>Commelina coelestis</i>	6. <i>Tulipa Gesneriana plena lutea</i>
7. <i>Anagalis monelli</i>	7. <i>Narcissus minor</i>
8. <i>Rosa damascena</i>	8. <i>Narcissus Jonquilla plena</i>
9. <i>Pelargonium concinnum</i>	9. <i>Tulipa suaveolens</i>
10. <i>Daphne Cneorum</i>	10. <i>Daphne Cneorum</i>
11. <i>Dianthus Caryophyllus</i> (carnation)	11. <i>Dianthus Caryophyllus</i> (carnation)
12. <i>Tropaeolum minus flore pleno</i>	12. <i>Hyacinthus orientalis</i>
13. <i>Pelargonium inquinans</i> Var. Frogmore Scarlet	13. <i>Crocus versicolor</i>
14. <i>Campanula pyramidalis</i>	14. <i>Campanula pyramidalis</i>
15. <i>Rosa indica alba</i>	15. <i>Narcissus orientalis</i>
16. <i>Senecio elegans flore pleno</i>	16. <i>Crocus vernus</i>
17. <i>Fuchsia coccinea</i>	17. <i>Leucojum vernum</i>
18. <i>Dianthus Caryophyllus</i> (clove)	18. <i>Dianthus Caryophyllus</i> (clove)
19. <i>Pelargonium Daveyanum</i>	19. <i>Tulipa gesneriana</i> scarlet variety
20. <i>Tigridia Pavonia</i>	20. <i>Tigridia Pavonia</i>
21. <i>Rosa centif.</i> , <i>Reseda odorata</i>	21. <i>Narcissus italicus</i>
22. A mingled flower-border	22. A mingled flower-border
23. <i>Bouvardia tryphilla</i>	23. <i>Hyacinthus orientalis</i> fl. pl. alb.
24. <i>Oenothera missouriensis</i>	24. <i>Narcissus calathinus</i>
25. <i>Calceolaria rugosa</i>	25. <i>Tulipa oculus solis</i>
26. <i>Calceolaria integrifolia</i>	26. <i>Tulipa gesneriana</i> var. Clarimond

¹¹ D., C. & Baillie, W.: "Plan and Select List of Plants for a Flower Garden in the Ancient Style", *Gardener's Magazine*, Vol. 7, 1831, pp. 298-302

¹² For a further analysis of the planting, see appendix 3.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 27. <i>Lychnis chalconica</i> fl. pleno | 27. <i>Lychnis chalconica</i> fl. pleno |
| 28. <i>Delphinium grandiflorum</i> simplex | 28. <i>Delphinium grandiflorum</i> simplex |
| 29. <i>Delphinium grandiflorum</i> plenum | 29. <i>Delphinium grandiflorum</i> plenum |
| 30. <i>Georgina</i> , <i>Lilium</i> , <i>Paeonia</i> | 30. Various early-flowering bulbs |
| 31. <i>Pelargonium Fothergilli</i> | 31. <i>Narcissus Tazetta</i> |
| 32. <i>Lobelia unidentata</i> | 32. <i>Erythronium Dens canis</i> |
| 33. <i>Oenothera macrocarpa</i> | 33. <i>Narcissus Bulbocodium</i> |
| 34. <i>Hesperis matronalis plena alba</i> | 34. <i>Hesperis matronalis plena alba</i> |
| 35. <i>Matthiola incana</i> or <i>annua</i> | 35. <i>Matthiola incana</i> or <i>annua</i> |
| 36. <i>Rosa provincialis</i> , <i>Reseda odorata</i> | 36. <i>Scilla campanulata</i> |
| 37. <i>Heliotropium peruvianum</i> | 37. <i>Leucojum aestivum</i> |
| 38. <i>Verbena Lamberti</i> | 38. <i>Tulipa Gesneriana plena lutea</i> |
| 39. <i>Fuchsia gracilis</i> | 39. <i>Narcissus poeticus</i> |
| 40. <i>Verbena Aubletia</i> | 40. <i>Tulipa Gesneriana plena rubra</i> |
| 41. <i>Paeonia Moutan papaveracea</i> | 41. <i>Paeonia Moutan papaveracea</i> |
| 42. <i>Paeonia edulis</i> var., in the centre <i>Georgina</i> | 42. <i>Paeonia edulis</i> var., various bulbs, &c. |
| 43. <i>Paeonia Moutan rosea</i> | 43. <i>Paeonia Moutan rosea</i> |
| 44. <i>Verbena Melindres</i> | 44. <i>Tulipa Gesneriana</i> , double striped |
| 45. A mingled flower border | 45. A mingled flower border |
| 46. A mingled flower border | 46. A mingled flower border |
| 47. Herbaceous plants, choice annuals, &c. | 47. Herbaceous plants, early and late bulbs |
| 48. <i>Gladiolus cardinalis</i> | 48. <i>Leucojum vernum</i> in pots |
| 49. <i>Lobelia splendens</i> | 49. <i>Hyacinthus orientalis</i> pl. <i>ruber</i> |
| 50. <i>Rosa semperflorens plena</i> | 50. <i>Crocus biflorus</i> |
| 51. <i>Pelargonium zonale</i> , scarlet flowered | 51. <i>Hyacinthus orientalis</i> pl. <i>ruber</i> |
| 52. <i>Pelargonium lateripes</i> , pink flowered, ivy-leaved | 52. <i>Hyacinthus orientalis plenus caeruleus</i> |
| 53. <i>Rosa indica minor</i> , <i>Reseda odorata</i> | 53. <i>Narcissus pulchellus</i> |
| 54. <i>Rose de Meaux</i> , <i>Reseda odorata</i> | 54. <i>Narcissus triandrus</i> |
| 55. <i>Lobelia fulgens</i> | 55. <i>Hyacinthus orientalis</i> pl. <i>ruber</i> |
| 56. <i>Pelargonium zonale</i> | 56. <i>Tulipa Gesneriana</i> var. |
| 57. <i>Rosa indica</i> , <i>Reseda odorata</i> , &c. | 57. <i>Narcissus Jonquilla</i> simplex |
| 58. <i>Pelargonium inquinans</i> | 58. <i>Tulipa Gesneriana</i> var. |
| 59. Selected herbaceous plants and choice annuals | 59. Selected herbaceous plants, early bulbs, &c. |
| 60. <i>Gladiolus cardinalis</i> | 60. <i>Leucojum vernum</i> in pots |
| 61. <i>Linaria alpina</i> | 61. <i>Anemone pavonina</i> |
| 62. <i>Heptaica triloba</i> | 62. <i>Heptaica triloba</i> |
| 63. <i>Hydrangea hortensis</i> | 63. <i>Scilla</i> , <i>Leucojum</i> , <i>Lilium</i> and similar bulbs |
| 64. <i>Delphinium Ajacis</i> , <i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i> | 64. <i>Delphinium Ajacis</i> , sown in February |
| 65. <i>Reseda odorata</i> | 65. <i>Narcissus papyraceus</i> |
| 66. <i>Lobelia lutea</i> | 66. <i>Anemone hortensis</i> |
| 67. <i>Paeonia Moutan Banksii</i> | 67. <i>Eranthis hyemalis</i> |
| 68. <i>Rosa spinosissima</i> selected | 68. <i>Rosa spinosissima</i> selected |
| 69. <i>Cydonia speciosa</i> | 69. <i>Cydonia speciosa</i> |
| 70. <i>Paeonia Moutan</i> | 70. <i>Anemone appenina</i> |
| 71. <i>Clarkia pulchella</i> | 71. <i>Galanthus nivalis</i> |
| 72. Herbaceous plants, Brompton stock, &c. | 72. Herbaceous plants, early bulbs, & c. |
| 73. <i>Verbena pulchella</i> | 73. <i>Hyacinthus orientalis</i> pl. <i>ruber</i> |
| 74. <i>Dianthus chinensis</i> | 74. <i>Dianthus chinensis</i> |
| 75. <i>Verbena Melindres</i> | 75. <i>Hyacinthus orientalis plenus caeruleus</i> |
| 76. <i>Heliotropium corymbosum</i> | 76. <i>Ixia crocata</i> , plunged in pots |
| 77. Herbaceous border of choice plants | 77. Herbaceous border, early and late bulbs |
| 78. <i>Alonsoa incisifolia</i> | 78. <i>Ranunculus asiaticus</i> |

- | | |
|--|--|
| 79. <i>Pelargonium zonale</i> , pink, ivy-leaved | 79. <i>Ixia fenestralis</i> , plunged in pots |
| 80. <i>Matthiola incana</i> v. <i>coccinea</i> | 80. <i>Matthiola incana</i> var. <i>coccinea</i> |
| 81. <i>Dianthus hortensis</i> | 81. <i>Dianthus hortensis</i> |
| 82. <i>Lobelia decumbens</i> | 82. <i>Anemone coronaria plena</i> |
| 83. <i>Lobelia cardinalis</i> | 83. <i>Tulipa Gesneriana plena lutea</i> |
| 84. <i>Viola amoena</i> | 84. <i>Viola amoena</i> |
| 85. <i>Pelargonium zonale</i> , scarlet variegated | 85. <i>Anemone coronaria simplex</i> |
| 86. <i>Anemone pavonina</i> , <i>Isotoma axillaris</i> | 86. <i>Anemone pavonina</i> |
| 87. <i>Anemone hortensis simplex</i> , <i>Heliophila araboides</i> | 87. <i>Anemone hortensis simplex</i> |

The mass *e* to be separated with lines of pinks. The lobes may be filled as follows: - 1. *Isotoma axillaris*, 2. Scarlet Ten-weeks' Stock, 5. *Campanula pentagonia*, 6. White Ten-weeks' Stock, the centre, of roses, mignonette, &c.

Plan for a Herbaceous Plant Garden by Charles M'Intosh (1853)

M'Intosh was of the impression that a general collection of herbaceous plants was of little value, except for botanical study. Instead he was in favour of selecting the best species which flowered freely and produced a good effect with their colour or habit. Single specimens were avoided. Instead those worthy of culture could be grown in masses. The size of the groups depended on the type of plant and space available. A plan for a symmetrical garden was included, (see illustration 25, chapter 3.2) showing fifty-one beds, each containing one genus. Although their sizes varied, each bed was large enough to contain between ten and fifty plants. M'Intosh went on to explain that the garden would therefore offer space for approximately 1500 hundred species, which really covered all those worth while growing.

M'Intosh was not very clear. On the one hand he talked about single specimens not being worthy of culture, masses being preferable; on the other hand he talked about filling each of the fifty-one beds with one genus each, totalling approximately 1500 species. This indicates that he intended the beds to have several species of one genus; and at the rate of planting between ten to fifty plants per bed he could only have planted one of each. This could be better described as a form of generic massing.

Alternatively, this was a theoretical example, which he had not put into practice.¹³

The following was a list of the genera which he recommended and which could be added to or changed as the reader wished.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. <i>Campanula</i> | 18. <i>Lathyrus</i> | 35. <i>Armeria</i> |
| 2. <i>Phlox</i> | 19. <i>Liatris</i> | 36. <i>Lythrum</i> |
| 3. <i>Aster</i> | 20. <i>Lupinus</i> | 37. <i>Astragalus</i> |
| 4. <i>Delphinium</i> | 21. <i>Monarda</i> | 38. <i>Euphorbia</i> |
| 5. <i>Aconitum</i> | 22. <i>Paeonia</i> | 39. <i>Helonias</i> |
| 6. <i>Penstemon</i> | 23. <i>Potentilla</i> | 40. <i>Alyssum</i> |
| 7. <i>Helleborus</i> | 24. <i>Primula</i> | 41. <i>Lychnis</i> |
| 8. <i>Alstroemeria</i> | 25. <i>Ranunculus</i> | 42. <i>Asclepias</i> |
| 9. <i>Anemone</i> | 26. <i>Salvia</i> | 43. <i>Coronella</i> |
| 10. <i>Aquilegia</i> | 27. <i>Saxifraga</i> | 44. <i>Acanthus</i> |
| 11. <i>Cheiranthus</i> | 28. <i>Sedum</i> | 45. <i>Fraxinella</i> |
| 12. <i>Dodecatheon</i> | 29. <i>Silene</i> | 46. <i>Achillea</i> |
| 13. <i>Dracocephalum</i> | 30. <i>Spirea</i> | 47. <i>Orobus</i> |
| 14. <i>Erigeron</i> | 31. <i>Statice</i> | 48. <i>Yucca</i> |
| 15. <i>Gentiana</i> | 32. <i>Uvularia</i> | 49. <i>Scabiosa</i> |
| 16. <i>Hemerocallis and Hosta</i> | 33. <i>Iris</i> | 50. <i>Dianthus</i> |
| 17. <i>Iberis</i> | 34. <i>Chelone</i> | 51. <i>Oenothera</i> |

3.4.3. Solitaire Planting

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the introduction of specimen plants into planting schemes. Specimen or solitaire plants were individuals planted on their own, usually in the lawn. Although this concept may have appeared as a novelty, it was not entirely new. The idea of planting plants on their own for the purpose of individual observation preceded even the gardenesque ideas. (See chapter 3.2.4.2) The eighteenth century designer Sir William Chambers (1726-1796) had mentioned in his *Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* of 1772 that one should not crowd plants together. Instead it was recommended that sufficient room be allowed in between

plants so that one could sit or walk on the grass.¹⁴

Whereas in the gardenesque movement plants were planted so they could achieve the highest standards of horticultural perfection, solitaire plants were used as design tools to avoid straightness and formality and often add a touch of boldness. Single plants and groups were interspaced with larger areas of open lawn so as not to encumber the place.¹⁵ Where informal beds were set in existing lawns, solitaire plants were added to improve the scene. They were intended to break up the monotony of the lines formed by bed margins and soften their effect. (See illustration 50.) It was considered a natural and useful way of diversifying an existing garden.

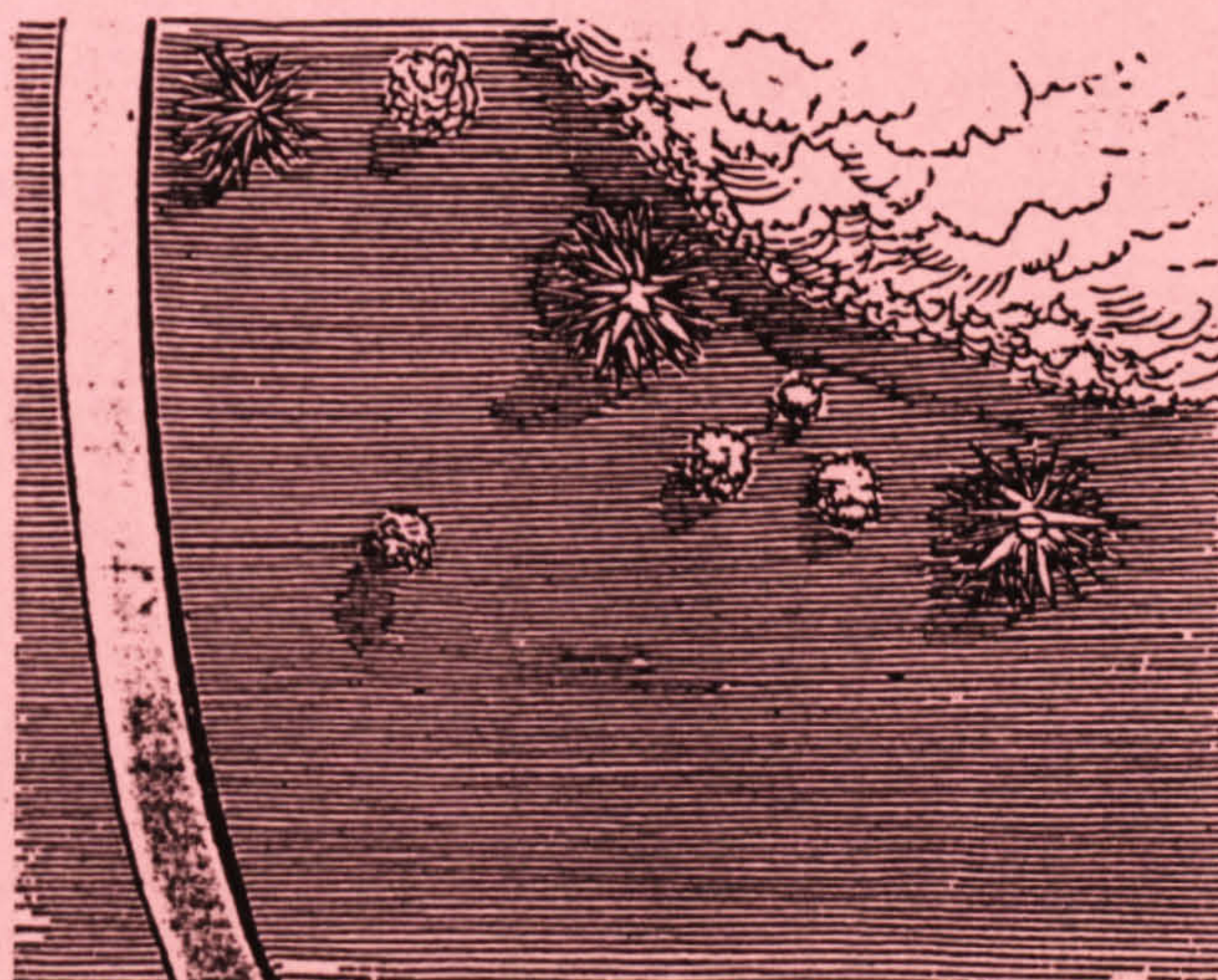
Specimen plants were rather striking plants with character, which would stand well on their own. Many hardy subjects could be used for the purpose of specimen planting. Thomson listed plants with ornamental foliage, which were suitable for planting as single specimens as well as planting in groups.¹⁶ They could range from standard or pillar roses, to *Veratrum nigrum*, *Macleaya cordata*, *Acanthus*, *Yucca*, *Tritoma*, peonies, bamboos, pampas grasses and many more. Thomson listed a total of 120 plants, including a few hardy perennials, bamboos, trees and many bedding plants suitable as specimens or ornamental foliage plants for bedding. Of these only twelve were marked hardy enough for our climate, though this number is debatable as for example *Gunnera tinctoria* (syn. *G. scabra*) was not listed as hardy, which it

¹⁴ Harris, John, "John Claudius Loudon and the Early 19th Century in Great Britain: the Imperfect Ideas on the Genesis of the Loudonesque Flower Garden", *History of Landscape Architecture* 1980, p. 54, Elizabeth Macdougall editor, Washington, Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium; Kemp, Edward: *How to Lay Out a Garden*, 1858, p.172

¹⁵ Kemp, Edward: *How to Lay Out a Small Garden*, 1850, p. 62

¹⁶ Thomson, David: *Handy Book of the Flower Garden*, 1868, p. 118

ILLUSTRATION 50: GROUP AND SINGLE SPECIMEN OF PLANTS IN THE GRASS



Drawing used by Robinson to illustrate the scattering of specimen plants on the edge of a group of plants. Individual plants were planted in the lawn, along the edge of shrubberies.

(Robinson, William: *The Subtropical Garden*, 1871, p. 23)

is in most parts of the British Isles, including Scotland where Thomson worked.¹⁷ Robinson included many lists of plants for specific purposes in *Hardy Flowers*, but had none for specimen planting¹⁸.

3.4.4. Form, Foliage and Plant Texture in Planting Design

Although plants with attractive foliage were initially used in bedding displays, their value in perennial planting was increasingly appreciated during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. They became popular for providing an all season foil, as a background to set off flower colours, or as a contrast or punctuation mark.

The introduction of form and habit in mixed displays appears to have long been foreseen before it was widely put into practice.

"When the rage for mere colour sickens, who shall say that form and habit may not become a capital consideration?"¹⁹

The observant author pointed out design elements which today have become quite widely accepted, but which in those days were unheard of. He noted that in beds of mixed herbaceous plants grace and elegance was found there where spiry forms prevailed in particular combinations of shapes and outlines. Plants such as veronicas, with their upright, slender spikes were particularly suitable.

The use of hardy perennials was not common in the flower garden until the

¹⁷ Anon.: "The Summer Flower Garden", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1865, p. 698; Robinson, William: *The Subtropical Garden*, 1871, pp. 20-4

¹⁸ Robinson, William: *Hardy Flowers*, 1888, pp. 302-3

¹⁹ Anon.: "Flower Gardens", *The Cottage Gardener*, Vol. 10, 1853, p. 498

introduction of the massed style, where they would be treated like the other bedding plants.

Certain hardy perennials, such as *Yucca* species, were used for the architectural value of their foliage. They appeared as dot plants for example to decorate the centre of a round bed, or were planted at regular intervals throughout long or large beds to give height and stature, and provide rhythm. Herbaceous perennials with interesting leaf colour were often used for their foliage effect, such as the silver-leaved, carpeting *Cerastium tomentosum* and the purple-leaved, ground covering *Ajuga reptans* 'Atropurpurea'.

The use of foliage plants had long been popular in Germany. The result was that for a long time these beds, where foliage plants such as cannas were used, were known as "German Beds".

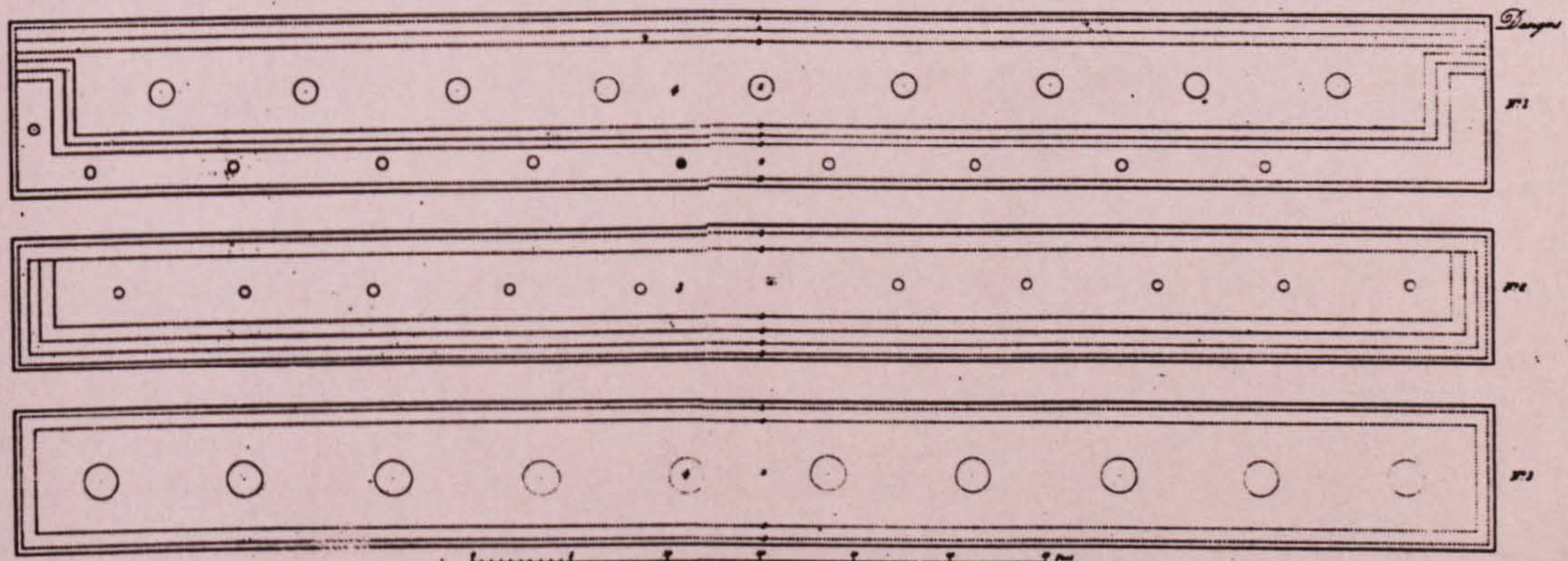
The French were masters at using foliage plants to enhance and set off their flower displays. After having described at length the way foliage plants were grown and displayed in Paris, David Thomson added:

"The only feature I see that could be borrowed from the French flower garden in any appreciable degree is, as I have already remarked, the liberal use of foliage with flowering plants."²⁰

An example of the way foliage plants were applied in the British massed flower gardens can be found in David Thomson's "Handy Book of the Flower Garden" of 1868. It contained a plan for a panel border in spring, which used a number of woody and herbaceous perennial plants as foliage plants. (See illustration 51.) The following plants were planted in the border:

²⁰ Thomson, David: *Handy Book of th Flower Garden*, 1868, p. 137

ILLUSTRATION 51: PANEL BORDERS FOR BEDDING PLANTS AND PERENNIALS



David Thomson included the above plans for panel borders which were designed for ribbon planting. Although usually these borders were planted with bedding plants, several hardy perennials were included, particularly for their foliage value.

(Thomson, David: *Handy Book of the Flower Garden*, 1868, designs 1, 2 and 3)

- . Irish yews; green and golden mixed or green with golden tops
- . dwarf queen hollies;
- . the above two rows would occupy the space of three lines, as planted for summer and autumn only, and might be permanent where both seasons are to be embraced;
- . ground work of blue pansy
- . panels of *Yucca recurva pendula*(?), surrounded with a band of variegated ivy, which might be left as permanent panels, with good effect;
- . line of yellow pansy
- . *Arabis mollis variegata* (syn. *A. mollis* - variegated form) or *A. albida* (syn. *A. alpina ssp. caucasica*)
- . red daisy
- . ground work of white daisy or *Cerastium tomentosum*;
- . small circles of purple pansy
- . line of variegated daisy with red flowers, or the dark-foliaged *Ajuga reptans* 'Rubra'

From this plant list it is clear that evergreen woody plants as well as herbaceous perennials such as *Arabis*, *Ajuga*, *Cerastium* and *Yucca* were used for their interesting foliage effects.

Thomson dedicated an entire chapter to ornamental foliage plants, either planted as single specimen plants or in groups in the summer and autumn flower garden. His first attempts to include bolder growing foliage plants were as far back as 1859. Thomson listed in total 147 plants, of which only twenty-eight were considered hardy, and sixteen requiring the temperature of an intermediate house. Seventeen had variegated foliage. Even the hardy ones would have been treated like the tender plants. As not all of his readers would have had greenhouses, he recommended propagating the plants annually.

Several of the hardy items were grasses, ferns or bamboos, but the eleven ferns listed were all tender. ²¹

Form and Foliage in Herbaceous Perennial Displays

The eighteen-seventies saw a turning point in the approach to using foliage in the border. Much of this change can be attributed to the efforts of William Robinson, as is confirmed by Bright:

"No one has done more than has Mr W. Robinson to call up our interest in the broad-foliaged plants which are the chief ornament in the gardens of Paris, and in the delicate tufts of flowers which nestle in the crevices of our rockeries. But there is much still to be done." ²²

In 1871 Robinson published the *Subtropical Garden*, a major work on the use of foliage plants and plants with good architectural form. Although it was mainly directed at subtropical bedding displays, and many tender plants were included, Robinson strongly supported the use of hardy plants for foliage effect. The book came at the beginning of a new era. It was the start of a new design approach, in which more than just flower colour, height and flowering period were important.

The *English Flower Garden* dedicated a whole chapter to "Colour in the Flower Garden" (see chapter 3.4.5) in which the relevance of foliage was discussed at length. In order to create colour harmony in the garden, it was important to match the flowers with the foliage as well as with the surrounding vegetation. The importance of accompanying foliage was stressed: if foliage was well chosen and positioned the

²¹ Thomson, David: *The Handy Book of the Flower Garden*, 1868, pp. 118, 130

²² Bright, Henry: *The English Flower Garden*, 1881, p. 27

value to the flower was as important as an appropriate setting to a jewel.²³ The leaf-shape (especially bold or beautifully structured leaves) outline, colour, and the plant's habit were all part of this foliage appeal.

The following were suggested combinations of foliage and flower. Many of these colour interactions are again very popular today.

- *Silver foliage + purple*: Plants with silver foliage performed best when planted as edging or under-planting to purple flowers. The interaction between the silver and purple was considered similar as that between warm coloured foliage with scarlet flowers like *Lobelia cardinalis*.
- *Pale green foliage + blue*: Fresh pale green foliage was the best foil for bright clear blue forget-me-nots.
- *Pale variegated foliage + pink*: Pale foliage with creamy white stripes complimented pink flowers.
- *Bronze foliage + oranges and browns*: Bronze foliage worked well with for example orange and brown wall flowers.

Besides the publication of William Robinson's *The Subtropical Garden*, it is clear that the eighteen-seventies and eighties were times when foliage plants were a favoured topic. The recommendations ranged from the simple suggestion to use *Veronica candida* as a silver leaved edging plant for perennial schemes or bedding out schemes²⁴, to the more outspoken one claiming

"One of the very worst symptoms of our modern taste [in massing] is,

²³ Robinson, William: *The English Flower Garden*, 1883, p. cxi

²⁴ W., T.: "Silver-Leaved Edging Plants", *Gardening Illustrated*, Vol. 1, 1879, p. 386

its love of variegated foliage."²⁵

The author felt foliage should act as a foil to the flowers - as the shadow of the plant.

In a piece entitled "Effective Flower Beds", published in *The Garden*, 7 February 1874, Hope gave a list of hardy and annual plants for beds, which contained three or four species of perennials, annuals, climbers or shrubs. Great emphasis was put on foliage effect as not everything would be flowering at the same time nor all the year round. For example bed number one contained *Aster ericoides* (which was described as having heath-like foliage even when not in flower) and dwarf, double red sweet williams which have red foliage when not flowering, edged with *Euonymus radicans* 'Variegata' and the whole centred with *Ilex* 'Golden Queen'.²⁶ The bed was thus made to look interesting twelve months a year with the evergreen *Euonymus* and holly, the sweet william for spring and early summer, and the aster for late summer show. Besides suggestions for using foliage as a way of extending the seasonal interest, there were also recommendations for using foliage plants to provide visual relief in planting schemes, such as the use of sword-like foliage to break the horizontal line of a border.²⁷

By the nineteen-thirties three types of plant-outlines were suggested for use in borders, namely plants with spiky, feathery and fluffy effect.²⁸

From the late nineteenth century onwards foliage played an important role in the

²⁵ Watson, Forbes: *Flowers and Gardens*, 1872, p. 221

²⁶ Hope, Frances Jane: *Notes and Thoughts on Gardens and Woodlands*, 1881, pp. 102-12

²⁷ D., J.: "Flower Borders in the Kitchen Garden", *Gardening Illustrated*, Vol. 4, 1882, p. 517

²⁸ Anon.: "Colour Groupings", *Gardening Illustrated*, Vol. 54, 1932, p. 264

display of perennials. Gertrude Jekyll in particular made many references to foliage plants, placing plants together purely for their leaf contrast such as the large rounded leaves of bergenias with the palmate leaves of hellebores²⁹ or the use of yuccas as a "full-stop", marking the start and finish of a border. She also liked to give the front of a border a mixed edge of silver or grey plants, not just as an edging but also as general front groundwork which would run here and there deeper into the border. The idea of using silver and grey foliage plants to set off other flowers was later launched again by somebody who did much to raise the awareness of foliage gardening: Mrs Desmond Underwood. She liked using silver edging plants "to tidy up" chaotic borders filled with plant collectors' favourites.³⁰

Arthur Rowe's painting of Dean Hole's garden at Rochester shows the increased relaxation in planting style. He used bolder groups of plants, with interesting outlines such as lupins, linear foliage of irises and spiky flower outlines of delphiniums to break up the outlines of the flowering masses. (See illustration 52.)

3.4.5. Colour Theories and their Application

As early as the late eighteenth century the importance of colour in the disposition of flowers was being considered. William Mason had devised a planting system in which a red, a yellow and a blue flower, all of the same height and flowering at the same time, were planted adjacent to one another as a trio. Similarly the secondary colours of crimson, purple and orange could be thus planted. These little trios of plants were then repeated so that a succession of flower would occur throughout the display.

²⁹ Tinley, G., Humphreys, T., & Irving, W.: *Colour Planning of the Garden*, 1924, p. xi

³⁰ Jekyll, Gertrude: *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*, 1936, pp. 166, 194; Underwood, Mrs Desmond: *Grey and Silver Plants*, 1971, p. 19

ILLUSTRATION 52: DEAN HOLE'S FLOWER BORDER



(Original in colour)

Dean Hole's flower border in his garden in Rochester displayed the new approach to border design. He planted in larger masses, low plants weaving in and out of the taller plants, with spiky delphiniums and lupins as well as irises breaking up the rounded masses of the vegetation. No colour scheme was adhered to.

(SP142905, "Dean Hole's Garden, Rochester", by Rowe, Ernest Arthur (1862-1922), John Spink Fine Watercolours, London/Bridgeman Art Library, London)

White flowers were considered less appropriate, because they harmonised badly with the green of the foliage, and in the sense of colours was considered a 'real' colour.³¹

Awareness of foliage colour was also noticeable at a similar time. In 1779 Meader published a catalogue of trees and shrubs, arranged according to their position in a planting scheme. The list contained details on foliage colour, but no mention was made of their flower colour. The foliage was obviously considered more important than the flowers, possibly because trees are in leaf for a much longer than in flower.³²

Several colour theories were developed during the nineteenth century, though initially their application was aimed at the massed style. Except for a few examples, it was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that elaborate colour schemes started to be applied to herbaceous planting schemes. This was most likely because the brighter colours of the newly introduced and highly fashionable tender exotic plants, which were used for massed displays, needed some form of colour coordinating to make them acceptable. Furthermore, the colour selection of the long existing range of herbaceous perennials had been more limited than what we know today, and therefore the urge to bring a display into accord had probably never been so strong. The nineteenth century was also a period during which several people attempted to fit colour theories into some sort of scientific pattern, trying to turn colour into an objective science rather than a subjective, personal view. The end result has been that colour theories have evolved as fashions changed.

The colour theories were easy to apply to house furnishings, dress material or even paintings, but in the garden it was quite a different matter. It was a subject much

³¹ Bending, Stephen: "William Mason", *Journal of Garden History*, Vol. 9, no. 4, 1989, pp. 217-20

³² Meader, James: *The Planter's Guide*, 1779

easier talked about than written down on paper. One of the great difficulties of working with plants is that they are a continually changing living medium, and subject to constant light changes. What composes a perfect image today, may have completely changed in the morning due to one plant fading or another one coming into bloom. The effects of weather and even time of day also play their role. Evening sunlight and dusk make colour combinations interact completely differently from bright midday sunshine, and so do grey cloudy days.³³ Despite all efforts to give scientific explanations for which colours work well together, and which ones do not, colour remains a very personal and subjective matter. What one observer regards as beautiful and harmonious, the next may consider unsightly or garish.

M'Intosh referred to several of the great colour theorists in his work such as Sir Isaac Newton, Buffon, Field and Chevreul. Each of these figures had put their ideas on colour in writing, though not all agreed with one another. Sensibly, M'Intosh felt that as long as people could not come to an agreement on the subject, he thought it ill advised "to pin our faith to any of their theories." He felt it was wiser to leave the arranging of a flower garden in the capable hands of an experienced flower gardener, rather than an inexperienced theorist.³⁴

The mingled or mixed manner had no complicated rules for the arrangement of colours. In a mixed display the only important factor to remember was to create a great variety and an evenly distributed mixture of colour throughout the bed or border for as long as possible. Two plants of the same colour were never to be placed adjacent to one another. According to the approach suggested for example by M'Intosh, the intention was that as soon as one plant had finished flowering its

³³ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, 1853, p. 594

³⁴ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, 1853, p. 595

neighbour should start, but it had to be of a different colour.³⁵ This theory did not appear to be universal as there were a few descriptions of schemes planted with one colour per bed.

By the eighteen-thirties Loudon was talking about monochrome beds. As an example he gave a scheme with symmetrical beds which could be planted with many different species, but allowed only one colour per bed. Another, earlier example could be found in the *Gardener's Magazine* of 1831, where 'C.D.' produced a plan and planting detail for a circular garden, in which the beds were planted in one colour only (see chapter 3.4.1.2 for plan and planting details).³⁶ Both these examples were planted in the mingled style, having many species to one bed.

Several of the plant lists published by various authors in the nineteenth century, were arranged by colour. Maria Elizabeth Jackson listed flowers according to flowering period in red, yellow, white and blue in *The Florist's Manual* 1816. In the second edition, 1822, she listed them as "red, shade from pink to purple" and "blue to purple", as well as yellow and white. Charles M'Intosh in *The Flower Garden* 1838 published a select list of perennial border flowers listing white, yellow, red, purple, blue and brown flowers reaching different heights. (See Appendix 4.)

Theories and Terminology

Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) had found that white solar light consists of simple or homogenous colour rays, which show up when the light is passed through a prism. He divided them into seven colours: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet

³⁵ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, 1853, p. 581

³⁶ Loudon, John Claudius: *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion*, 1838, p. 214, and D., C.: "Plan for Flower Garden", *Gardener's Magazine*, 1831, p. 33

in analogy with the seven tones of the diatonic scale.³⁷ These attempts to draw parallels between music and light continued throughout the nineteenth century, resulting in a certain amount of confusion in the terminology applied to the use of colours.³⁸ When Newton's seven colours were assembled into a full circle of 360° each individual colour was represented by its own individual proportion. These could be proportioned as follows:³⁹

violet 80°
indigo 40°
blue 60°
green 60°
yellow 48°
orange 27°
red 45°

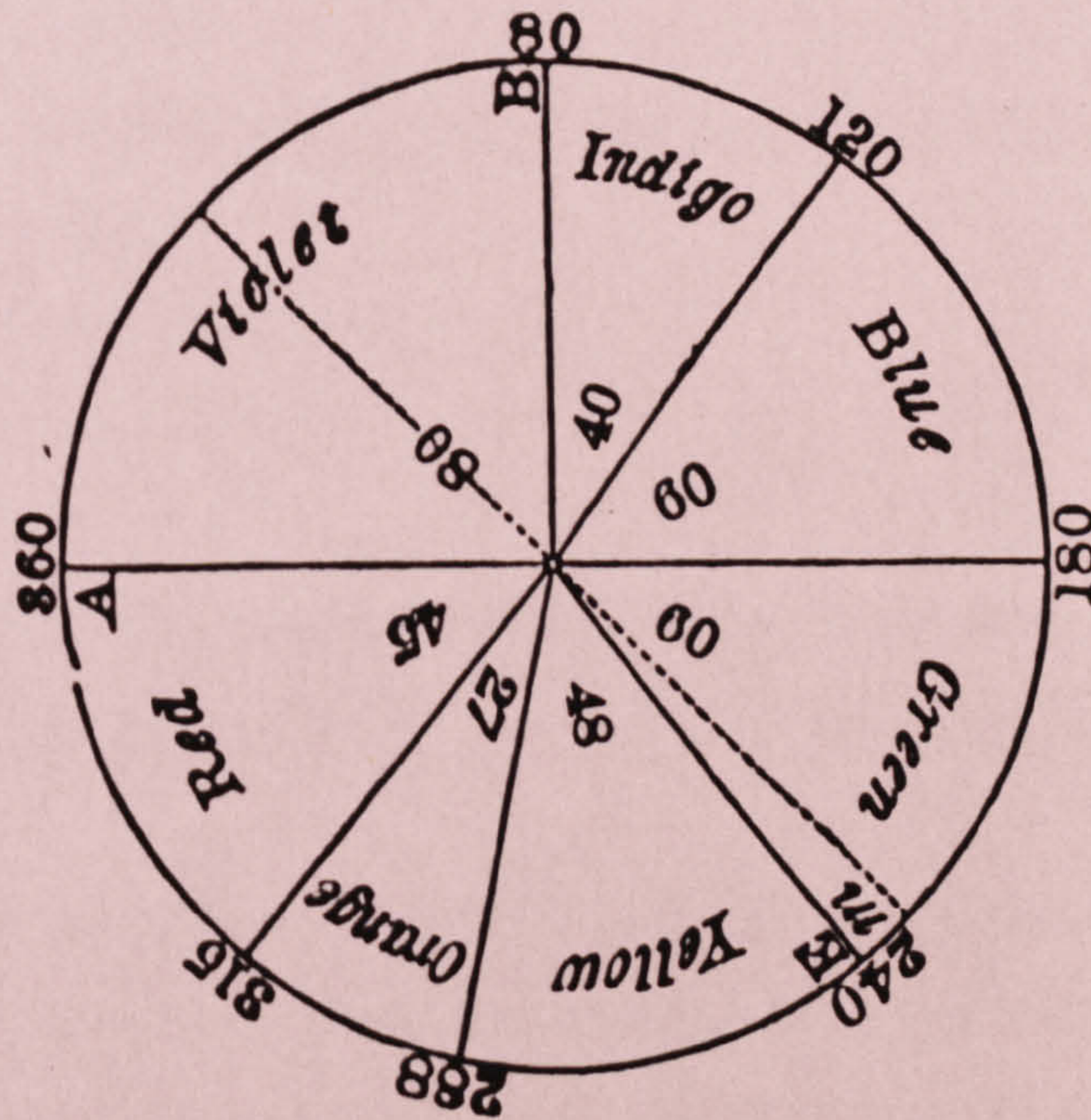
With the colours thus arranged (see diagram in illustration 53) it was possible to work out the contrasting colour by finding the one that lay directly opposite in the circle. The example used by Thomson was violet. The opposing colour of violet was green, but close to yellow, so it was a green with a hint of yellow.

³⁷ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, 1853, p. 594

³⁸ Elliott, Brent : " A Spectrum of Colour Theories", Vol. 118, no. 12, 1993, p. 575, *The Garden*

³⁹ Thomson, David: *Handy Book of the Flower Garden*, 1868, p. 273

ILLUSTRATION 53: NEWTON'S COLOUR WHEEL



To illustrate his colour theory, Newton used a circle divided into 360 degrees. Each colour was positioned in the circle in the order and proportion exhibited by the prismatic spectrum and rainbow. This way it was easy to find the exactly opposing colour.

(Thomson, David: *Handy Book of the Flower Garden*, 1868, p. 274)

The following table shows the colours and their contrasts:

black - white
white - black
red - green
orange - blue
yellow - indigo
green - reddish violet
blue - orange
indigo - orange yellow
violet - bluish green

This table published by Thomison was easy to use, even by those not so confident with colours, as a guideline when arranging colour schemes for a bedding-out display.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) also divided the different hues into relative proportions, but in such a way that when the values of a primary colour and its complimentary secondary colour were added up together they made a total of twelve. Johannes Itten (1888-1967) referred to this as *contrast of extension*.⁴⁰ The more brilliant the colour, the smaller amount of it was needed.

The allocated values were the following:

yellow 9
red 6
blue 4
orange 8
green 6
violet 3

40

Itten, Johannes: *The Art of Colour*, 1973, p. 104

When the primary and its complimentary secondary colour were united they totalled a value of twelve in the following proportions:

yellow : violet = 9 : 3 = 3 : 1

orange : blue = 8 : 4 = 2 : 1

red : green = 6 : 6 = 1 : 1

The intention was for the colours to be used in the right proportions when composing a picture.

George Field (c.1777-1854) decreed that white solar light consisted of only three colours: the primaries yellow, red and blue. All others were a combination of these three. Sir David Brewster, who originally had been a follower of Newton's theories, admitted in M'Intosh's book that by the eighteen fifties most writers on colouring had accepted this new way of thinking, that white light only consisted of the three primary colours. Field's theories were backed up by Buffon's findings in his experiments. When you put a coloured object on a white or black background and intensely looked at it for a short while, upon removal of the object the eye observed, there where the object had been, a coloured patch of its contrasting colour. In case of blue, the colour observed was orange, in case of yellow, it was purple and for red the colour seen was green, and vice-versa. David Ramsay Hay (1798-1866) described these as *accidental colours* or *contrasting colours* to the primaries, with which they were said to harmonise in opposition. Hay observed that to obtain the right hues of secondary colours, the primaries could not be mixed half and half, but had to be mixed in the right proportions:

orange = 3 yellow + 5 red

purple = 5 red + 8 blue

green = 3 yellow + 8 blue

Of all the colour theorists and their writings, the most quoted one is Michel-Eugène

Chevreul (1786-1889) and his work *De la Loi du Contraste Simultané des Couleurs*, which was translated into English by Charles Martel as *The Principles of Harmony and Contrast of Colours*, 1854. Judging by an article in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* the translation of this work was not perfect. The author of the piece complained that instead of clarifying some of the obscure areas in the work, the translator had only muddled things further, especially where plants were concerned.⁴¹ Despite the imperfections, many garden writers quoted Chevreul's work.

Chevreul recognised the theory that white light consisted of the three primary or *simple colours*, which when combined produced secondary or *compound colours*. He also found that when white light was shone onto a reflective surface, it appeared white, when it was shone onto an absorbing surface it appeared black. Surfaces which were part-reflective, part-absorbent only showed the colour rays not absorbed. Colours became complementary, when put together in the right proportions they formed white light again.⁴²

Talking more generally about laws of colour, M'Intosh explained that although there were different approaches to arranging colours, not even those which were authorities on the subject had the courage to make any definitive claims about what was right or wrong. Instead he suggested a number of rules that were generally applicable when dealing with colours:

the complementary arrangement of colour is superior; for the best effect use colours of as nearly as possible the same tone. (White best in complementary arrangement of blue and orange; but worst in complementary arrangement of yellow and violet.);

the primary colours can be used in pairs (for example red and yellow). A

⁴¹ Anon.: "A correspondent ...", *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1857, p.788

⁴² M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, 1853, pp. 594-6

primary and a secondary colour, which includes the primary colour, do not go well together (for example red and orange);

if the primary is combined with the secondary colour, containing the primary colour, then the secondary must be the brightest of the two (for example yellow and orange are better together than red and orange);

when two colours harmonize badly, separate them with white;

black often works better than white when combined with two bright colours (for example red and orange, yellow and red, yellow and green);

black associated with dark colours or bright colours with a deep tone often produce harmonies with good effect (for example black, blue and violet is better than white blue and violet);

black with a bright and a dark colour is not as good as black with two bright colours (for example red and blue, red and violet, orange and blue or yellow and blue all harmonize better with white than black);

grey with two luminous colours makes them look flat, and is inferior to black or white;

grey associated with dark colours or bright colours of a deep tone produces an inferior effect to those colours mixed with black;

when mixing a bright and a dark colour, grey is often better than black or white (for example grey is best with green and violet, green and blue or orange and violet);

white, black or grey can be used to separate two colours that badly harmonise, taking into account the tone of the colours, and the proportion of light and dark colours.

Furthermore M'Intosh gave his readers some examples of colour schemes which he felt were either successful or not at all. The first example was an arrangement based on the range of colours of the rainbow or the prism, which he called a happy arrangement. The second example he considered as an unsatisfactory display in which

dark and light colours were mixed indiscriminately. The third arrangement consisted of the same colours arranged according to the laws of contrast, spreading the dark and brilliant colours evenly across the range. Using the principles of repetition, he then created a harmonious display as fourth example. (See illustration 54.)⁴³

Colour Gradations and Hues

Throughout much of the nineteenth century, many of the recommendations encountered in gardening literature referred to colour schemes based on complementary colours, which opposed each other in the colour circle. Towards the latter part of the century reactions started to be noticeable.

Thomson described in addition to the contrasting colour arrangements, the law of harmony.⁴⁴ Contrary to the previously discussed law of contrast where opposing colours were employed, the law of harmony used only colours which blend into one another. To determine which colours would harmonise, the same diagram of the colour circle could be utilised as for the contrasting colours, only this time one had to look out for those colours which were adjoining rather than opposing each other, such as yellow and orange or red and violet. The harmonizing colours were considered the easiest to find. It was fairly straightforward to assimilate a display starting with red, then dark pink and light pink and finishing off with white. This created a gentle transition.

These two quite opposing laws could be applied together in one display. Thomson suggested this was particularly suitable when dealing with an isolated bed. The centre could be planted with for example two harmonizing colours, and the edge with a

⁴³ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, Vol. 1, 1853, pp. 600-1

⁴⁴ Thomson, David: *Handy Book of the Flower Garden*, 1868, p. 277

ILLUSTRATION 54: DIAGRAMS OF M'INTOSH'S COLOUR SEQUENCES

1.

deep crimson
mixed
geranium
red
orange
yellow
green
blue
violet
dull red
grey
mulberry

2.

dark blue
orange
sapphire blue
black
green
dark borwn
scarlet
pea-green
violet
salmon
black
sea-green
scarlet
dark green
buff
violet
green
scarlet
dark blue

3.

dark blue
scarlet
green
buff
violet
green
pea-green
black
dark green
scarlet
blue
scarlet
violet
orange
cool green
brown
salmon
sea-green
blue
black

4.

dark blue
scarlet
white
black
blue
brown
scarlet
white
black
light drab
black
orange
black
light drab
black
white
black
claret
orange
grey
white
scarlet
dark green
crimson
white
dark grey
dark red
black

1. Arrangement based on the principle of the rainbow prism.
2. An unpleasant combination of colours, indiscriminately mixing dark and light.
3. Same colours as above, successfully arranged according to the laws of contrast.
4. Harmonious display, using the principles of repetition.

(M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, 1853, p. 600)

contrasting colour. (The centre with orangy-yellow calceolarias and harmonising red salvias, edged with contrasting blue lobelia.) Thomson suggested the eye would comprehend and grasp the design better if the centre of a bed was filled with the softer harmonising colours, bordered with a contrasting colour.⁴⁵

Colours in Perennial Displays

Other than the few examples seen earlier for beds of mixed perennials in one colour, it would appear that no strict colour guidance was given for the arrangement of mingled displays in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. An article in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* of 1849 described how to display colours by approaching the subject from an artistic point of view: something which thirty-four years later would be much elaborated on by Gertrude Jekyll in her contribution to William Robinson's *The English Flower Garden* first published in 1883, and in other articles. However in this case, the author 'M.' gave a very detailed description of how to arrange flowers in a bouquet. He compared it to different art forms, coming to the conclusion that the same governing colour principles applied, whether one was painting a picture, making a dress, arranging a nosegay or laying out a garden.

The two main elements in arranging a bouquet were considered the provision of light (as in creating a mass of light), and providing variety in tones and in the outline of the general form. 'M.' warned however, that when creating variety, one had to be careful to avoid spottiness and confusion. Once sufficient light was provided, the middle tones could be added. These were considered to provide the widest range of colouring material. They were then followed by the deep tones. The deep tones could be either hot or cold, and combined well with the rich green tones of the foliage. Grey or silvery foliage such as that of the *Dianthus* was considered more appropriate a

⁴⁵

Thomson, David: *Handy Book of the Flower Garden*, 1868, p. 279

companion to the lighter tones of the blush rose or creamy *Gardenia*. Although these three tones of light, middle and deep, were mixed together, they still had to form a united picture, avoiding equal quantities of any one thing. The combined result of colour and form should create neither formality nor confusedness. 'M.' thought it was much more effective to contrast a light colour with a dark colour, rather than a mass of orange with a mass of blue which enhanced one another, and of which he said they were painful to the eye to observe. Adding a neutral colour was considered much more effective, or alternatively working with complementary colours was easier too.⁴⁶

The Contributions of Gertrude Jekyll and her Contemporaries

According to William Robinson's *English Flower Garden* (1883), it would appear that by the eighteen-eighties the use of colours in the garden had remained relatively unchanged. This statement could be disputed, judging from the amount of to-ing and fro-ing that was going on in the gardening press (particularly in *The Garden*) during 1882. Jekyll wrote a series of articles on colour in the flower garden, which generated quite some response in a series of retaliations between herself, 'J.D.' and 'R.A.H.G.' One of the main conclusions that could be drawn from this correspondence was that the average gardener was rather baffled by all the various opinions and theories, and all he really wanted were some simple guidelines on how to plant effectively.

Miss Jekyll pointed out that planting a herbaceous border was in fact no different from painting a picture, except in size. The flowers and the sunlight were to create the image and therefore the border had to be planned carefully, rather than just amalgamating a series of lines or evenly distributed dots of colour. She recommended planting in harmony rather than contrast (Jekyll used the term *harmony* in the sense that Thomson referred to it: colours adjoining one another in the spectrum), with a

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M.: "An Enquiry ...", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1849, p.419

decided colour scheme. Planting in masses was most important, rather than the small clumpy effect which had been done so often earlier in the nineteenth century. She referred to the natural clumps and drifts found when looking at woodlands and other natural spaces. Furthermore she recommended the use of warm colours in hot sunny spots, reserving the cooler shades for the shady places. These rules could be applied as easily to bedded-out plants as to a permanent scheme of perennials. Jekyll was not entirely against the old system of using contrasting colours, she thought there was a place for them in the garden, but should only be used sparingly.⁴⁷ These ideas of Jekyll may not have been the norm at the time, but due to the frequent exposure they received in various articles and books, they caught on.

The *English Flower Garden* may have given readers some new food for thought on the arrangement of colours for bedding schemes, but more importantly it included details on how to display a mixed border harmoniously. In all but the last edition of *The English Flower Garden*, Robinson included a chapter on colour in the flower garden which had been partly written by Gertrude Jekyll and 'J.D.'. Jekyll's contribution to the book was very similar to her articles in contents and wording. Although she considered colour to be one of the most important points in the arrangement of a flower garden, she thought it was still greatly neglected. The bedding system was normally laid out according to a colour scheme, though this was described as usually being of as many colours as possible, arranged in the most violent contrasts. On the other hand the mixed border did not seem to have greatly evolved since Loudon's detailed descriptions in the eighteenth century (see chapter 3.4.1.1). Jekyll's description of "lines of evenly distributed spots of colour, wearying and annoying to the eye" and "in no way interesting"⁴⁸, showed that planting was still

⁴⁷ J., G.: "Colour in the Flower Garden", *The Garden*, 1882, p. 177; S.: "Colour in the Flower Garden", *The Garden*, 1882, p. 470

⁴⁸ Robinson, William: *The English Flower Garden*, 1883 p. cx

not being carried out in a more sensitive or artistic way. Being from an artistic background herself, Jekyll reminded her readers once again that laying out a garden was like painting a picture, and hence the colours should be placed carefully and not just "dropped down in lifeless dabs".

The readers of *The English Flower Garden* were not only told that harmonies of rich and brilliant colours were the rule, they were also told about grading colours and creating sequences of such combinations. It was however not only the colour of the flower that had to be taken into account, the foliage and the background (grass and shrubs) were considered as part of the whole display, and flower colours had to harmonise with those as well.

For those having problems or doubts about how to create a harmonious display, writers suggested to look at the naturally occurring colour ranges in some of the plant genera such as wall flowers, American azaleas or auriculas. These groups of plants displayed a wide and interesting range of harmonizing colours. In particular the warm colours such as scarlet, crimson, pink, orange, yellow, and warm white were considered easy to combine, and allowed themselves to be arranged into a good succession of shades. The purples and lilacs also combined well, but had to be kept separate from the pinks and reds. This could be done by using pale yellows and warm whites in between the two groups. If kept completely separate, then the purples and lilacs could also be planted with cold whites and a mass of silver or grey foliage. The blues were to be treated quite separately, adding delicate contrasts of warm whites and pale yellows, or just set on their own in a mass of dark foliage. Whites were more used as an aid to a particular colour or make a transition between difficult colours, but in no way was it to be used dotted about the border. This was considered as visually unsatisfactory. All whites were to be grouped together into one large patch.

In order to get away from the "spots" of colour that until then had adorned mixed

borders, the recommendation was to plant in masses of one colour, the masses being large enough to make an impression, without being too large to become unpleasant. A breadth of colour grouping would also visually help to give distance in a long border seen from end to end.⁴⁹

After a relatively hectic period in the first half of the eighties during which several articles and correspondence were published, there came a relatively quiet period which went on into the beginning of the twentieth century. Jekyll made regular contributions on colour in articles and wrote a book on the subject, which was first published in 1908: *Colour in the Flower Garden* (later renamed *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*). Although not everybody necessarily agreed with them, by 1913 it would seem that her ideas on colour were becoming more widespread and accepted:

"The repeated requests for information and suggestion that have recently reached the Editor are a proof of the ever-increasing interest in the subject of grouping and arranging for colour effect. It is a significant sign of advance in the character of the aims of those who love their gardens."⁵⁰

Jekyll's efforts on the colour front continued. In 1924 George F. Tinley and William Irving published a book *Colour Planning of the Garden* to which Jekyll wrote the introduction. The book listed plants by colour and was lavishly illustrated with colour

⁴⁹ "J. D." could have been J. Douglas or J. Dundas; Robinson listed in the first eleven editions, until 1909, a list of all the contributors. Their contributions to the book would then be initialised, though no list of initials was given. In the later editions he did not acknowledge his contributors work any longer. Some contributors would change, presumably as Robinson changed his opinion on the subject matter. In the last edition (fifteenth) of the *English Flower Garden* he edited, the entire chapter on colour in the flower garden had been omitted. One possible explanation may be that it occurred after Jekyll's death.

⁵⁰ J., G.: "Grouping Flowers for Colour", *The Garden*, 1913, p. 276

plates. In her introduction, Miss Jekyll stressed again that:

"colour in gardening as in painting[...]means the arrangement of colour with the deliberate intention of producing beautiful pictorial effect, whether by means of harmony or of contrast."⁵¹

There is no doubt that this continuous stressing of the fact that planting for colour effect in the garden should be like painting a picture, has contributed much to today's attitude to planting herbaceous perennials. After all Gertrude Jekyll left us a large legacy of her work in the form of her books and articles as well as detailed planting plans to which people can easily refer today.

3.4.6. Historical Revivalism

"There is one effect which the earlier methods of massing flowers was instrumental in bringing about, and which is very much to be regretted, namely, that in many gardens it has almost driven out of cultivation the grand old herbaceous plants which used to be cultivated, and amongst which may be numbered hundreds of the most beautiful and interesting garden plants - plants which furnish a continuous succession of diverse flowers and foliage from almost the dawn of the year to its close.[...]The chief objection urged against these plants is, that there are always to be found amongst them some that are in the process of ripening off their stems and foliage[...]so that they give an untidy appearance to the whole."⁵²

This comment by Robert Thompson summed up rather well what the revival of

⁵¹ Tinley, G. F., & Irving, W.: *Colour Planning of the Garden*, 1924, p. ix

⁵² Robert Thompson: *The Gardener's Assistant*, Vol. II, 1903, p. 265

herbaceous perennials was all about, though historical revivalism also covered the revival of past garden styles.

There were those who looked back at the plants they felt had been lost during the Victorian fashion for bedding plants, as can be seen in the extract above. The others had more of a desire to recreate the actual design of the gardens of their ancestors. Consequently people referred to the distant past of one or two centuries earlier, as well as to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The end result of these two different issues was, that by the eighteen-sixties, many gardeners were starting to favour the use of herbaceous perennials again. Rather than copy their ancestors and continue where informal garden design had left off, they opted for the best of both informal and formal garden design. The result was the start of a period during which herbaceous gardening became very popular, and which has strongly influenced today's attitudes to herbaceous gardening: The mixture of the formal design with gardens divided into rooms and individual spaces, filled with opulent mixtures of herbaceous perennials. Several examples of gardens created on these principles at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, are familiar to us today. Many of the gardens created by Jekyll and Lutyens are known for this style, but also gardens like St. Nicolas, Hidcote and Sissinghurst come under this category.

The Revival of the Garden Design Ideas from the Distant Past

There were authors who nostalgically looked back into history and described the formal gardens popular before the landscape movement. George Johnson for example quoted extracts from Parkinson and John Rea's works, describing how gardens were

laid out and which plants adorned them.⁵³ John Latouche and Henry Bright quoted from Bacon's work, describing Bacon's ideal garden with lawn, enclosed garden and wilderness. This garden was surrounded by hedges and had green alleys. Each month was supposed to have its own flowers which created an ever changing effect, whilst much attention was being paid to scent (which is very evocative) rather than just colour.⁵⁴

There were descriptions of Elizabethan gardens, and the formal gardens which had been rejected in favour of the informality of the eighteenth century English landscape movement. Loudon described in *Blackwood's Magazine* the gardens of the past, mentioning hedge-enclosed spaces which would have been admired by Bacon and Evelyn.⁵⁵ Nash executed four volumes of drawings of houses and their interiors, the people who lived in them and their habits of the Tudor and Elizabethan age.⁵⁶ Although they showed little detail of the gardens, they reflected the interest there was in that period of history. This lack of detail on gardens of the period was commented upon in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* of 1864. The architecture of the period had received a lot of attention, but the gardens had been neglected. Usually they were represented as what he referred to as a 'natural' garden, with a few small flower beds cut out of lawns, like decorations on a cake, or alternatively as a Dutch or Italian garden. Instead the author pointed to Shakespeare's descriptions of knotted gardens, with straight paths, knots and geometric beds, and referred to Parkinson who had said so many options for layout were available it would have been impossible to list them all. The

⁵³ Johnson, George: *A History of English Gardening*, 1829, pp. 83, 111

⁵⁴ Latouche, John: *Country House Essays*, 1876, p. 97; Bright, Henry: *The English Flower Garden*, 1881, p. 3

⁵⁵ Loudon, John Claudius: "On the Education of Gardeners", *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1834, pp. 691-2

⁵⁶ Nash, Joseph: *Mansions of England in the Olden Times*, 1839-49

architecture of the garden was supposed to reflect the architecture of the house with long straight terraces and rectangular lines broken up by intricate knots and beds.

One of the areas where the Elizabethan gardens differed from the nineteenth century ones, was the use of colour. Whereas the nineteenth century garden aimed at creating contrasts, the old gardeners had tried to mix and blend colours into a rich mass of various hues. The other difference was that the Elizabethan gardens had been intended to provide all year effect rather than a seasonal display, so that the owners could exercise in the garden all year round. They also attached great importance to scent, which according to the author was totally lost in the nineteenth century.⁵⁷

Even at the end of the nineteenth century the desire to go back to the early gardening ideas was present. Robinson's rival in the gardening world, Sir Reginald Blomfield, published a book *The Formal Garden in England* (1892), and John Dando Sedding wrote *Garden Craft Old and New* (1891), both works advocated the return to formal seventeenth century layouts, the creation of rooms and spaces, straight lines and architectural features. Robinson was not only offended by Blomfield's style of gardening, he was also irritated by the fact that Blomfield suggested that gardens were best designed by architects.⁵⁸

The Yearning for the Lost Perennials

A general misconception seems to have developed in the nineteenth century that perennials were ousted out of the grander gardens in favour of bedding plants, and survived in the more humble garden where the owner could not afford the expense of

⁵⁷ Anon.: "On Elizabethan Gardening", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1864, pp. 868, 892, 940, 1060

⁵⁸ Robinson, William: *Garden Design and Architect's Gardens*, 1892

bedding plants. The myth was perpetuated by those who were against bedding plants. The following anonymous author expressed his regrets that:

"so many of the older perennials should have been pushed aside for subjects whose novelty constituted their sole claim to favour. ... but we have no hesitation in saying that the number of hardy subjects is now so great that no difficulty whatever be found in filling with them a garden of large extent..."⁵⁹

The first part of this misconception was true to a point. Bedding plants did become very popular not only because they were the latest thing in fashion, but also because many large estate owners spent months away from their country seats. Consequently the gardeners concentrated their efforts on producing a good display for those months when the owner was there to enjoy it. Late summer and autumn were the important seasons, rather than spring and early summer, when many perennials and roses flowered. The habit of ignoring spring flowers in favour of summer and autumn ones was perpetrated by small garden owners. Wanting to follow fashion, they concentrated on summer and autumn displays, ignoring the pleasures spring flowers could offer. However Thomson was delighted to announce that changes were occurring and that people were re-discovering the values of perennials for spring display.⁶⁰

Various authors wrote about the old fashioned perennial flowers which they claimed used to adorn the gardens before being taken over by the fashion for bedding out displays. They lamented their disappearance, and called for their return to the

⁵⁹ Anon.: "Hardy Perennials", *The English Flower Garden*, Vol. 1, 1852, p. 30

⁶⁰ Thomson, David: *The Handy Book of the Flower Garden*, 1868, p. 203

gardens.⁶¹ A writer in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* in 1845 complained that the rage of half-hardy plants for massed displays had driven the old herbaceous plants out of the market, "so much so that I am credibly informed that it is now really difficult to procure a collection of herbaceous plants".⁶² To which extent this statement was actually true is questionable. Joshua Major lamented the fact that numbers of our lovely and beautiful border flowers were being neglected, though they were worthy of admiration. He asked the *Cottage Gardener* to regularly contribute articles on perennials, so that they would not be forgotten. Another complained that only a few fashionable races were cultivated, to the neglect of the ancient inhabitants of the flower garden:

"A hollyhock is as showy as a dahlia, infinitely more graceful, much easier to cultivate as prone to run into varieties, and hardy instead of tender; yet the lumpish dahlia is seen everywhere...and the hollyhock is consigned to a few places where, as at Shrubland, refined taste still excludes fashionable vulgarity."

The author considered it was a folly, the way the gardening world had abandoned old favourite flowers for new ones.⁶³

Not every garden had been taken over by bedding plants either. An author in *Gardening Illustrated* described a visit to a Sussex garden, in which bedding plants had never caught on. There were borders eighty feet long (24 metres) in which the modern and old-fashioned plants happily grew together. There were standard and bush roses, dahlias, phlox, marigolds, monkshood, everlasting peas, sweet peas, coreopsis,

⁶¹ Errington, Robert: "Flower Garden Arrangements", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1845, p. 560

⁶² Anon.: "A Plea for Herbaceous Plants", *The Cottage Garden*, Vol. 10, 1853, p. 488

⁶³ Anon.: "Leader", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1850, p. 739

crimson flax, annual chrysanthemums, asters, carnations, early flowering chrysanthemums, Japanese anemones, pelargoniums, verbenas and many annuals. There were no strips, patterns or any formality, instead the flowers were grouped into wreaths or sprays like summer clouds changing with every view.⁶⁴

Luckily not all garden owners gave in to the fashions of that time. Shrubland Park, the garden of Mr James Floris (the perfumer) at Acton Green, was described as filled with the old fashioned plants grown in mixed borders of which he was fond of, rather than the new plants planted in gaudy beds or masses.⁶⁵ Beaton affirmed that a garden without a border for mixed flowers was actually seldom to be met with.

By 1868 the situation was changing. A report in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* stated that "Old fashioned plants are steadily becoming more popular...The modern system of bedding out is becoming confessedly weak in its capacity to secure variation of design...". The author agreed it was difficult for everybody to be original, "but the desire for change ...is perhaps the best guarantee that in due time the new ideas now developing, will find adequate expression to the satisfaction of those who wait for this advent." Instead of returning to the old traditions of mixed borders, he suggested retaining some elements of both the massing and the mixing styles. The mixed borders had lacked enlightenment and artistic flair, the bedding out style was a recurring glare of colour from which relief was needed.⁶⁶

John Latouche agreed, suggesting gardens should be laid out rather formally, allowing a rich, varied luxuriance of perennials to soften the lines. Referring to Bacon's days when such formality was practiced, he explained that the catalogue of available plants

⁶⁴ Anon.: "Old Fashioned Gardens", *Gardening Illustrated*, Vol. 4, 1882, p. 349

⁶⁵ Anon.: "Garden Memoranda", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1857, p. 327

⁶⁶ Anon.: No title, *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1868, p. 321

had greatly increased.⁶⁷

Latouche, Henry Bright⁶⁸ and Mrs Loftie⁶⁹ all thought people's taste had moved on, and few were prepared to maintain the highly uneconomic bedding system.

The Plants

The terminology *old flowers* or *old-fashioned flowers* referred more to the class of herbaceous perennials, rather than the actual species used. Even writers who had been great advocates of bedding displays appear to have been converted to what was referred to as 'old-fashioned flowers'. Edward Luckhurst agreed that many people had been guilty of growing far too many plants for the sake of quantity rather than quality, often in an attempt to keep up with their neighbours. People had often been advised to dedicate a border to old-fashioned flowers, which he felt was wrong. Instead Luckhurst suggested to plant the best perennials in all the nooks and crannies encountered in a more informal garden setting, which often were perfect for them. They would then offer a great surprise when walking through the garden. Some plants a garden should not be without were: phlox, pyrethrum, penstemons, peonies, carnations, *Daphne cneorum*, solomon's seal, Dutchman's breeches, *Fuchsia 'Riccartonii'*, *Andromeda catesbae* (syn. *Leucothoe catesbaei*), *Gentiana acaulis*, *Arundo conspicua* (syn. *Chionochloa conspicua*), *Stipa pennata*, *Briza maxima*, pampas grass, loose strife, *Spirea japonica*, *S. palmata* (syn. *Filipendula purpurea*), *Gunnera scabra* (syn. *G. tinctoria*), *Macleaya cordata*, *Yucca recurva* (syn. *Y. recurvifolia*), *Y. gloriosa*, *Acanthus latifolius*, old China monthly rose, cabbage rose,

⁶⁷ Latouche, John: *Country House Essays*, 1876, pp. 96, 102, 106, 107, 114; Anon.: "On Revivalism", *The Garden*, 1876, p. 509

⁶⁸ Bright, Henry: *The English Flower Garden*, 1881. p. 25

⁶⁹ Loftie, Mrs: *Social Twitters*, 1879, pp. 64-5

common moss rose, 'Gloire de Dijon' rose, *Erica carnea*, *E. mediterranea* (syn. *E. erigena*), rosemary, lavender and the old white scented pink.⁷⁰

Henry Harpur-Crewe was very pre-occupied with the old varieties of border flowers and was a regular contributor to the gardening press on the subject. He made appeals to readers in the hope of finding surviving specimens of varieties believed to be extinct, such as the 'Wheat-ear Carnation', a deformed form of *Dianthus caryophyllus*, or the real old white clove carnation. He also searched for old roses such as *Rosa microphylla* (syn. *R. roxburghii* f. *normalis*) or *R. brunonii*. In an article of 1868 he expressed his delight at seeing so many people fight for herbaceous perennials and biennials. He said:

"I think we are waking up, and fine fellows though they are, we are not going to let the ribbon gardeners and sub-tropical florists have it all their own way, and we shall soon[...] see some of those glorious old herbaceous gardens..."⁷¹

The range of available plants had greatly increased since the beginning of the nineteenth century, and fashions were reflected in these too. Hollyhocks for example had long been great favourites for any display of herbaceous perennials, but by the very end of the nineteenth century their place had been taken by delphiniums.⁷²

Despite all the bedding plants, nurseries continued supplying seeds for perennials and annuals:

⁷⁰ Luckhurst, Edward: "Old-Fashioned Flowers", *Journal of Horticulture*, 1879, p. 103

⁷¹ Harpur-Crewe, Henry: "Old Garden Favourites", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1871, p. 1551; and Harpur-Crewe, Henry: "Flowers of Other Days", *Journal of Horticulture*, Vol. 14, 1868, p. 199

⁷² Anon: *Cottage Gardening*, 1896, p. 71

"Go to the seedshops, however, and there you will learn that more than half the people grow annuals, and a great number of perennial plants, from seeds every year, and that the rage for this economy is getting more and more into the fashion every year."⁷³

According to Robinson (who probably contributed most to the myth that perennials had been pushed out of the garden for bedding plants) many people agreed that abandoning the old favourite flowers in favour of tender bedding plants had been a mistake, but few had any idea of the wide range of hardy plants which came from every northern and temperate climate that could be used in the flower garden.⁷⁴

There were several other recurring trends which could be distinguished in the course of the revival of herbaceous perennials. Firstly there was the use of colour in the garden. The bedding system was considered bright, garish and gaudy. Instead people wanted to return to the more subtle hues and mingling colours used in Elizabethan times. Another important ingredient many people seemed to be pining for was scent. In the rush to produce brightly coloured bedding plants, scent had been forgotten.⁷⁵

Surviving Period Gardens

Several examples from this period survive today, some in layout, some in planting:

Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire

The overall layout of the garden around the Hall has not changed since Elizabethan times. However the area on the south side of the house was newly laid out in 1861 by

⁷³ Beaton, Donald: "Flower Gardens", *Cottage Gardener*, Vol. 11, 1854, p. 498

⁷⁴ Robinson, William: *The Wild Garden*, 1894, p. 2

⁷⁵ Groom, James: "Value of Herbaceous Borders", *The Garden*, Vol. 9, 1876, p. 145

ILLUSTRATION 55: HARDWICK HALL'S ELIZABETHAN LAYOUT



(Original in colour)

In the period of historical revivalism, the garden at Hardwick Hall was laid out on an Elizabethan plan. The area was divided into four rectangles, two for vegetables, one for fruit and one for ornamental trees on a lawn, by generous intersecting paths lined with yews. at the centre stood bowers with lead statues.

(author's collection)

Lady Louisa Egerton, daughter of the seventh Duke. The pattern fully respects the period architecture of the building, which had been completed in 1599, and has remained unchanged since then. The space was split into four quarters, divided by wide grass walks, lined with clipped hedges. At the intersection are four bowers in which lead statues stand. Two quarters were originally dedicated to the growing of vegetables and flowers, one was for fruit, the fourth was a green lawn with ornamental trees.⁷⁶ (See illustration 55.)

Blickling Hall, Norfolk

The garden at Blickling Hall appears to have been very popular in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century, judging by the amount of articles devoted to it in several gardening magazines. In 1873 the *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener* reported the following:

"The gardens at the present time, especially the flower garden, are undergoing extensive alterations. The new wall and terrace steps just erected, enclosing two acres for flower garden, were designed by Sir Digby Wyatt. The plans for groundwork were furnished by Mr Nesfield...The present design of the flower garden is entirely Lady Lothian's, and carried-out by the present gardener, Mr S. Lyon."⁷⁷

In an 1894 article it was described as one of the best existing gardens in the modern style, in which nearly all tender exotic species had been banned in favour of hardy perennials. Much praise went to the head gardener, Mr Ocle, who over the past twenty five years had created most of the present garden in the revived old style (he was still working there in 1912, when he was much praised in the *Gardeners'*

⁷⁶ Girouard, Mark: *Sweetness and Light: The Queen Anne Movement 1860-1900*, 1977, p. 157; Girouard, Mark: *Hardwick Hall*, 1994, p. 92

⁷⁷ Anon.: "Blickling Hall", *Journal of Horticulture*, Vol. xxiv, 1873, pp. 166-7

Chronicle, for making the gardens look so good).⁷⁸

Although it was never ablaze with colour, it was at all times well furnished with flowers. For spring and early summer there were some standard variegated *Acer negundo*, low squat thujas and columnar upright junipers. They gave form to the garden when the flowers had not yet come into full growth. Although formal and symmetrical in layout, the garden was not intended to be overseen at one glance. There were always some parts the observer could not see, encouraging people to walk in between the beds. Some of the plants used were all sorts of dahlias, zinnias, begonia, salpiglossis, *Tagetes patula*, *T. pumila* (?), coreopsis, carnations, cannas, helianthus, *Gladiolus brenchleyensis* (?), *G. x gandavensis*, *Phlox decussata* (syn. *P. paniculata*), hollyhocks, marguerites, michaelmas daisies, Chilean beet, *Monarda didyma* and many more. It was noted that "pelargoniums were remarkable for their almost complete absence." When summer flowers were over, they were replaced by evergreen shrubs, "the usual kinds of spring and early summer-flowering plants" and bulbs, which would provide winter and spring displays for the coming season. These in turn would be replaced again by summer flowers. This way the garden was kept presentable the whole year round. (See illustration 43.)

From a 1903 description we can gather that an attempt at colour arrangement was made. Beds of yellow flowers had yellow roses in the middle, to give them some height. Beds of heliotrope were adorned with trails of purple clematis. Foliage effect was also noted, in borders near the fountain which were planted with plantain lilies, whose pale green foliage was lovely enough without a flower.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Anon.: "Blickling Hall", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1894, ii, pp. 533-4; Anon.: "Blickling Hall", *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1912, i, p. 157

⁷⁹ B., F.A.: "The Gardens at Blickling Hall", *The Garden*, Vol. 1 xiv, 1903, pp. 267-9

The garden layout as described in these turn of the century articles has since been simplified, and the planting was altered by Norah Lindsey in between the wars, but the basic structure is still there. The planting is still done on the same principles, although today the four large square beds are filled with perennials, they are still dome shaped, with mingling colours.

3.4.7. The Changes which Occurred in the Mixed Border

Loudon had defined the mixed border as consisting predominantly of herbaceous perennials, set in rows, widely spaced and planted in small groups or even as individuals, with mixed colours. Many of his contemporaries agreed with this, but also suggested planting annuals mainly to fill in gaps left behind by early spring flowers. Today's idea of a mixed border is one where there is space for herbaceous perennials, shrubs, roses, bulbs, biennials, annuals and bedded out plants. Planting is no longer linear and colour schemes are introduced in many instances. There is an awareness of the effects of foliage texture and shape, and planting is often done on a bolder scale. Some of today's planting theories can be found in Beaton's mid-nineteenth century description of a mixed border:

"To be a mixed border, in the true sense of gardening language, it must be planted with bulbs, herbaceous plants and shrubs, both evergreen and deciduous, and there should be spaces left purposely for tall, half tall, and low annuals"⁸⁰

Although the border he went on to describe was even more linear in its planting than anything described by his predecessors, it could be regarded as one of the earlier definitions of the term as it is seen today. The linearity was there for the ease of

⁸⁰

Beaton, Donald: "The Systematic Arrangement of Mixed Borders", *The Cottage Gardener*, Vol. 15, 1855, p. 214

maintenance, so that the gardeners knew where the roots were during the winter months at a time when the plants were dormant. As long as plants were planted in rows, the grading of plant heights continued. The narrow rows near the front were only suited to smaller plants, whereas the more generously spaced rows at the rear of a border were perfect for large plants. This basic approach to planting design in lines remained virtually unchanged till the late nineteenth century.

The awareness of colour increased towards the latter part of the century, as did the use of plants for their foliage value, both of these design elements were first exploited in the bedding out schemes. Group size may have been on the increase according to the books, but an analysis of some of the herbaceous planting schemes seen on late nineteenth and early twentieth century photographs, show that the planting in small groups or even just of individual plants was still practised.

The above examples show how little planning and planting of borders had changed as the end of the nineteenth century approached. Although garden writers were talking about change, it had not yet taken over the gardens of that period.

CHAPTER 4.1: AN OVERVIEW OF GERMAN GARDENING UP TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

According to Johann Heinrich Seibel in an article in the *Allgemeines Deutsches Gartenmagazin* of 1810, the fashion for 'Blumenliebhaberei' (the love of flowers) came to Europe from Persia and Constantinople. The people there used to depict flowers on tapestries and clothes; they represented them in the form of artificial flowers, as well as growing them in their gardens. With the help of cloth and tapestry images of *Fritillaria imperialis*, lilies, tulips and others became familiar and much loved, which in turn encouraged their spread across Italy, France, Germany, The Netherlands and England through trade and pilgrimages.

Seibel indicated that not only our garden plants came from the east, garden design had also been influenced by eastern ideas. European gardens belonging to royals and wealthy landowners had symmetrical parterres, coloured gravels and narrow paths, which were influenced by Oriental pleasure gardens.¹

However information on the earlier periods is rather scattered and sparse so that it makes this assertion hard to verify. The few illustrations, descriptions and accounts which survive help us to build up a partial image of what the earlier gardens looked like and what part herbaceous perennials played in these gardens. In the course of this research only a sample of the contemporary literature was consulted due to time and access limits and may not give a full picture of pre-nineteenth century gardening.

¹ Seibel, Johann: "Etwas ueber die Vorzuegliche Modeblumen", *Allgemeines Deutsches Gartenmagazin*, 1810, p.128

4.1.1. The Middle Ages

The further back in history we go, the fewer the contemporary documents are. The following descriptions were found in an anonymous book published in 1530 in Strassburg by Christian Egenolph. It contained recommendations on how to make a small herb garden, a medium sized garden and a large, royal garden.

The Small Herb Garden

This type of garden was described as follows: "Gardens for pleasure and greenery, are sometimes made with trees only, some with herbs only, some with both." ² Those gardens made only with herbs, should have a good soil (not too rich, not too poor), well prepared and freed of all weeds and roots. He recommended the use of boiling water to take care of any hidden roots which had not been dug out. After the soil was levelled, turf had to be put down, stamping it well down so that in the end it resembled a green cloth. Then on all sides scented herbs such as sage, rue, basil, marjoram, mint and others, were placed as well as many kinds of flowers like violets, lilies and roses. Between the herbs and the grass area, grass could be used to make a seat or bench. Trees or vines had to be planted to provide shade and fresh air to cool people down. They could be ornamental as they were more important for the provision of shade than they were for fruit, and had to have attractive flowers. However they could not be planted too close as too much shade was believed to cause disease. Behind the grass the author recommended planting many medicinal herbs and those that could be used for flavouring dishes. These herbs should not only produce flowers but also refresh people's faces and hearts: they were good for the spirit and cheered people up.

² Anon: *Lusstgarten und Pflanzungen*, 1530, p. iii

For arachnophobic readers he warned not to plant anything in the middle of the grass as otherwise the spiders would make webs from one tree to the other and from one twig to the other, which would cause displeasure for those intending to enjoy the garden! The concept of providing pleasure was obviously important as many references were made to it. Unpleasant encounters such as spider webs were definitely not part of this. On the other hand, the provision of a clear spring in the garden would add greatly to the pleasure.

Rather than referring to wind direction as is done today with north, east, south and west, the author referred to the winds of different times of day and their effect upon human wellbeing. A garden should be exposed to the winds of midnight³ and sunrise for good health. The midday sun and sunset should be shut out because they were said to bring weakness and sadness. Although the midnight wind was not good for fruit, it preserved good health in people, and the author concluded that after all this was a garden where one looked for pleasure rather than fruit, confirming that crops were grown elsewhere.

Medium Sized Ornamental Garden

As the size of garden increased, it would appear that the contents became larger too. For the medium sized garden the author spoke of surrounding a piece of land with a thorn hedge and planting trees, mainly fruit trees with vines in between. The space in between the trees was to be kept as meadow, with the coarser plants weeded out and mown twice⁴ a year so that it stayed pleasant and nice.⁵

³ The author refers to directions with the times of day, for example midnight and midday, sunset and sunrise. It is to be assumed that the author herewith refers to the position of the sun, and that we can deduce that midnight is today's equivalent of north, midday is south, sunset west and sunrise east.

⁴ The author uses *zwirnet im jar* which has been interpreted as *twice a year*.

The Royal Ornamental Garden

For this type of garden the author recommended nothing but the best. An even site had to be chosen, exposed to the good winds of sunrise and midnight, with a sparkling spring and surrounded by a tall wall. A wood of trees of different kinds had to be planted at midnight (to the north) and in between these trees wild animals, introduced into the garden, could walk and hide. At midday (in the south) a beautiful palace should be built for living in. Its windows were to open onto the garden, so that the heat of the summer could not get in. In the summer the palace would cast shade over the ornamental garden⁶. Also in the town⁷ one or more small gardens could be made as described above under the heading of small herb garden. As part of the food provisions, there was to be a pond stocked with fish, and in the wood rabbits and hares and similar animals were kept. A cage could also be made for song birds such as nightingales, indicating that although these larger gardens were there for pleasure, the mention of fish, hare and rabbits confirms their role in providing food.⁸

In particular the description of the small herb garden is of relevance to this research. The main plant elements described were herbs and flowers, though few were actual herbaceous perennials. Sage and lilies are plants which today are sometimes classed within the same category, though sage is really a woody plant, and lilies are bulbs. The image we build up from this description recalls illustration 3 (chapter 3.1) of a medieval garden, with a central open space, surrounded by flower beds and turf seat and taller trees in the background. The way herbs were listed first, followed by flowers to be inserted in between the herbs, give us an indication of how important herbs were at that time.

⁵ Anon: *Lusstgarten und Pflanzungen*, 1530, p. iiiii

⁶ These comments confirm the earlier made assumptions about orientation are correct.

⁷ *Statt* has been translated as *town*.

⁸ Anon: *Lusstgarten und Pflanzungen*, 1530, p. v

Botanical Collections

The sixteenth century was a period during which private plant collections and botanical gardens developed. Private collections were started in 1525 by Euricus Cordes in Erfurt, Nordecius in Kassel and Caspar Gabriel in Padua.⁹ At the same time the first botanical gardens were founded in Italy in Pisa (1543), Padua (1545), and Florence (1550). The first German botanic garden was created a little later in Leipzig (1580) followed by Heidelberg in 1593. According to John Prest the six most influential European gardens during that period of botanical development were Padua, Leyden (1587), Montpellier, Oxford (1621), Jardin du Roi in Paris and Uppsala (1665).¹⁰ During this period Flemish traders imported the most important plants from the Indies and the Near East to enrich their gardens. The beauty, rarity and subsequent value of these plants turned them into precious items of trade which helped their spread across the continent.¹¹

4.1.2. The Seventeenth Century

As the seventeenth century is a period during which gardening literature was still scarce, only one contemporary document was consulted for the purpose of this research. Johann Sigismund Elsholtz wrote an elaborate gardening work which was published in 1684, eight years after John Rea published *Flora, Seu de Florum Cultura*. It was divided into several books, about general gardening and the layout of gardens, the flower garden, the kitchen garden, the tree garden, the vineyard and the herb garden.

⁹ Bouché, Friedrich: *Die Blumenzucht in ihrem Ganzen Umfange*, 1837, p. 14

¹⁰ Jellicoe G. and S.: *The Oxford Companion to Gardens*, 1991, p. 67; Prest, John: *The Garden of Eden*, 1981, p. 11

¹¹ Bouché, Friedrich: *Die Blumenzucht in ihrem Ganzen Umfange*, 1837, p. 15

Flower Garden Layout

As for the appearance of the actual flower gardens themselves, it would seem that some elements from earlier gardens were still present. Looking at the opening illustration shown in *Lusstgaerten und pflanzungen* of 1530 (see illustration 56) it shows the flower beds slightly raised and edged with wooden boards. This custom was mentioned by Elssholtz who recommended that the shape of flower beds was unimportant: anybody could use a shape of their fancy, whether it be round, oval, square or whatever, although it would be difficult to fit the planks which were supposed to surround the rounder beds. Therefore, for purely practical reasons, a straight-sided shape may be easier.¹²

Elssholtz felt that gardens enclosed by walls were not very aesthetic. He suggested that the walls should be covered with espalier trees, tied against a latticework of metal and wood or a palisade. At the base of the wall came a narrow border two to three and a half feet¹³ wide (0.60 to 1.05 metres), in which stone fruit was planted. At the base many flowers could be planted as long as they did not damage the trees, and the beds should be edged with box edgings. One could then decide on paper how the garden should be laid out.

Elssholtz's proposals for the layout of gardens as described below, were rather elaborate. An illustration of the first half of the seventeenth century of the flower garden of Hamburg shows us that not all layouts were so elaborate and fancy. It shows us a large rectangular plot, fenced in by wooden palisade against which grew espalier trees. The garden was divided lengthways by a path. On either side of the path spaces

¹² Elssholtz, Johann Sigismund: *Vom Garten-baw*, 1684, p. 42

¹³ The German measurement of feet is the same as the English measurement, the equivalent of 0.3048 metres, rounded down to 0.30 metres for the sake of this research.

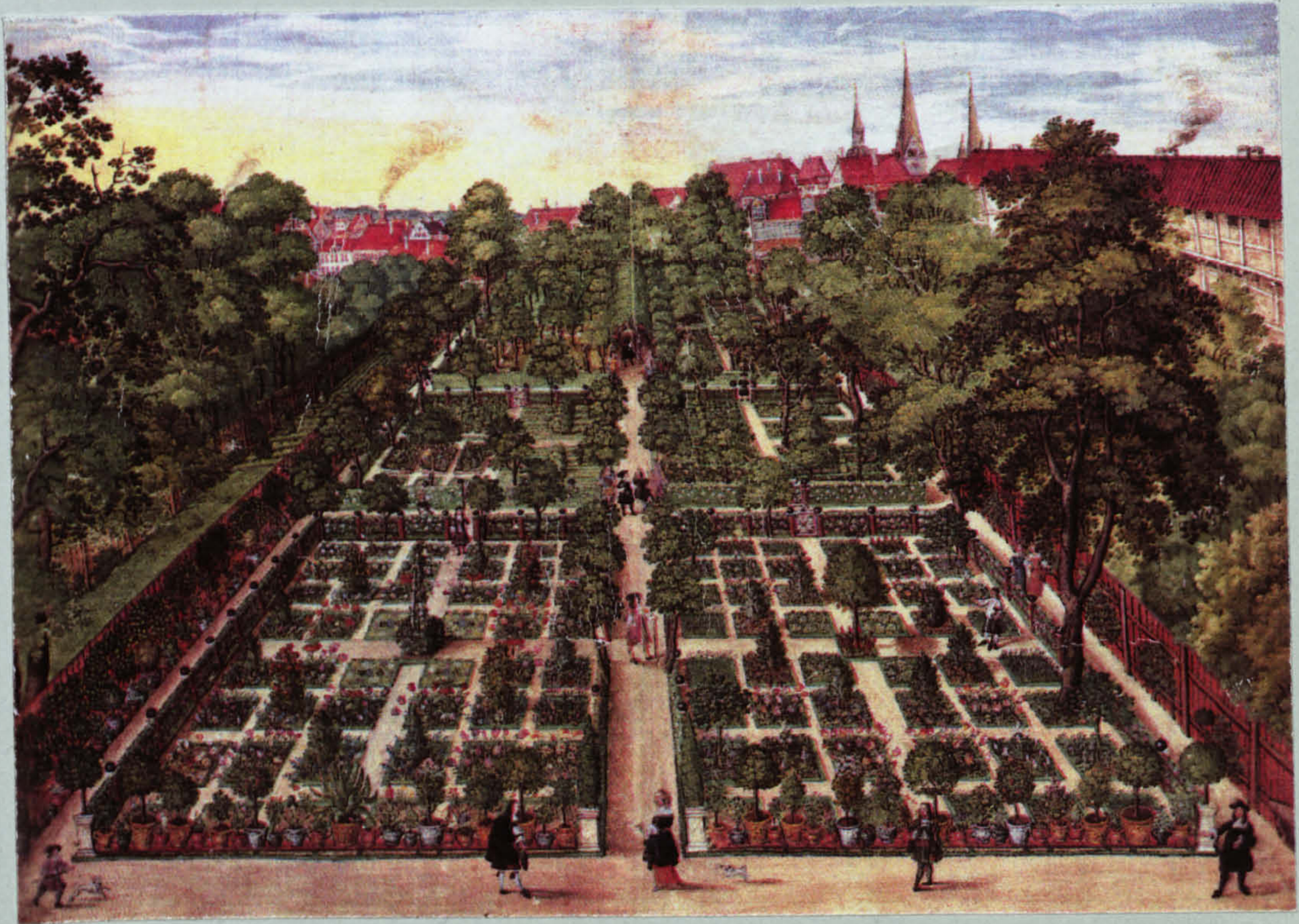
ILLUSTRATION 56: SIXTEENTH CENTURY GERMAN FLOWER GARDEN WITH RAISED BEDS



This enclosed flower garden shows a man at work planting a plant in a raised flower bed which contained a large selection of different plants. He also had some plants grown in pots, standing on a raised bench. Raised beds were common features in gardens of that period.

(Anon.: *Lusstgaerten und Pflanzungen*, 1530, Title page)

ILLUSTRATION 57: SEVENTEENTH CENTURY FLOWER GARDEN IN HAMBURG



(Original in colour)

This illustration dating from the first half of the seventeenth century shows the flower garden of the City of Hamburg. It was laid out in a simple geometric pattern with small square beds filled with flowers. There were also plants grown in pots and espalier trees trained against the surrounding fence.

(Hennebo, Dieter: *Gartendenkmalpflege*, 1985, p. 145)

were enclosed by low vegetation-covered fences, and a row of pot-grown plants. Within these spaces were small square raised flower beds. (See illustration 57.)

Elssholtz described four different designs for the flower garden. The first option was for what he referred to as "an open piece". It was the oldest, traditional form and was what the author referred to as a flower meadow, though in reality it appears to have been a flower parterre. It could be laid out in different patterns such as a square, rectangle, octagonal, round or oblong. One could walk in among the formal pattern of beds without encountering any obstacles. (See illustration 58.)

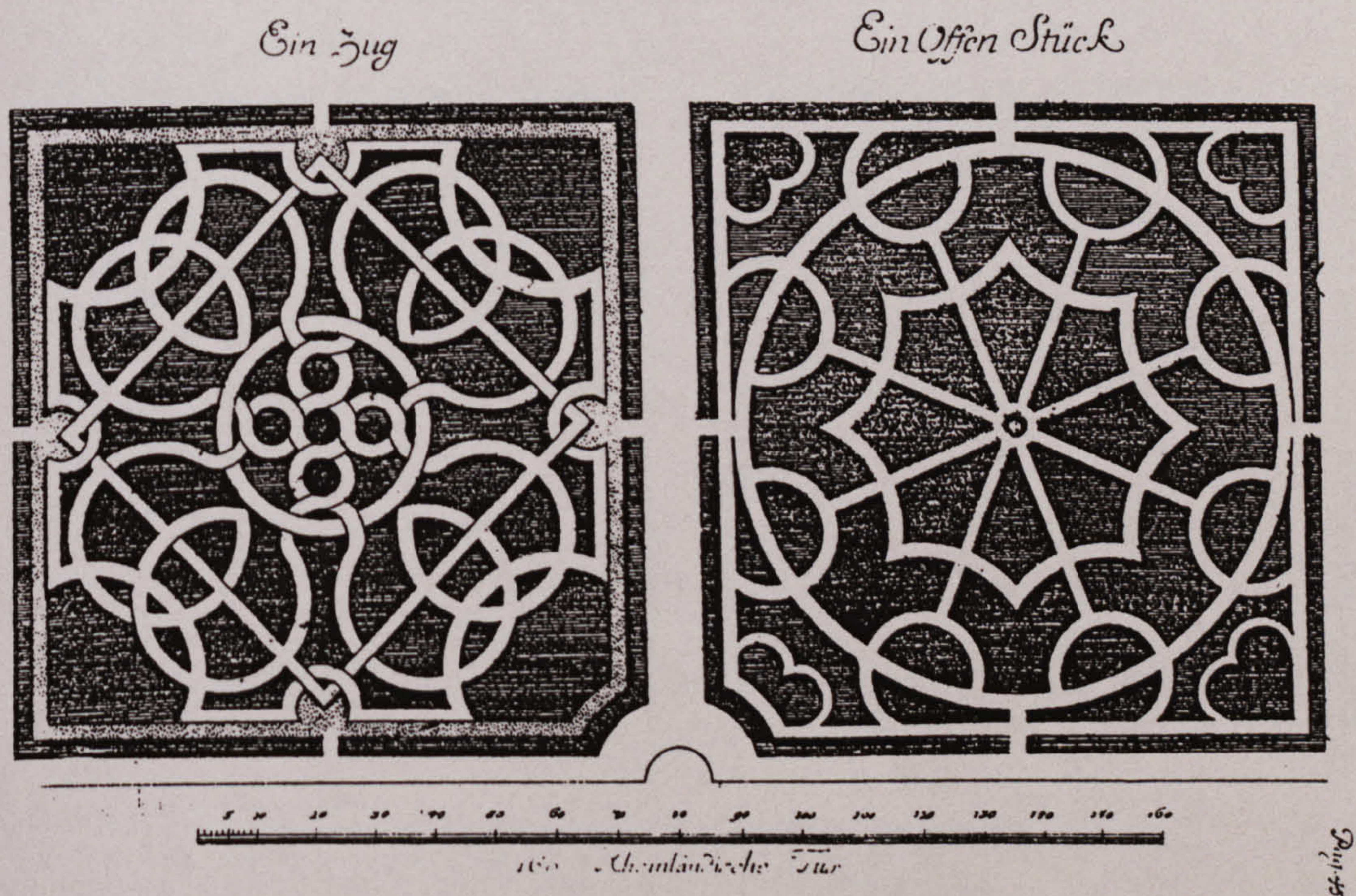
The second option was called a *Zug*¹⁴. Judging by the accompanying illustration 46, it would be the equivalent of a knot garden. It was considered similar to the first option, though a little more elaborate. The lines were entwined which made access no longer easy, as one had to step over some of them.

The third option was to design a number or short names, to which could be added a crown or coat of arms. This was described by the author as a new way of laying out gardens. The outline was planted in box and it was considered that the patterns did not need any flowers to set them off, though these could be used to fill borders surrounding the design. (See illustration 59.)

The fourth option was a *Laubwerk* (foliage or leafwork) pattern. Besides the third option this was the newest and considered the nicest but the most difficult to execute, as the intricate patterns and scrolls had to be designed free-hand without help of a ruler or compass. Some used to put plants in these patterns, others chose to leave them

¹⁴ No definition for the word *Zug* was found in relation to gardens. It is possible that the word referred to the *zusammenziehen* or tying of a knot, as the figure resembled a knot garden.

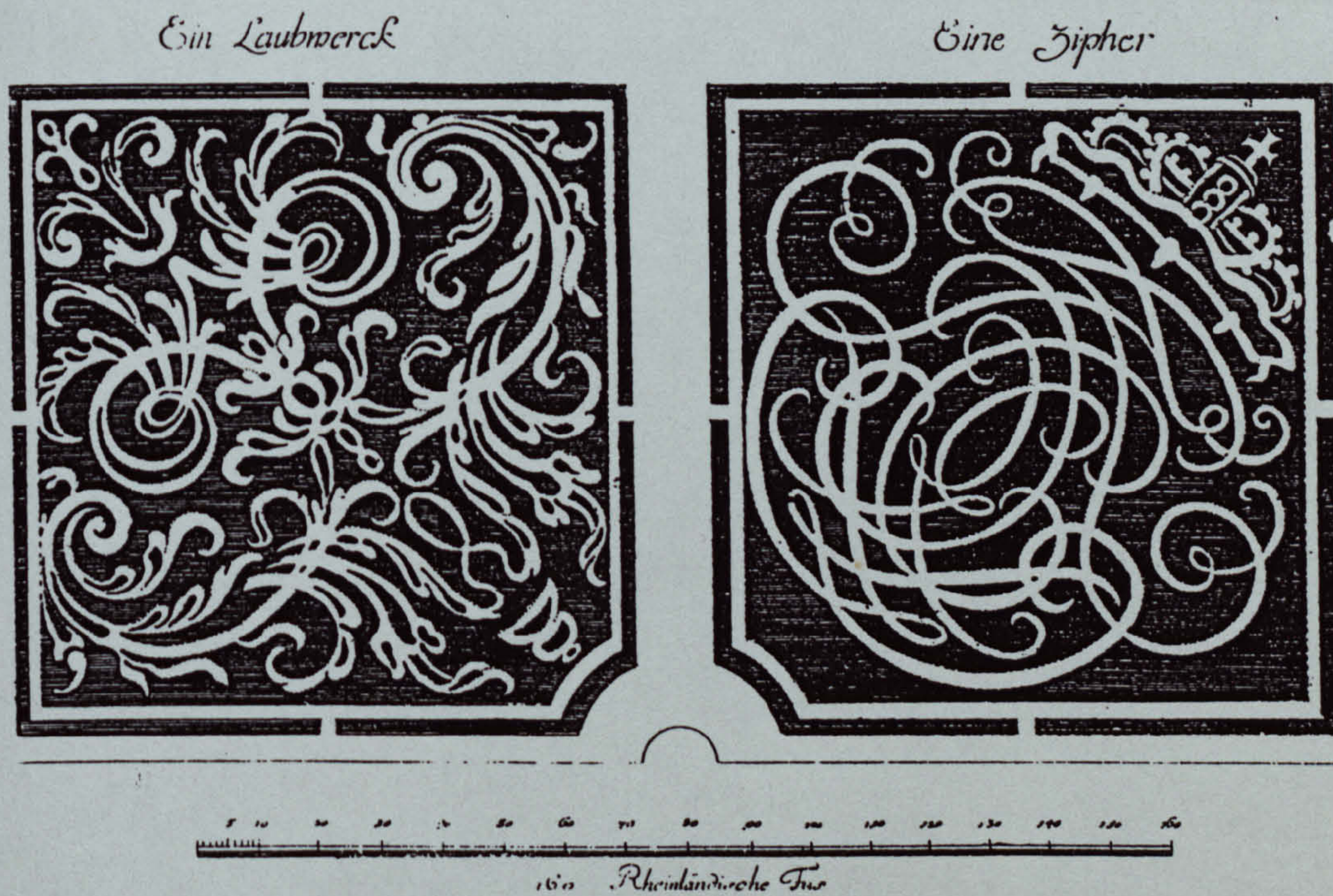
ILLUSTRATION 58: SEVENTEENTH CENTURY FLOWER GARDEN LAYOUTS



Elsholtz illustrated his book with four possible layouts for geometric flower gardens. These two are *Ein Zug* (A knot garden?), on the left, and *Ein Offen Stück* (Open piece), on the right.

(Elsholtz, Johann Sigismund: *Vom Gartenbau*, 1684)

ILLUSTRATION 59: SEVENTEENTH CENTURY FLOWER GARDEN LAYOUTS



Elssholtz illustrated his book with four possible layouts for formal flower gardens. These two are *Ein Laubwerk* (leaf work), on the left and *Eine Zipher* (a number or initials?), on the right, both are very elaborate, and would have had little or no space for flowers.

(Elssholtz, Johann Sigismund: *Vom Gartenbau*, 1684)

bare like the numbers and names mentioned above. For more ideas on suitable patterns the author referred to several works, including French and Dutch ones¹⁵. (See illustration 59.)

In any case, the author stressed the importance of staying practical in design by stating that beds should not be too wide so that it was possible to reach the middle for weeding. As a good rule, it was recommended that square or rectangular beds should be no wider than four feet (1.20 metres), the round ones no more than three feet (0.90 metres). In order to make the lines of the intricate figures stand out they had to be edged. A lively edging could be created with a mixture of herbs such as hyssop, lavender, sage, rue, thyme, marjoram, chamomile and more, which allow themselves to be cut back, bushing out after the cutting.

Main paths dividing parterres with beds should be six to eight feet across (1.80 metres to 2.40 metres), and the paths between the beds should be one and a half to two feet wide (0.45 metres to 0.60 metres). The parterres could also be decorated with some ornamental shrubs, either as a central feature point, to enhance corners or along paths.¹⁶

To implement the design, good organisation was recommended. Firstly Elssholtz suggested drawing up patterns on paper prior to laying out the beds. Secondly he said it was wise to put on paper a plan of where the plants should be planted, even to use different colours like blue, yellow and red to demarcate particular colours for particular beds. He thought it wise, once a bed had been sown with flower seeds or bulbs had been planted, to label the beds with wooden sticks in which a number had

¹⁵ Lauremberg, Peter: *Aparatus Plantarius Primus*, 1632, 1654, 1682; Ferrari, G.B.: *Flora*; Boyceau, Jacques de: *de la jardinage*; and Groen, Jan van der: *Den Nederlandtsen Hovenier*, 1669

¹⁶ Elssholtz, Johann Sigismund: *Vom Garten-baw*, 1684, p.47

been carved, or better still to use lead labels in which the numbers were hammered. A separate list was then kept so the gardener could keep track of what was planted in which beds.¹⁷

Planting

Plants should not be too close to one another, so that they would not be in the way of each other and, more importantly, they could be viewed from all sides. Harmony and symmetry had to be aimed at. If a peony was planted on the corner on one side of a bed, it had to be repeated on the other side. A Crown Imperial planted in the centre of one bed, had to be reflected in the counterpart bed, and so on. Beds had to be planted so they mirrored one another.

Elssholtz commented on how often it was the custom to plant one type of flower per bed, in effect using the massed style. One bed would only have tulips, another just narcissi, a third would be filled with lilies. This was considered very pleasing to the eye as long as the plants were flowering, but once they had finished the beds would look very empty, which took away from the beauty of the garden. Instead he recommended planting the bulbs in the corners or along the edges of the beds, reserving the middle for other plants. These could then provide the flower display when the bulbs had finished flowering, ensuring the beds would be displaying flowers for a long period of time. By keeping the bulbs to the edge of the bed and in the corners, rather than in between the later flowering plants, little damage would be done to the roots of adjoining plants if any needed lifting. These accounts indicate that beds were planted permanently.

¹⁷ Elssholtz, Johann Sigismund: *Vom Garten-baw*, 1684, pp.44, 49

Elssholtz quoted Peter Lauremberg, who suggested filling a bed with bulbs such as tulips, narcissi and hyacinths. Rosemary and carnations were planted across the bed, and double poppies were sown in between. First the mixture of bulbs would flower. When these had finished the rosemary took over the display, until the poppies appeared and covered the bed with their flowers. When the poppies had finished the carnations continued to provide the flower display well into the summer.¹⁸ Although the plant range used was limited, flowers were mixed and would provide a long display.

Although Elssholtz was not very specific about plants, some would have been tender species. He recommended preparing hot beds so that seeds of tender plants could be sown as early as February or March, under the protection of glass frames or wooden planks which would cover the beds at night or during cold weather.¹⁹

4.1.3. The Eighteenth Century

The eighteenth century saw an increase in garden literature. The early eighteenth century work of Lacroyx carried much information on plants. He gave many useful tips on their cultivation, suggesting that all flowers could be raised from seed, but that they would take several years to flower. This indicates he was referring to perennials rather than annuals. In search of the new and the unusual, he put much value on the method of raising plants from seed. He thought it was the ideal way of selecting new strains and double flowers. In order to do this, one had to sow enough seed to plant out 200 or 300 flowers in a field. As each seed-raised plant had its own genetic make

¹⁸ Elssholtz, Johann Sigismund: *Vom Garten-baw*, 1684, p.48

¹⁹ Elssholtz, Johann Sigismund: *Vom Garten-baw*, 1684, pp.49-50

up, one was bound to find two or three double forms. However he did not add whether all of these new forms were garden worthy plants.²⁰

Other gardening works of the eighteenth century included Heinrich Hesse's *Neue Gartenlust* (1714), and published in the same year was *Parnassus Hortensis* edited by Johann Daniel Muellern. Arnold Friedrich von Hartenfels published *Neuer Garten-Saals* in two volumes in 1745 and 1746, which listed plants by type such as flowers, tubers, bulbs and fibrous rooted plants.

Craftsmanship and Planting

There was a great preoccupation with achieving the highest gardening standards. Hesse mentioned that when searching for a suitable site, there were three points to consider. Firstly what were the climatic conditions of the site? Was it a cold or warm site? Secondly, what was the soil like, wet or dry? Thirdly, was there sufficient sun and air, which would encourage healthy plant growth?²¹

There were more recommendations for the planting and transplanting of plants. Lacroyx warned against not doing so when the plants were in flower, and urged that they should be provided with some shade till established. A plant's chance of good establishment was further enhanced if the area surrounding it was kept clean and weed free.²²

Unlike his seventeenth century predecessor Elssholtz, Lacroyx thought it was not such a good idea to mix different plants in one bed. Elssholtz had mainly aesthetic motives

²⁰ Lacroyx, Andreas: *Edles Kleinod*, 1707, p.106

²¹ Hesse, Heinrich: *Neue Gartenlust*, 1714, p. 1

²² Lacroyx, Andreas: *Edles Kleinod*, 1707, pp. 106, 109-10

in mind, whereas Lacroyx was more practical. Those plants which needed lifting every year would not mix well with those which were happy to stay in place for several years as it caused unnecessary disturbance to the roots.²³

Layout

The *Parnassus Hortensis* of 1714 was a testimony to how the ornamental role of gardens further evolved. It contained an important chapter on how to lay out a flower garden, and a separate one on how to lay out herb and kitchen gardens. The author thus linked the herb and kitchen garden, as opposed to incorporating the herbs into the ornamental flower garden. Despite this separation, the use of herbs for edging flower beds was still practised. Similarly to what Elssholtz had suggested in 1684 (see above), the author of *Parnassus Hortensis* suggested the use of herbs such as lavender, hyssop and sage but also marjoram and chives, both of which are herbaceous and die back in winter, leaving little to show. Better still was to use box, as this was evergreen, decorative and could be neatly trimmed. Hartenfels agreed with these ideas in 1746.²⁴ He also suggested edging with auriculas, a florists' flower which judging by the number of varieties listed (106 compared to 85 listed in 1707 by Lacroyx) was very popular.²⁵

As in Elssholtz's work, this book included detailed instructions on how to lay out and make the garden, such as how to measure up a piece of land destined to become a garden, how to transpose these measurements onto paper and then how to design the

²³ Lacroyx, Andreas: *Edles Kleinod*, 1707, p.105 and Elssholtz, Johann Sigismund: *Vom Garten-baw*, 1684, p. 49

²⁴ Anon.: *Parnassus Hortensis*, 1714, p. 107; Hartenfels, Arnold Friedrich von: *Neuer Garten-Saals*, vol. 2, 1746, p. 161

²⁵ Hartenfels, Arnold Friedrich von: *Neuer Garten-Saals*, vol. 1, 1745, p.239

garden.²⁶ The area had to be divided into four squares, each square containing a number of beds laid out in an ornate pattern. The example quoted by the author had squares of fifty-two *Schuhen*²⁷ (15.60 metres) long and wide. Each flower bed within the square was to be four shoes (1.20 metres) wide and the paths in between these beds were no more than two shoes (0.6m) wide. This way there was sufficient access around each bed to reach the middle for weeding and tending the plants. The main paths in between the flower squares had to be of a comfortable width. They were to be no less than six to eight shoes (1.80 to 2.40 metres) wide. They were lined with wooden posts and planks, which fenced in the quadrants. These fences were covered with roses, jasmine, *Viburnum*, white and blue lilacs, red, white and black currants and gooseberries. The rose, being the queen of flowers, received the prime position by the entrance to the flower garden. It was also possible to make a whole hedge out of roses. By means of grafting, several different roses could be grown onto one rootstock in order to make a more colourful effect. Next in line to the roses came the yellow or white jasmine. The paths were covered in gravel or coloured sands to provide colourful decoration. This also ensured a tidy finish over which one could walk at any time of the year without getting wet feet.²⁸

If there was enough space available it was also possible to have parterres filled with broderies as an alternative to the quarters of beds filled with flowers and bulbs. The box-lined intricate scrolls and figures could be filled with short cut grass and small flowers.²⁹ The *Parnassus Hortensis* also suggested installing mazes as another way of encouraging exercise. Mazes appear to have been popular; Elssholtz already

²⁶ Anon.: *Parnassus Hortensis*, 1714, p.88 and onwards

²⁷ One *Schuh* or shoe equals one foot or 0.30 metres.

²⁸ Anon.: *Parnassus Hortensis*, 1714, pp. 93-107

²⁹ Anon.: *Parnassus Hortensis*, 1714, p. 122

referred to them in 1684 and in 1746 Hartenfels commented that they were very much in favour.³⁰

International Links

Several references in seventeenth and eighteenth century literature confirm the existence of links between gardeners of different countries. It is clear from the work of Lacroyx that close links were maintained with neighbouring countries, in particular the Netherlands. Besides Elsholtz having already pointed his readers towards Dutch literature such as *Den Nederlandtsen Hovenier* (1669) for more information, it is noticeable how plant variety names, especially of bulbs, indicate Dutch origin. In addition to that, Lacroyx specifically recommended his readers to obtain poppy seed from Hamburg or Holland. Hartenfels on the other hand made references to the French work *La Théorie et la Pratique du Jardinage* by Dezaillier d'Argenville with regards to the laying out of gardens. Other authors whose works were translated from Dutch and French into German included Menage, Bolnay, Van Zombel (syn. Boorhelm), Schuyl and Van Osten.³¹

During the seventeenth century, Berlin's Kurfuerst, Friedrich Wilhelm, was said to have imported seeds, exotic herbs, flowers and fruit trees from as far afield as Italy, France, the Netherlands and England so that he could furnish the large garden he had ordered to be installed in the wake of the Thirty-years' War (1618-1648). This had

³⁰ Anon.: *Parnassus Hortensis*, 1714, p. 117, Elsholtz, Johann Sigismund: *Vom Garten-baw*, 1684, p. 45 and Hartenfels, Arnold Friedrich von: *Neuer Garten-Saals*, Vol. 2, 1746, p. 164

³¹ Elsholtz, Johann Sigismund: *Vom Garten-baw*, 1684, pp. 45, 92; Lacroyx, Andreas: *Edles Kleinod*, 1707, pp. 63, 369; Hartenfels, Arnold Friedrich von: *Neuer Garten-Saals*, vol. 2, 1746, p. 161; *Allgemeines Deutsches Gartenmagazin*, 1810, p. 129

been a period during which the area had suffered terrible shortages of fresh fruit and vegetables.³²

Plants

After his initial chapters on trees and bulbs, Hartenfels continued his book with a chapter on *Kreutergewachsen*. By today's terms these would be herbs, but he was generally referring to herbaceous plants.³³ Further on in the book he included a catalogue of plants, many of which were florists' flowers. Since Conrad von Gesner had witnessed the flowering of the first tulip in 1559, which had been introduced into Germany from Constantinople two years previously, tulips had increased in popularity: 369 varieties were listed here.³⁴ During the eighteenth century the range of plants, as in England, showed a steady increase.

Changing Garden Flora

The success that florists' flowers enjoyed with gardeners can be deduced from the increasing numbers mentioned in the literature of this period. However, the high cost of florists' flowers, many of which were originally brought from the east, as well as people's desire to have a wider range of plants flowering over a longer period of time,

³² Reichenbach, Dr A. B.: *Flora oder die Blumengaertnerin im Garten und im Zimmer*, 1873, p. 11

³³ Lacroyx, Andreas: *Edles Kleinod*, 1707, p. 37

³⁴ According to a nineteenth century report tulipomania had increased thanks to the wide diversity of colours and markings which can be found in the flowers. However their great popularity and ease of propagation meant gardens eventually became flooded with large quantities of tulips, which in turn resulted in the downfall of tulipomania. However according to Solms-Laubach some tulips still reached high prices in the early nineteenth century, though towards the end of that century they had gone out of fashion, and became harder to obtain. (Seibel, Johann: "Etwas ueber die Vorzuegliche Modeblumen", *Allgemeines Deutsches Gartenmagazin*, 1810, p. 130; Solms-Laubach, Hermann Grafen zu: *Weizen und Tulpen*, 1899, p. 95)

resulted in people starting to look more at the type of flowers which had been grown by herbalists for many years. Furthermore the development of botany and the downfall of tulipomania resulted in the advancement of garden flora, as an ever increasing range of plants became available. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the selection became more varied, richer and longer flowering.³⁵ Johann Heinrich Seibel pointed out in 1810 how some of the florists' flowers which had been in vogue for fifty or a hundred years, had totally gone out of fashion by the early nineteenth century.³⁶ See chapter 6 for more details of plants.

Changing Fashions

Inevitably people's tastes changed during the eighteenth century. Hartenfels commented on how the German gardens, with their box-edged parallel and symmetric layouts, had gone out of fashion, and that instead the French parterres with their coloured gravels representing suits of armour, crowns and other heraldic images had become the latest fashion in garden design.³⁷ However by the end of the eighteenth century the French style had lost its popularity in favour of the English style, with its informal landscaped parks and pleasure grounds. By the start of the nineteenth century this latter style had become very popular.

As in other countries on the continent, the Germans were greatly inspired by the great eighteenth century English landscape parks, but did not slavishly copy the English style. Advocates such as Professor Hirschfeld and Herr von Muenchenhauser added

³⁵ Seibel, Johann: "Etwas ueber die Vorzuegliche Modeblumen", *Allgemeines Deutsches Gartenmagazin*, 1810, pp. 129, 131

³⁶ Seibel, Johann: "Etwas ueber die Vorzuegliche Modeblumen", *Allgemeines Deutsches Gartenmagazin*, 1810, pp. 127

³⁷ Hartenfels, Arnold Friedrich von: *Neuer Garten-Saals*, Vol. 2, 1746, p. 163

their own mark to their attempts of beautifying nature, thus creating subtle differences³⁸, making these gardens distinctive.

³⁸ Reichenbach, Dr A. B.: *Flora oder die Blumengärtnerin im Garten und im Zimmer*, 1873, p. 9

CHAPTER 4.2: THE TYPES OF GERMAN FLOWER GARDEN

The garden was an extension of the house as Pueckler had pointed out, on which one should spend as much money as on the house.¹ Some garden owners were in a position to spend more than others, a factor which inevitably influenced the appearance of gardens.

Gardens could be divided into three broad categories. There were useful gardens, gardens for pleasure and mixed gardens. In the first category one would expect to find fruit, vegetables, herbs and perhaps even cut flowers. Pleasure gardens were, as their title indicates, purely for recreational purposes. It was where the residents could relax, walk and enjoy the pleasant surroundings. The latter category was a combination of both: essential crops joined the ornamental.

Eduard Schmidlin (1808?-1890) published the following table showing all the different types of garden with their possible subdivisions². It had first been published by the French author Noisette, whose work *Le Manuel Complet du Jardinier* was translated into German by G.C.L. Sigwart *Vollstandiges Handbuch der Gartenkunst* (1826).

The useful garden:

- kitchen gardens
- common vegetable garden
- common vegetable garden for forcing
- fruit/kitchen gardens
- with orchard
- without orchards
- fruit gardens
- tree nursery
- orchard

¹ Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 419

² Schmidlin, Eduard: *Die Buergerliche Gartenkunst*, 1843, p. 1

Chapter 4.2: Types of German Flower Garden

- medicinal gardens - for study
- for use
- botanical gardens - for study
- for naturalising

The mixed garden: - flower / kitchen garden
 - ornamental kitchen garden

The pleasure garden: - symmetrical gardens - public pleasure gardens
 - private pleasure gardens - in castles
 - in towns

- landscape gardens - natural
 - ornamental

It is not clear to what extent this table applied to the norm. Were botanical gardens for example always classed as a useful garden? In British gardens it was not uncommon to include a botanical collection within the pleasure garden, as one of the different features which could be enjoyed by the residents.³ However in the kitchen garden of Dalkeith Palace a large area, separated from its surroundings, was devoted to the systematic arrangement of herbaceous plants.⁴ This indicates that the practice of mixing the botanical with the useful was not unknown in Britain either. (See also chapter 3.2.2.)

³ Major, Joshua: *The Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, 1852: Plate V shows a botanic garden running parallel to the kitchen garden wall next to the arboretum.

⁴ Fish, R.: "Recollection of the Gardens at Dalkeith House", *The Cottage Gardener*, Vol. 17, 1856, p. 37

The gardens for pleasure or ornamental gardens could be divided into different types.⁵

1. Park or landscape garden;
2. Flower park or pleasure ground;
3. Flower garden.

Jaeger and Boise both claimed German flower gardens were like English ones. They could be formal and geometrical or informal and landscaped. Flower gardens could be detached, they could be near the house or as part of the pleasure garden. Flower gardens could be visibly segregated from their surroundings or intimately united.

Hermann Jaeger (1815-1891?) was one of Germany's most active garden writers in the nineteenth century. He wrote that the smaller pleasure grounds which were so rich in flowers that they made the main impression, were best laid out as an irregular flower garden. If the overall planting and grass were dominant, then a geometric design was most appropriate.⁶

Flower gardens were laid in either the French style which was formal, based on the grand designs by Le Notre and his allies, or the English style which was the informal landscape style which originated in this country. The French style was according to Jaeger no longer applied by the mid-nineteenth century, instead for formal designs a style very similar to it was being used especially near public buildings, castles and in town squares.⁷

⁵ Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 416

⁶ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, pp. 7, 332

⁷ Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 418

4.2.1. Everyman's Garden

The gardens of those not belonging to the upper classes would most likely have been mixed gardens, in which space limitations and food requirements for the family usually dictated the proportion of each garden dedicated to food or pleasure. Peasants' gardens have been described as the original gardens, from which the later pleasure gardens evolved. According to an article in the *Botanisches Monatschrift* they were described as at the bottom level of the scale of garden aesthetics, having remained virtually unchanged for hundreds of years. This type of garden could be found on the outskirts of towns as well as in the country. They were adorned functional gardens, which contained flowers as well as herbs people would have used for culinary and medicinal purposes.⁸

According to Jaeger, everyone - except when dealing with princely castle gardens - should first think of his and his family's well-being and pleasure before thinking of providing for the table. He described what he called the house garden which was primarily there for pleasure and enjoyment. He reckoned that a family gained more benefit from the pleasure such a garden offered, than it would have done from the fruit and vegetables which could have been raised in it. Everybody should be able to enjoy the outdoors and the plants. For maximum enjoyment the garden should be next to the house, private and sheltered from the street and neighbours. It is not clear how widespread this attitude may have been. Messger, talking about different types of flower garden mentioned that if the house stood in a small garden, which at the same time was used for vegetable growing, the beds along the main paths were to be used

⁸ Glaab, L.: "Ueber Pflanzen der salzburgischen Bauerngaerten", *Botanisches Monatschrift*, 1892, pp.155-8

for flowers. Even if the garden was primarily functional, the aesthetic and pleasurable was not to be forgotten.⁹

People living in urban environments did not necessarily have a garden attached to their house, but from early on in the nineteenth century allotments were provided for the needy. Already in 1830 the city of Kiel set up '*Armengaerten*', the equivalent of the English 'poor's allotments'. Other cities soon followed this example by providing their poor inhabitants with a space to grow their own produce. Allotment societies or *Schrebergartenverein* were set up from 1865 onwards, after Daniel Schreber's death. By 1869 there were over 100 sites with allotments across Germany. According to Crouch and Ward Germany was the first place on the continent where allotment gardening became a conscious movement.¹⁰

The Plants

Talking about the history of floriculture, Friedrich Bouché stated that flowers had always been a luxury and only appeared when man could afford it¹¹. This may have been the case for florists' flowers, but is questionable when applied to perennials, as most are easily and cheaply propagated. Hampel pointed out, perennials were good for peasants' gardens where one did not want to spend too much money.¹²

The newest introductions may not have been within everybody's financial reach, but most gardeners would have had easy access to a range of perennials, through

⁹ Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, pp. 420-1; Messger, J.: *Gartenbuch* [1840], pp. 286-7

¹⁰ Crouch, David, & Ward, Colin: *The allotment*, 1988, p. 135

¹¹ Bouché, Friedrich: *Die Blumenzucht in Ihrem ganzen Umfang*, 1837, p. 7

¹² Hampel, W.: *Gartenbuch fuer Jedermann*, 1890, p. 314

exchange with neighbours and gardening societies as well as from suppliers. Bouché mentioned that in the last decades, during which the love for flowers had increased, the visitor was being greeted by flowers even in the poorest peasant gardens.¹³

Although it is difficult to build a precise image of what earlier peasant gardens would have looked like, it is quite safe to assume that any changes that may have occurred would have happened at a slower pace than in the gardens of the wealthy. It is furthermore likely that the gardens would have contained flowers at earlier stages in history. Some references give us an indication that flowers had been used in peasant gardens for a long time. Theodor Ruempler (1817-1891) had spent part of his life teaching, but made his fame through writing. He published three gardening magazines, translated Vilmorin's *Illustrierte Gartenbau*, but was particularly known for his *Illustriertes Gartenbau-Lexikon*, which was a source of information for all branches of horticulture. He talked about the way flowers were planted in borders "as our ancestors used to do". A practice which was still often seen in the country.¹⁴

It is likely that cottage gardeners would have made use of native flora. As a result German gardens probably contained some different flowers from English gardens. Due to Germany's size and geographic position, even within the country boundaries gardens may have looked different as different types of flora would have been available. Those within easy reach from the sea would have had more access to plant introductions coming from countries across the sea. Southern Germany would have benefitted from the flora originating from the Alps, such as monkshood, auriculas,

¹³ Bouché, Friedrich: *Die Blumenzucht in Ihrem ganzen Umfang*, 1837, p. 16

¹⁴ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Stauden*, 1889, p. 14

Lilium bulbiferum and hellebores. Eastern reaches of the country would have more contacts with central and eastern Europe.¹⁵

Werner Dittrich lists the following herbaceous perennials as typical peasant garden plants, though he does not specify whether this is for the whole of Germany, nor at which time.¹⁶

<i>Achillea ptarmica</i> 'Plena'	<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>
<i>Aconitum napellus</i>	<i>Iris florentina</i> (syn. <i>I.</i> 'Florentina')
<i>Aconitum napellus</i> 'Bicolor'	<i>Iris germanica</i>
<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	<i>Iris pallida</i>
<i>Asparagus officinalis</i>	<i>Iris sambucina</i> (syn. <i>I. x sambucina</i>)
<i>Aster novi-belgii</i>	<i>Iris variegata</i>
<i>Aster tradescantii</i>	<i>Lychnis chalcedonica</i>
<i>Campanula persicifolia</i>	<i>Lychnis chalcedonica</i> 'Flore Plena'
<i>Centaurea montana</i>	<i>Lychnis coronaria</i>
<i>Convallaria majalis</i>	<i>Lysimachia punctata</i>
<i>Chrysanthemum serotinum</i> (syn. <i>Leucanthemella serotina</i>)	<i>Omphalodes verna</i>
<i>Dianthus plumarius</i>	<i>Paeonia lactiflora</i>
<i>Dicentra spectabilis</i>	<i>Paeonia officinalis</i>
<i>Dictamnus albus</i>	<i>Paeonia tenuifolia</i>
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	<i>Phlox paniculata</i>
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	<i>Polemonium coeruleum</i> (syn. <i>P. caeruleum</i>)
<i>Helleborus niger</i>	<i>Primula x pubescens</i>
<i>Helleborus viridis</i>	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>
<i>Hepatica nobilis</i>	<i>Rudbeckia laciniata</i> 'Goldball'
<i>Hepatica nobilis</i> 'Rubra Plena'	<i>Saponaria officinalis</i> 'Plena'
<i>Hepatica nobilis</i> 'Plena'	<i>Saxifraga hypnoides</i> var. <i>egemmulosa</i> (syn. <i>S. kingii</i>)

¹⁵ Dittrich, Werner: "Bepflanzung von Bauerngaerten", *DGGL - Referate des Fachseminars Pflanzenverwendung in Historischen Anlagen*, 1982 Schloss Ludwigsburg, pp. 291-301

¹⁶ Dittrich, Werner: as above

Saxifraga decipiens (syn. *S. rosacea*)

Sempervivum tectorum

Phalaris arundinacea 'Picta'

Viola odorata

Layout

Werner Dittrich stated that the most common layout for peasant gardens was simply to divide the garden into four quarters, possibly with a circular bed in the middle which would have contained some flowers such as roses or peonies.¹⁷ Ruempler mentioned that in those gardens which were partly dedicated to the growing of useful crops and partly to ornamental plants, flowers were usually grown in borders along the vegetable beds. These borders were only for the growing of flowers interspersed at regular intervals with a shrub. They were not supposed to contain any fruit trees. The beds were edged along the path side with box or flowers, glazed tiles or brick on edge.

The planting was done so that each variety was grouped on its own, in groups of three to five plants, depending on the plant size.¹⁸ Colour schemes were unimportant. The more colourful a display was, the higher it was rated and considered more attractive.¹⁹

¹⁷ Dittrich, Werner: as above

¹⁸ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Stauden*, 1889, p. 14

¹⁹ Hampel, W.: *Gartenbuch fuer Jedermann*, 1890, p. 314

4.2.2. Kitchen Gardens

According to Schmidlin's table on the different categories of flower gardens (see introduction of chapter 4.2), the type of kitchen garden where one could have expected to find flowers was one of the two mixed gardens. It could be either the flower / kitchen garden or the ornamental kitchen garden. However Ruempler described these mixed gardens as gardens of past times. This was how our ancestors satisfied their desire for flowers, by creating narrow borders of perennials along their vegetable beds.²⁰

In those gardens where the useful was mixed with the ornamental because of lack of space, the ornamental element had to be dominant over the fruit and vegetables. Their cultivation had to be of the highest standards to fit in with the surrounding ornamental areas. Better still was to keep the vegetables out of sight wherever possible, although fruit was easier to blend into the surroundings, growing amidst the grass in an informal park-like manner.²¹

Besides the traditional flower borders in kitchen gardens, Ruempler also mentioned another type of garden which could fit into the larger sized kitchen garden or flower garden, though he considered it as best situated in an isolated area of the park garden. It was the herbaceous garden. From his description this appears to be a rather informal garden, where perennials were not planted in any symmetrical layout but in a free and informal manner. Each plant type was planted as an individual or in small groups, depending on size, to allow plants to reach their full size without any hindrances. This sounds reminiscent of the gardenesque style. (See chapter 3.2.4.2.) These beds were

²⁰ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Stauden*, 1889, pp.3, 14

²¹ Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 417

not meant to be seen other than from the main paths, and had therefore to be screened properly either with trained roses or shrubs.²²

Judging by the frequency to which this type of garden was referred in literature, it would appear that straight borders lining the main axis paths, as seen in Britain, were more common.

Layout of Kitchen Gardens

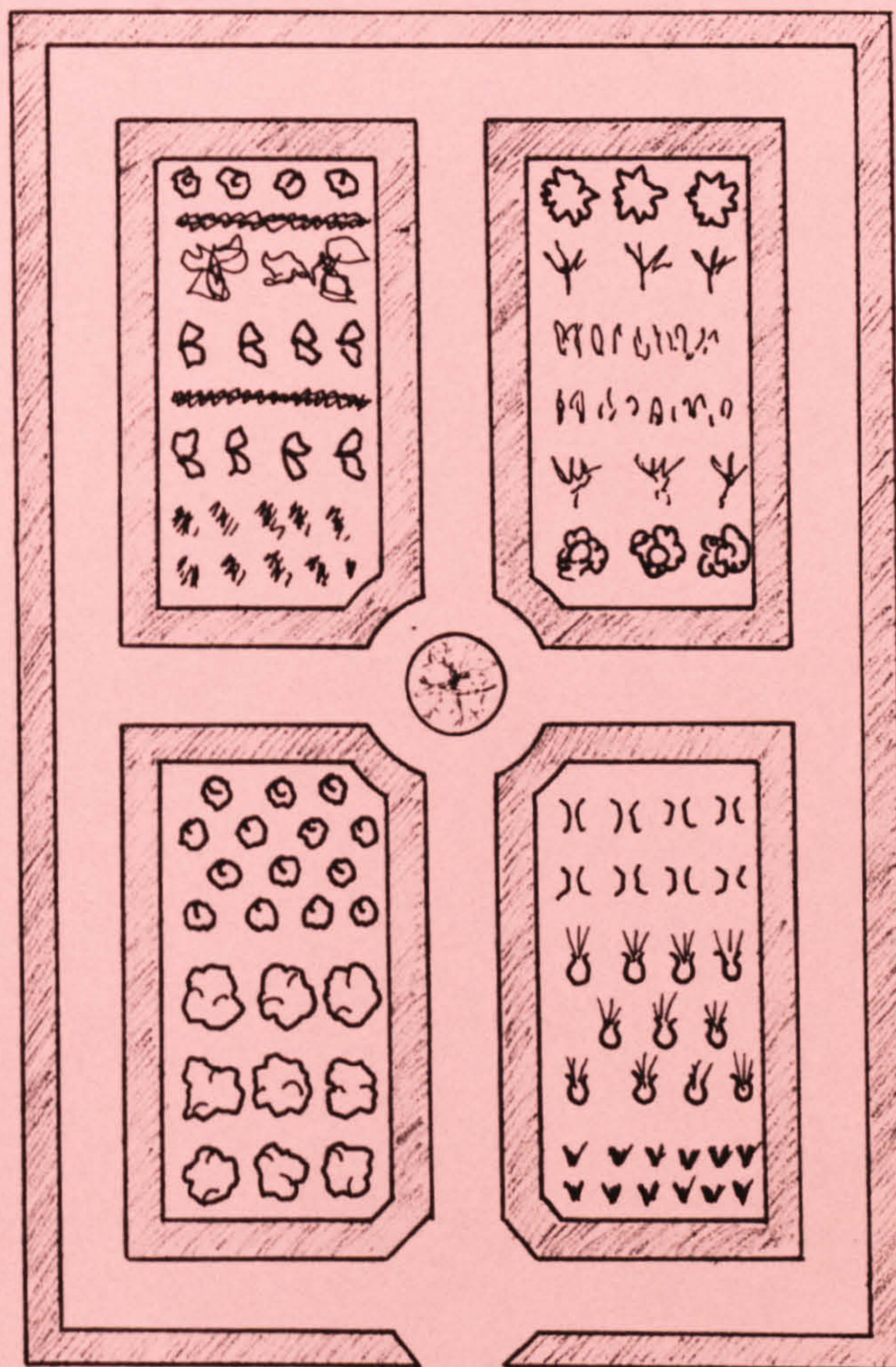
In the Dutch translation of Ruempler's *Die Gartenblumen* there is mention of mixed gardens which share vegetables and flowers. The flowers were only planted in the borders which lined the main paths. These borders ran alongside the rectangles filled with vegetable crops. Due to the geometric architecture of kitchen gardens and the restricted space available for flowers in an area chiefly dedicated to growing vegetables, the shape and dimensions of these borders was limited to being long and narrow. All that mattered was that the borders were made to look attractive, which was achieved with careful planting.²³ This account suggests a simple layout of rectangular vegetable beds and straight paths edged with borders. Such a layout was illustrated by Lebl. (See illustration 60.) The two paths divided the rectangular space into four quarters. The paths had to be a minimum of one metre, maximum two and a half metres wide, depending on the scale of the garden. In the centre was a circular bed.²⁴ In Ruempler's *Gartenbau Lexikon* a similar layout is recommended. Two paths

²² Ruempler, Theodor : *Die Stauden*, 1889, pp. 15-6

²³ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, 1876, translated by Meijer, Dr H. A. J in 1882, p. 183

²⁴ Lebl, M.: *Gemuesegaertnerei*, 1892, p. 12

ILLUSTRATION 60: LAYOUT FOR A KITCHEN GARDEN



The above plan is based on a drawing published by Lebl, showing a kitchen garden divided into four rectangles for vegetables. Each bed was surrounded by a narrow border, which could be planted with flowers and/or fruit or even vegetables. In the centre, at the intersection of the paths, was a circular bed.

(Lebl, M.: *Gemuesegaertnerei*, 1892, p. 12)

crossing at right angles divided the garden into four equal rectangles. These were edged with a one metre or wider border.²⁵

Planting of Kitchen Garden Borders

The flower borders in kitchen gardens could be edged to help soil retention and to give a neat finish to the beds. Box was an often quoted favourite as it was clean, hardy, submitted well to trimming, could easily be kept to a maximum height of one foot (0.30 metres) and had a good root system which helped to retain the soil but which did not rob other plants excessively of nutrients as long as it was given a good mulch of manure. Other plants could be herbs such as chives, lavender, rue, runnerless strawberries, or flowers such as *Dianthus plumarius* and *Bellis perennis*. The problem with these was that they could look untidy when they had finished flowering. Roses were also considered nice, but required a lot of attention.²⁶

Ruempler suggested that these borders along vegetable beds could be planted with herbaceous perennials, with the occasional soft fruit bush, although he was not so much in favour of mixing soft fruit and fruit trees with flowers as they created unfair competition for each other. Flowers such as roses, dahlias, delphiniums, peonies, lilies and other attractive hardy perennials could be used to fill the borders. Some gardeners preferred planting herbs instead of flowers.²⁷

The tradition of planting fruit trees in the kitchen gardens seems to have been rather controversial. A writer in *Gartenzeitung* complained about the North German tradition

²⁵ Ruempler, Theodor: *Illustriertes Gartenbau-Lexikon*, 1882, p. 336

²⁶ Lebl, M.: *Gemuesegaertnerei*, 1892, p. 15

²⁷ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Stauden*, 1889, pp. 3, 14; Ruempler, Theodor: *Illustriertes Gartenbau-Lexikon*, 1882, p. 336

of having fruit trees in the kitchen garden. He pointed out that they created too much shade for most vegetable crops, and that the fruit harvest interfered with the crops. He preferred planting fruit trees in an orchard outside the kitchen garden, or alternatively using only espalier and fan trained trees against walls or at the back of borders.²⁸

4.2.3. Formal Flower Gardens

Nineteenth century opinions on the distinct types of flower gardens for different circumstances seem to be quite unanimous. Most texts consulted for the purpose of this research agreed that where the flower garden was attached to the house it was best of formal layout. Only if the house was set completely within the informal surroundings of the pleasure grounds was a formal layout considered less suitable. But even then, some preferred to make the transition from the architectural linear projection of the house to the informality of the pleasure ground by creating a formal area around the house. This created a visual link from formal to informal when seen from the garden, but it also helped the onlooker from within the house: the formality of the garden near the house helped to provide a continuation of the shapes and lines one would be surrounded by in a room. How large the formal area was depended on size and circumstances. If for example the house was standing quite close to a road, the whole area between house and road could be formal.²⁹

Carl Eduard Adolph Petzold (1815-1891) was of the opinion that if the flower garden could be overseen in one swoop it ought to be formal. He thought that particularly for the grander houses and palaces a formal terrace and flower garden enhanced the

²⁸ L... Ph in W: "Ueber sogenannte Kuechengaerten", *Gartenzeitung*, 1857, p. 74

²⁹ Bosse, J.: *Handbuch der Blumengaertnerei*, 1859, p. 122; Heicke, C.: "Welche Mittel stehen dem Gaertner zu Gebote", *Zeitschrift fuer bildende Gartenkunst*, 1893, pp.52-3

building, adding value to the house by making it more imposing. But it was not only near the house that formality should be observed, flower gardens attached to temples, greenhouses and conservatories or small flower gardens isolated in the pleasure ground should observe the strictest symmetry.³⁰

However, not all flower gardens removed from the house and set within the midst of the pleasure ground had to be formal and symmetrical. They could also be informal, letting nature feel its influence, for example when the garden contained areas with particular habitats for different plant types such as peat beds for ericaceous plants, water basins for water plants, rockeries for alpine and rock plants and posts for climbers.³¹ (For details on planting and colour arrangements, see chapter 4.4: Planting Styles in German Flower Gardens.)

Illustration 61 shows a formal terraced garden outside the house, on four levels. The lowest level, furthest away from the house, was reserved for two double flower borders for mixed flowers. The other terraces, closer to the house, were planted with carpet bedding displays.³²

Another alternative was to decide on the layout according to the vegetation. If the garden's main elements were shrubs and grass, then an informal layout was called for. On the other hand if the flowers played the predominant role, then a formal layout was often more appropriate.³³

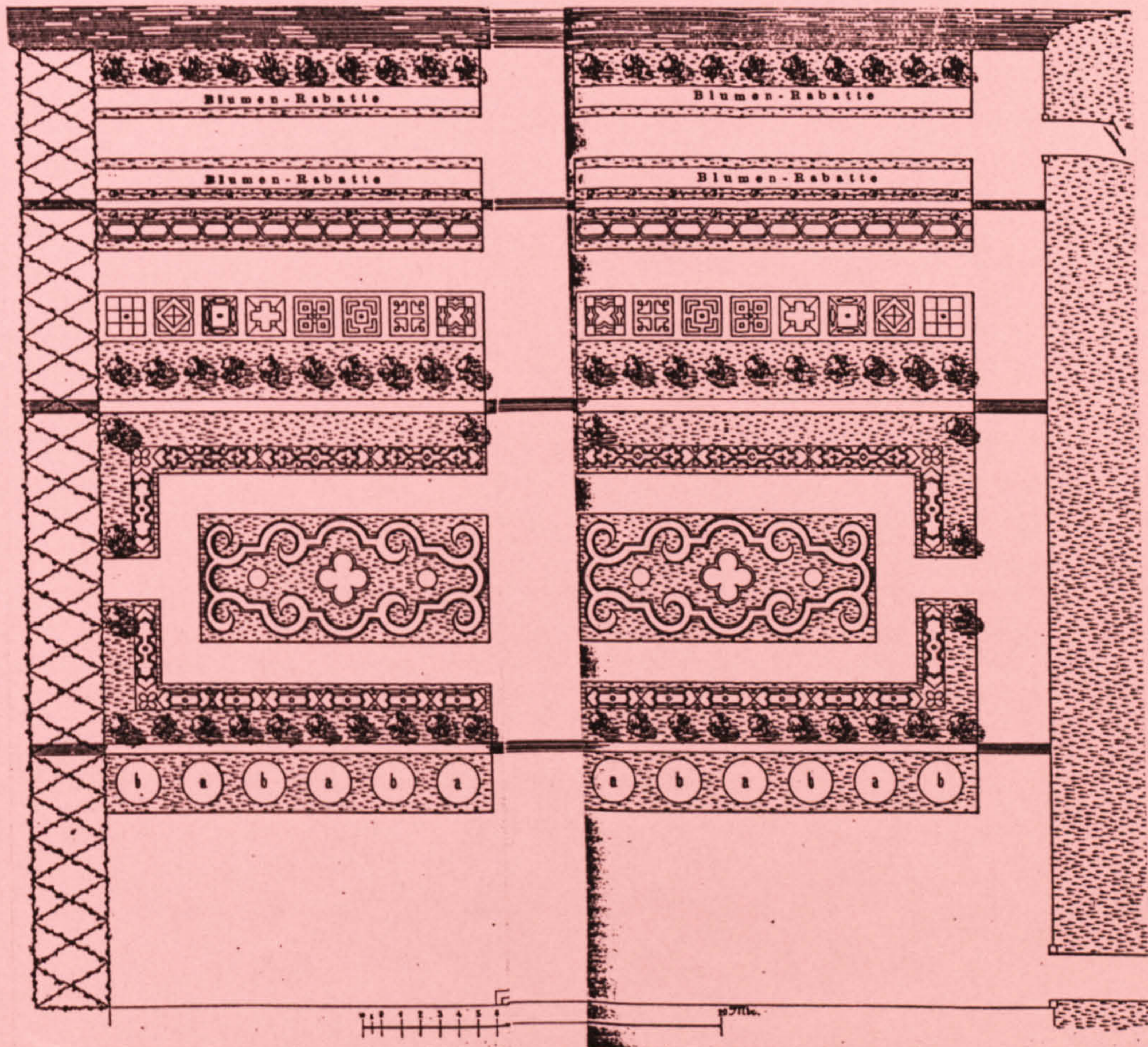
³⁰ Petzold, Eduard: *Die Landschafts-Gaertnerei*, 1862, pp. 50, 59

³¹ Petzold, Eduard: *Die Landschafts-Gaertnerei*, 1862, p. 69; Bosse, J.: *Handbuch der Blumengartnererei*, 1859, p.122

³² Anon.: "Teppich Terrace", *Neubert's Garten Magazin*

³³ Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 147.

ILLUSTRATION 61: FORMAL GARDEN PLAN WITH HERBACEOUS BORDERS



The formally terraced garden contained a lower terrace with four borders reserved for mixed flowers, whilst the other terraces were dedicated to to carpet bedding schemes.

(Anon.: "Teppich-Terrasse", *Neubert's Gartenmagazin*, vol. xlix, 1896, p. 125)

For practical reasons Julius Bosse (1788-1864) thought it was easiest to have the flower garden near the house so that one had access at all times. If this was not possible then a position near the green houses was preferable, as this made it easier for the gardeners. A third option, which he thought was aesthetically preferable, was to assimilate the flower garden with the pleasure ground so that it became part of a whole. The effect of this was most pleasant.³⁴

The choice of style depended on locality. As Jaeger pointed out the first rule in garden design was to make use of the available or existing elements and to position the garden where it was most suitable. One had to extract from every locality the best elements and plan according to local circumstances, without losing any of the beauty of the spot. In other words, to use the genius of the place.³⁵

Ornamental gardening could be divided into three sections. Firstly there was the flower garden for bulbs, annuals, biennials and perennials. The second section was the greenhouse which housed all the exotics and thirdly there was the *Lustgebueshe*, the pleasure ground or English garden which contained ornamental trees and shrubs. The flower garden associated with the house was the one he considered formal. It could be overseen from the balconies of the house or walked into from the main rooms. The beds were of a rigid square, circular, oval or semi-circular shape.³⁶ Jaeger did not include the greenhouse in his categories of the ornamental garden, instead he added the park and mentioned the useful ornamental garden. There were rarely strong separations between these different garden areas. Usually they flowed from one into the other without showing any strong demarcation lines.³⁷

³⁴ Bosse, J.: *Handbuch der Blumengaertnerei*, 1859, p. 121

³⁵ Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 250

³⁶ Messger, Joh.: *Gartenbuch* [1840], pp. 286-7

³⁷ Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 417

Within the formal gardens it was possible to have some areas with specific roles, though it is not known how widely spread the custom was to have these garden with special purposes. Ruempler described to his readers a spring and an autumn garden. The spring garden was designed to offer the garden visitor an enticing foretaste of spring, and was to be a relief of the winter garden. It was refreshing by being orderly, symmetrical, scented and colourful. The spring garden was an area separated from the rest of the garden, a small enclosed sunny site in the vicinity of the house. It could consist either of a grass parterre with a round or oval flower bed in the centre, or a border edged with a grass strip. Around the beds or borders there should be evergreen shrubs or those which come into leaf early or flower in early spring. In any case the planting had to respect harmony of colour and form. In the parterres planting was to follow the edge of the bed, filling smaller beds with one plant type only or possibly two of contrasting colour. Borders, on the other hand, were planted with the taller plants at the rear, the lower ones at the front.

These spring gardens were prepared in autumn and if well kept could provide pleasure until the real spring started. Annual summer flowering plants were used to interplant bulbs in order to mask the dying foliage of the spring flowers as well as provide some colour throughout the summer months.

As for the autumn gardens Ruempler thought it was important to retain a certain feeling of spring freshness at a time when everything in the garden was starting to die down. He complained that too many people were ignorant about the wide range of autumn flowering perennials which could be used to extend the flowering season. He recommended the real flower admirer to set aside a sunny area specially dedicated to the late season. The main performers were the many asters, which provided many months of flower display. Added to these were the numerous late summer *Compositae* such as *Rudbeckia* and *Inula*. To provide relief of flower shape it was important to add some flowers belonging to other plant families such as *Anemone* 'Honorine Jobert',

Aconitum autumnale, *Statice latifolia* (syn. *Limonium latifolium*), *Lilium speciosum*, *Tritoma uvaria* (syn. *Kniphofia uvaria*) and others. On the edge of the autumn garden it was possible to place some small beds with autumn flowering bulbs such as the crocuses and colchicum. The overall layout of the autumn garden very much depended on the size, site and lie of the land available.³⁸

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Renaissance gardens again became popular, although their requirement for large quantities of plants and much care meant that the style was mostly seen in large establishments which had the organisation and means to look after such schemes.³⁹

4.2.4. Informal Flower Gardens

4.2.4.1. The Picturesque Movement in Germany

Unlike in Britain, the picturesque and gardenesque movements had little impact on the German gardening scene. People were aware of the movement, and referred to it but within the English context, referring to *das Pittoreske* when talking about Englishmen such as Price, Whately and Gilpin.⁴⁰ Petzold referred to them in a deprecatory way, saying that in their attempt to prove that only the picturesque was of any value, they went too far. Although they were aware of the picturesque debate, Germans appear to have been more interested in the English landscape movement as a whole, rather than getting involved in the discussions that went on in Britain.

³⁸ Ruempler, Theodor : *Die Stauden* ,1889, pp. 21-3

³⁹ Hampel, W: *Gartenbuch fur Jedermann*, 1890, p.199

⁴⁰ Petzold, Eduard: *Die Landschafts-Gaertnerei* , 1862, pp. vii-viii

An article in the *Gartenzeitschrift* described how Whately had been taken by the picturesque effect, recommending gardeners to study landscape paintings. The article pointed out that the works of Price and Knight as well as Chambers' work on oriental gardening had greatly influenced the designing of parks and gardens. In France, where the style was soon known, Watelet was more in favour of romantic ideas, whereas Girardin and his painter friend Meyer supported the picturesque effect. A landscape garden was supposed to be like a gallery of pictures according to Girardin. The author, L. Trzeschtik, went on saying Gilpin was of the same school of thought as Girardin. The lesser known French landscape gardener Guibert preferred the less elaborate designs, going back to Brown's ideas on Landscape gardening. Finally he mentioned Repton and Loudon, who according to Trzeschtik carried on along the thoughts of Watelet and Girardin, though preoccupying themselves more with working out details.

The two figures in Germany who were most strongly influenced by the landscape movement were Fuerst Pueckler and Ludwig von Skell. Pueckler would have been more inspired by Watelet's thoughts, Skell was a follower of Girardin.⁴¹

The *Zeitschrift fuer bildende Gartenkunst* talked about the English landscape movement, describing gardens which in England would probably have been regarded as picturesque. Throughout the article no reference was made to the term picturesque or *malerisch*.

"Many English gardens did not offer an image of orderly, idealised nature, but nature in all its roughness and wildness, as we would find it outside [the garden] with forest scenes, marshes, dead tree trunks and such like. There were others who preferred to accumulate unusual items such as ruins, pagodas, temples and tombs."

⁴¹ Trzeschtik, L.: "Englischer und franzoesischer Gartenstyl", *Gartenzeitung*, 1882, pp.449-51

The author, C. Heicke, wrote that in many of these designs the role of the house had been overtaken by that of the garden. The house ended up forgotten in the woodland, and no longer dominated over its surroundings. He explained that people had learned from these mistakes, turning away from this style, though the 'curving principle' (no straight lines or right angles) had withstood the changes and was still the main element which was being applied to landscape gardens. According to Heicke, German gardens had been formal up to the end of the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century came the English landscape movement, which by the nineteenth century was being applied in combination with the earlier formal layouts. They had extracted the best elements of both styles.⁴²

Several German garden writers were interested in the ideas and philosophies of the English landscape movement, but had no time (or possibly no interest) to discuss smaller details such as perennial planting. As the information available on the subject is limited, no in depth study has been included in this research.

Although the word 'picturesque' was not used in German garden vocabulary, the term *malerish*, which could be translated as painterly or picturesque was used to refer to the effects created by planting. Jaeger referred to the *malerish* effect of planting foliage plants in groups, pointing out that since the introduction of foliage plants, gardens had gained previously unknown atmosphere. He explained that they had made the scene *malerish* because they were precisely those foliage plants which he said were always depicted in the foreground by painters.⁴³

⁴² Heicke, C.: "Welche Mittel stehen dem Gaertner zu Gebote", *Zeitschrift fuer bildende Gartenkunst*, 1893, pp. 50-1

⁴³ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 418

4.2.4.2. The Informal Garden Style

Even though the Germans did not get into the picturesque debate, German landscape gardeners were keen to make use of the ideas projected by the English landscape movement. The popularity of the informal style seems to have increased progressively throughout the nineteenth century.

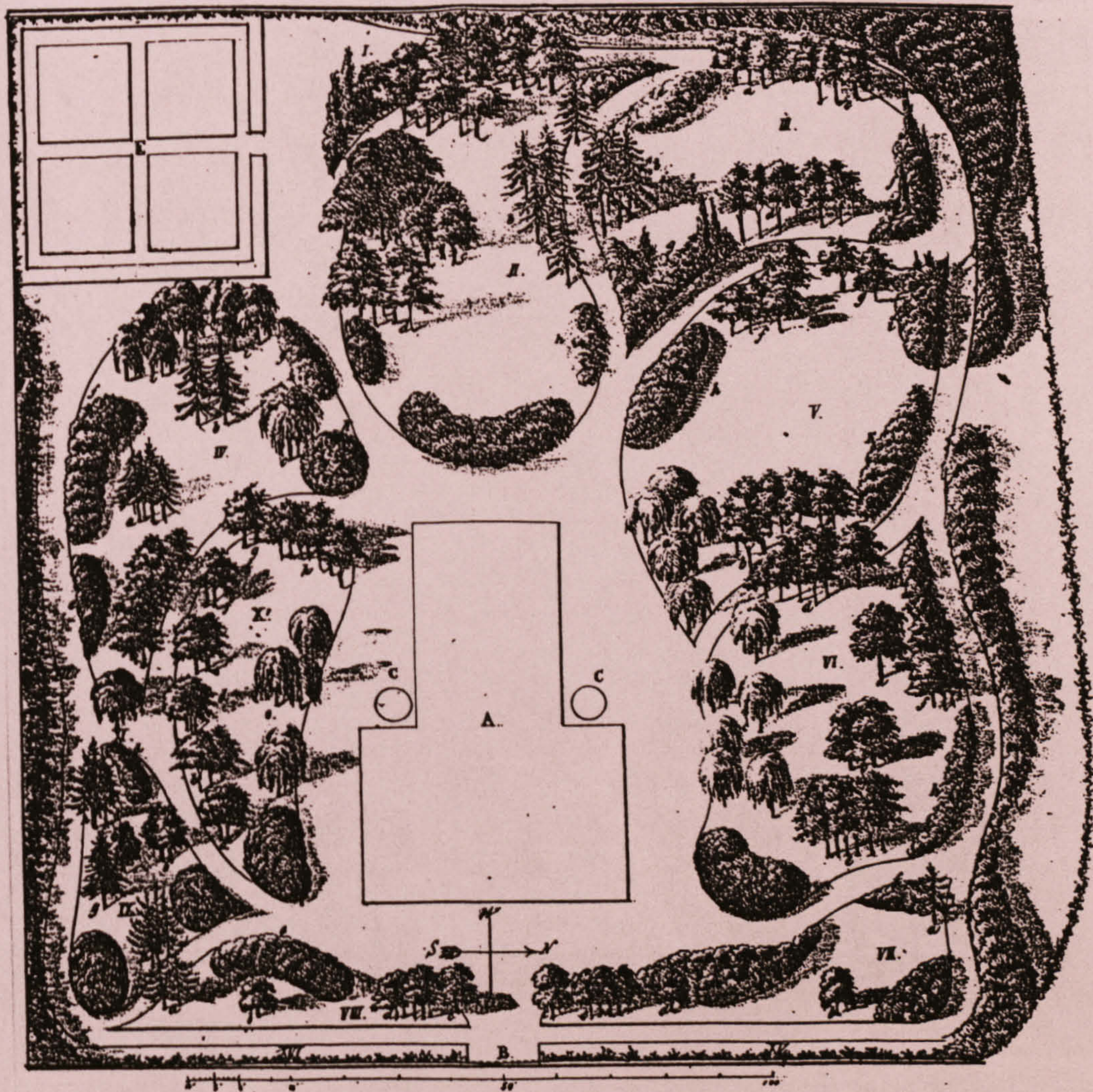
Jaeger's claims of 1858 and 1875 were confirmed by Hampel in 1890 that most modern flower gardens were arranged in the landscape style. Talking about the difference between groups and beds, Jaeger said that beds belonged in the *usual* flower gardens or flower parks, rather than the formal gardens. This indicated that the formal garden was less common.⁴⁴ The informal style was much more appropriate for medium to large sites, as space was needed to represent idealised landscapes. The formal style was often best suited to small gardens. Ruempler, on the other hand, thought it was possible to design smaller gardens in the landscape style. He described simple gardens which were decorated with small groups of shrubs which could be planted in a circle, and groups of perennials planted in corners or along edges, sometimes recessed further into the shrubbery if they required less light. Planting was in a natural way, avoiding straight lines. Plants were chosen to flower at different times so that there would be something in flower all year long.⁴⁵

Messger described what he considered a flower garden which was sited near the house so that it could be enjoyed from there. It was formal. If however the house was situated in the middle of the pleasure ground, a formal flower garden was not

⁴⁴ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, pp. 332, 422

⁴⁵ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, 1876, translated by Meijer, Dr H. A. J in 1882, p. 195

ILLUSTRATION 62: PLAN OF AN INFORMAL GARDEN



Schmidlin published this plan for an informal garden. It's winding paths dissect the lawn into separate spaces. On the lawn stand trees, shrubberies and flower beds (marked *f*). Particularly the flower beds near the front of the house were reserved for roses, whereas the ones near the rear were more suited to dahlias and hollyhocks.

(Schmidlin, Eduard: *Die Buergerliche Gartenkunst*, 1843, plate 13)

considered appropriate. Instead, he suggested to provide some colour by planting flowers in baskets and surrounding the house by flower borders.⁴⁶

If a flower garden was informal, it had to be laid out in conjunction with other natural elements such as lawns, shrubs and trees. A plan (see illustration 62) published by Schmidlin shows an informal garden surrounding a house. Winding paths divide the lawns into areas, which are planted with trees, shrubberies and some groups of flowers. These were mostly roses, dahlias and mallows, not a very imaginative selection. The flower beds were mainly placed in the areas closest to the house.⁴⁷

The flower park or pleasure ground was frequently referred to, and would have been present in most small parks and larger town gardens. It could be the area which surrounded the house, and which made the link between the house and its flower garden and the park beyond. It contained flowers and ornaments displayed in a more relaxed setting than what would be found in the flower garden near the house, yet it displayed more art than the park would have done, providing the ideal link from one to the other. It could also be an independent garden, in which case it was usually smaller and highly ornamented and contained flower gardens and formal areas within its boundaries. Jaeger said it really ought to be called the English style as its inspiration came from England, but the only problem was that this terminology was already being used to refer to the landscaping of parks and landscapes in the English landscape style. Instead he suggested to refer to these smaller gardens as *Landschaftliche* or landscape flower gardens.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Messger, Joh.: *Gartenbuch*, [1840], pp. 286-7

⁴⁷ Lange, Th.: "Die Benutzung der Blumen in Grosseren landschaftlichen Anlagen", *Zeitschrift fuer bildende Gartenkunst*, 1893, pp. 205-7; Schmidlin, Eduard: *Die Buergerliche Gartenkunst*, 1843, p.542-4

⁴⁸ 'Landschaftliche' flower gardens could be interpreted as smaller scaled landscape style flower gardens. Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes Allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 417

The herbaceous garden was another type of informal garden described, though it really was a border which ran along the front of shrubberies. Similarly borders mentioned in English literature (see chapter 3.2.4) appeared more incidental, they tended to be described as a colourful foreground to the shrubbery, rather than a herbaceous garden as is the case here. Such borders, as seen in the Elysium planting at Audley End (see illustration 22, Chapter 3.2), received much more exposure in Germany, possible because they played a more important role.

The herbaceous garden was supposed to fit within the boundaries of any larger flower garden or kitchen garden. The border were preferably placed in an isolated area of the pleasure ground, somewhere in an open situation, alongside a winding path in the foreground of a curving shrubbery with some attractive evergreen trees and shrubs such as *Abies*, *Juniperus*, yew and box. This green backcloth was intended to blend in with the foreground. Hence it could be pulled forward into the border, and provide shade for the perennials which benefited from shady conditions. Some of the most imposing perennials were those which enjoyed a semi-shaded position.

These informal flower borders lining shrubbery masses were present in many of the landscape parks⁴⁹, the best documented examples being at Bad Mushaw, but none have been reinstated in recent restoration schemes. Illustration 63 shows this mixture of perennials backed by a wall of shrubs. (See also chapter 4.4 - Perennials in the Pleasure Ground.)

Collectors Gardens

Like today, it was not everybody's ambition to surround themselves with a beautiful garden, formal or informal. Accounts show that already in the earlier half of the

**ILLUSTRATION 63: INFORMAL SHRUBBERY EDGE PLANTING
OUTSIDE A COTTAGE**



(Original in colour)

Pueckler made extensive use of perennials to make the transition between trees and shrubs, down to ground level. They provided a colourful, low-maintenance touch in the pleasure ground.

(Pueckler-Muskau, Hermann: *Andeutungen ueber Landschaftsgaertnerei*)

nineteenth century some people were more interested in botanical variety than the beauty of the display. The plant collector or *Blumenfreund* (the flower friend) was quite often content with collecting plants, without displaying them in any particular way. Plant collectors frequently thought an ornamental display of their favourite plants did not correspond with the objective of the collection, which was to create variety and botanical interest. However, if one tried, an attractive display could be obtained.⁵⁰

Although some decorative arrangement was possible, it was difficult to adhere to any colour schemes such as one colour per bed. It would have necessitated too many beds for the available space. Jaeger therefore recommended to have fewer beds of mixed colours instead.⁵¹

4.2.4.3. Germany's Naturalistic Planting and the Wild Garden

Unlike the word *picturesque*, which was not adopted in Germany, the term *Der wilde Garten* was literally translated from the English 'the wild garden'. In a series of articles in *Gartenzeitung* in 1882-83, 'Dendrophilus' admits having found the term in *The Garden*, thinking it was most suited to what he was doing. He said having read William Robinson's *The Wild Garden* and used this book as an inspiration for the layout of his own garden. He added that he referred to the book on numerous occasions in the course of this series of articles.⁵² Although the ideas of wild

⁵⁰ Reider, Jacob Ernst von: *Die systematische Kultur aller bekannten Blumen- und Zierpflanzen*, 1833, p. 171

⁵¹ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 371

⁵² Dendrophilus: "Der Wilde Garten", *Gartenzeitung*, 1882, pp. 37, 85, 130, 191, 215, 282, 331, 361, 403, 428 and 1883, p. 31

gardening were not new (see below) Dendrophilus decided that the English terminology was most appropriate.

Well before Dendrophilus quoted Robinson and talked about the wild garden, Jaeger had written about similar ideas, without calling it wild gardening. He suggested using not only native plants but also exotic plants which would thrive in the habitats provided, and could be naturalised in informal landscape gardens, where according to him they were most appropriate. Particularly spring flowering plants were suited to growing in grass areas, woodland edges and shrubberies, as in these areas they did not interfere with the rest of the garden when they died off. The only rule he could suggest for planting was to observe and imitate nature. He listed a number of perennials and bulbs suitable for planting in woodlands and in meadows. He recommended finding red and blue flowers for the meadows, as he thought too many German natives were either yellow or white flowered, which lacked effect. The perennials and bulbs used such as *Dicentra spectabilis*, *Papaver orientale* var. *bracteatum*, *Trollius*, *Tanacetum coccineum* different achilleas, lupins and hemerocallis, had to be selected to ensure that they would have finished flowering by the time the meadow could be cut for hay.⁵³ Previously he had suggested that if one had larger groups of colour within a naturalistic display, it was important to have the odd plant of the same colour reoccurring at a distance as if it had been scattered. "It is this variety and irregularity which nature creates which is so attractive."⁵⁴ Jaeger's ideas were very reminiscent of what Robinson wrote in *The Wild Garden*, which was not published until 1870, twelve years later.

⁵³ Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, pp. 438-9 and *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 342

⁵⁴ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 373

Although Dendrophilus was inspired by his English contemporary, Jaeger was not. At the time Jaeger's thoughts were published, Robinson was still working at the Royal Botanic Society's garden in Regent's Park, and concentrated his writing efforts on travel accounts.⁵⁵

Dendrophilus appealed to those readers who harboured a love for nature, saying wild gardening would suit them most. It was considered ideal for those owners who could not afford to spend too much money on the upkeep of their garden, and who thus could avoid the expense of more manpower to run it and of high fertiliser requirements. By simulating nature the scheme tended to be less labour demanding and did not require as much artificial 'support' in the form of staking and fertilising as other schemes did.

His awareness of the style of gardening resulted from the observation of native scenes. Native woods gave much pleasure, and nothing was nicer than the sight of a carpet of spring flowers or the smell of wild orchids. Most plants presented themselves best when planted in the right environments, surrounded by their natural neighbours. He was of the opinion though that in the wild garden one should not exclusively use native plants. Many of the plants which people had become to consider as native, had been introduced at a much earlier stage and had long naturalised themselves. Plants used could come from anywhere in the world as long as they originated from the same climatic regions.⁵⁶

The persistent popularity of informal landscaped gardens may have contributed to the naturalistic planting movement, as one was suited to the other.

⁵⁵ Allen, Mea: *William Robinson 1838-1935*, 1982, pp. 23-8, 42

⁵⁶ Dendrophilus : "Der Wilde Garten", *Gartenzeitung*, 1882, p. 37-8

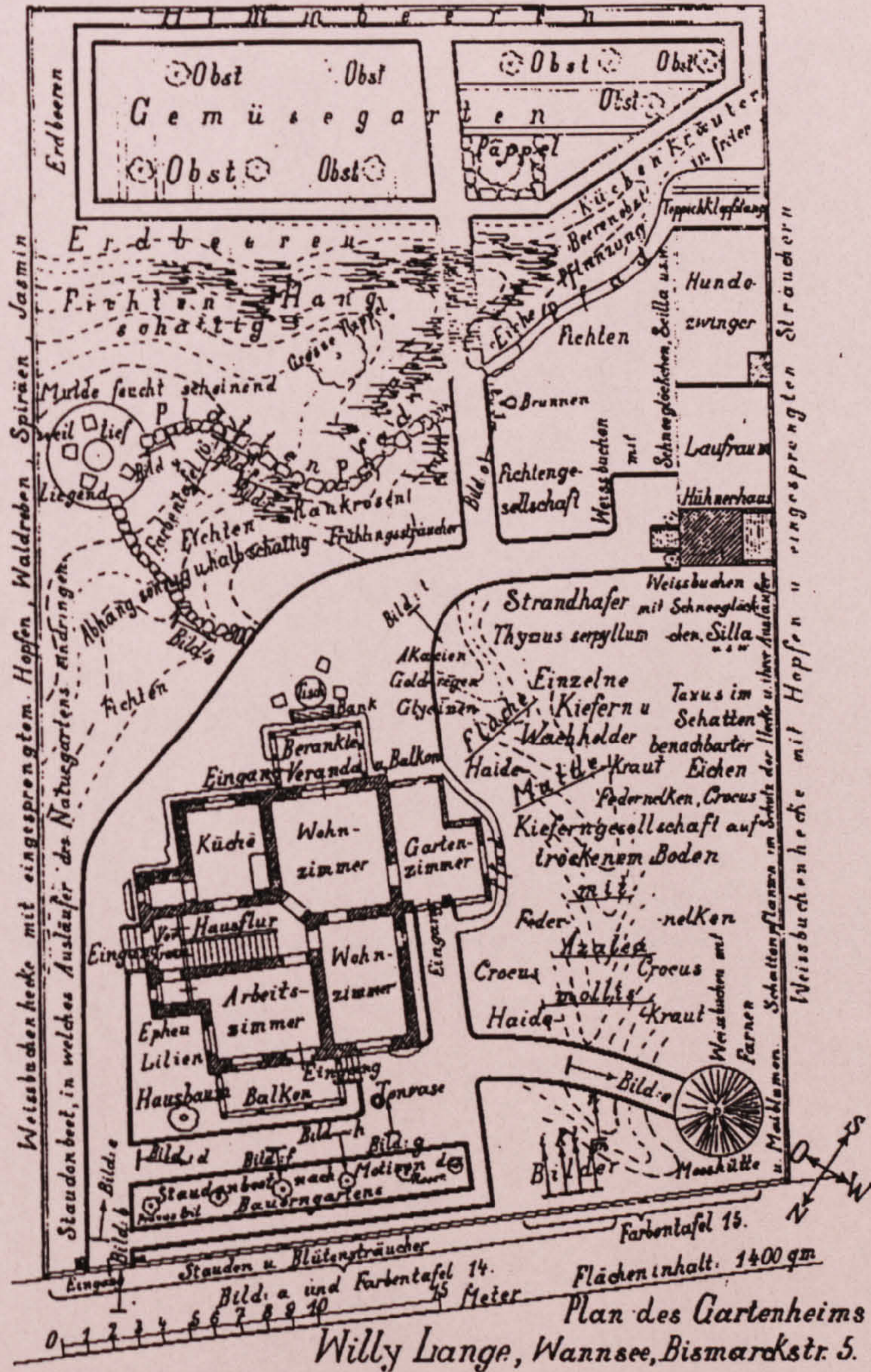
Ruempler told his readers in 1889 how not to waste a corner of the garden, not even in the shadiest area. Under the heading 'Planting of shaded areas' he recommended sowing a shade-tolerant grass mixture along the woodland edge and allowing the foot of trees to be decorated with ivy, *Vinca minor*, *Primula elatior* and *Scilla* species. In the grass areas one could plant groups of *Galanthus nivalis*. In the shrubbery, on either side of the paths, one should plant shade-tolerant plants, including natives. He suggested plants such as *Arum maculatum*, *Lilium martagon*, *Leucojum vernum*, *Allium ursinum*, *Polygonatum vulgare* (syn. *P. odoratum*), *P. multiflorum*, *Hepatica nobilis*, *Helleborus viridis*, *Actaea racemosa* (syn. *Cimicifuga foetida*), *Convallaria majalis*, anemones, orchids and *Luzula albida* (syn. *L. luzuloides*). At the end of the book he listed plants for specific habitats, such as woodland, wood margin and shrubbery edge. His statement "this is more or less what one calls a wild garden, as was first carried out in England with success", shows he was not aware of Jaeger's earlier writings.⁵⁷

The trend for planting native plants within the garden continued. Willy Lange said plants deserved the correct growing environment dictated by nature, and the plant associations found in their natural environment. Introducing exotic species, or improved cultivars which came from similar habitats into these scenes was not excluded, on the contrary, they represented an improvement of nature. Lange considered this as the height of botanical achievement. Unlike his predecessors who called it the wild garden, Lange referred to it as the nature garden. Its design was based on patterns which occurred in nature, the end result was a form of improved nature thanks to the artistic input of mankind.⁵⁸ Lange put great emphasis on the importance of respecting a plant's habitat requirements. Not only would a plant grow better in an environment which resembled its native habitat, it also looked much more

⁵⁷ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Stauden*, 1889, p. 46

⁵⁸ Lange, Willy: *Gartengestaltung der Neuzeit*, 1907, pp. 12-3, 146

ILLUSTRATION 64: PLAN OF WILLY LANGE'S GARDEN



The plan of Lange's own garden in the Wannsee area of Berlin shows a diversity of styles. To the north-west and north-east of the house are two herbaceous borders, one in the peasant-garden style, the other one gradually merging into the nature garden to the south-east of the house. The south-west quarter of the garden was similarly laid. These two informal garden areas were partly tree-covered, with under planting of shrubs, bulbs and perennials. The vegetation was designed to reflect the character of the area.

(Lange, Willy and Stahn, Otto: *Die Gartengestaltung der Neuzeit*, 1907)

at home, especially when planted with other species requiring similar conditions, improved selections or those plants with a similar physiognomy.

The enclosed plan of Lange's own garden (see illustration 64) reflects the diversity of his work. Close to the house were herbaceous borders, one of which was planted in peasant-garden style. The other one gradually merged into what he called the nature garden, further away from the house. At the far end of the garden stood the fruit and vegetable garden, with dog kennel and chicken run.⁵⁹

The desire to establish successful plant communities in naturalistic ways was carried on into the twentieth century by Karl Foerster, who referred to Lange's work in *Vom Bluetengarten der Zukunft*, suggesting that those readers who wanted to know more about the nature garden and its planting should look at Lange's work and read *Gartengestaltung der Neuzeit*. It was however not only Lange's work which influenced Foerster's ideas on respecting plant habitats when planting. Foerster had also been inspired by the way plants were organised in his local botanic garden at Berlin-Dahlem. The arrangement of plants followed geographic principles rather than botanical ones, and plants were grown in the locations they enjoyed most.⁶⁰

In *Lebende Gartentabellen* (first published in 1940) Foerster listed plants for very specific circumstances, not so much classified according to habitat, but according to the garden type one was confronted with. Categories included symmetrical flower beds, rock gardens and water gardens, but also perennials, annuals, bulbs, trees and shrubs, plants with particular shapes, functions or requirements as well as specific habitats. As he was primarily a plantsman, his listings were based on his extensive

⁵⁹ Lange, Willy: *Die Garten Gestaltung der Neuzeit*, 1907

⁶⁰ Foerster, Karl: *Vom Bluetengarten der Neuzeit*, 1917, p. 13; *Winterharte Bluetenstauden und Straeucher der Neuzeit*, 1911, p. 18

horticultural and botanical knowledge, and fitted in better with his general principles of creating low-maintenance gardens, by matching plants with the habitat provided, as well as selecting cultivars which were strong-growing, disease resistant, and did not need staking.⁶¹

Unlike Lange, who was in favour of naturalistic planting for aesthetic or possibly moral reasons (see below), Foerster was a horticulturalist who wanted to create the best growing environment for his plants to promote healthy growth, which in turn would help to create a successful display.

Neue Blumen - Neue Gaerten was a book in which Foerster dealt with the statement often quoted by customers: "It is nice that this plant grows so well with you, and has given you so much pleasure." Anybody was capable of growing any plant, as long as they provided what it required. It was just as important to look out for a plant's physical growing needs; not only carefully choose what you planted, but also where and how you planted it.⁶²

Although Gert Groening and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn described the phenomenon of naturalistic planting promoted by Lange as closely linked to the development of the nationalistic movement in Germany⁶³, it is clear from the data available from Jaeger, Dendrophilus and Ruempler, that the ideas of planting native plants, with some

⁶¹ Foerster, Karl: *Blumengaerten fuer intelligente Faule* - Potsdammer Jahresschau, 1928, pp. 49-51

⁶² Foerster, Karl: *Neue Blumen - Neue Gaerten*, 1938

⁶³ It should be stressed that Groening and Wolschke-Bulmahn mention that their article is an interpretation of Lange's theories. On the other hand it would seem that the use of foreign plants advocated by Lange is not compatible with the racist and nationalistic tendencies of which it is accused. Wolschke-Bulmahn, J. & Groening, G. : "The Ideology of the Nature Garden", *Journal of Garden History*, Vol. 12, no. 1, 1992, pp.73-80

exotics added, in a way which imitated nature long pre-dated Lange's work. Although Foerster referred to Lange, he had come to similar conclusions on his own accord too, and expanded on these later on in his career. The idea of providing the correct habitat for the plants one tries to grow makes horticultural sense to all good gardeners. It is therefore not surprising that Jaeger, Robinson, 'Dendrophilus', Ruempler, Lange, Foerster and Richard Hansen all approached planting design in a similar way.

Resumé

Formal flower gardens, originally inspired by the French gardens, were mostly seen in association with larger properties, castles and public buildings, where they would have reflected a certain status level and added grandeur.

The informal landscape style was very popular in Germany throughout the nineteenth century. It usually consisted of a flower garden, formal or informal, situated near the house and surrounded by a pleasure ground, which would then go on to become the park if space allowed. Similarly, a glasshouse could be part of the pleasure ground if space permitted.

From the late 1850's onwards, the move towards naturalistic planting started, first with Jaeger's work, then Dendrophilus, who had read Robinson's *The Wild Garden*, Ruempler, Lange and Foerster.

CHAPTER 4.3: DESIGN ELEMENTS OF GERMAN FLOWER GARDENS

As in British gardens, the main elements which contributed to most flower gardens were borders and beds, both formal and informal in design. These were also the design elements mostly associated with perennials. They were used in connection with paths, lawns, shrubberies and ornaments to create a whole. The way they were planted was what gave them their particular character.¹ This will be analysed in the next chapter.

Although perennials were predominantly grown in beds and borders, they were used in several different areas of the garden:

- . individually on lawns (solitaire plants);
- . grouped on lawns;
- . in beds of different shapes;
- . in borders;
- . along the edges of shrubberies;
- . in amongst rocks, in rock gardens;
- . in or near the water;
- . in woods and meadows;
- . near walls, pillars, tree trunks and artificial structures (trained);
- . in tubs and containers of all sorts, out-of-doors, in the winter garden or the greenhouse.²

Depending on the type of environment, flowerbeds could have a symmetrical, regular and formal or an asymmetrical, informal shape. In a symmetrical flower garden formal beds were best. In the pleasure ground informal beds could be used, but in the

¹ Gruner, Heinrich: *Heinrich Gruner's praktischer Blumen Gaertner*, 1817, p. 4

² Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 412

park itself no flower beds fitted at all. The simplest bed form was circular or oval. Although both were pleasing and played a dominant role in every garden, oval beds were more economic in plants, as they had less surface area but still created the same effect. Being narrower they were also easier to cultivate.³

Bosse suggested that a garden should be thus designed that it would entice the garden visitor. A large part of the most attractive features were to be clearly seen from the garden entrance or from the living room windows. A fine example of this is Kleine Glieniche, which was so designed that the visitor was instinctively led from one feature to the next in a particular succession (see illustration 65 for plan). Water features, statues, pergolas and flower beds were thus placed to act as eye catchers (see illustration 66, 67 and 68 for flower bed detail). The beds had proper brick foundations and were edged with decorative tile or wrought iron edgings.

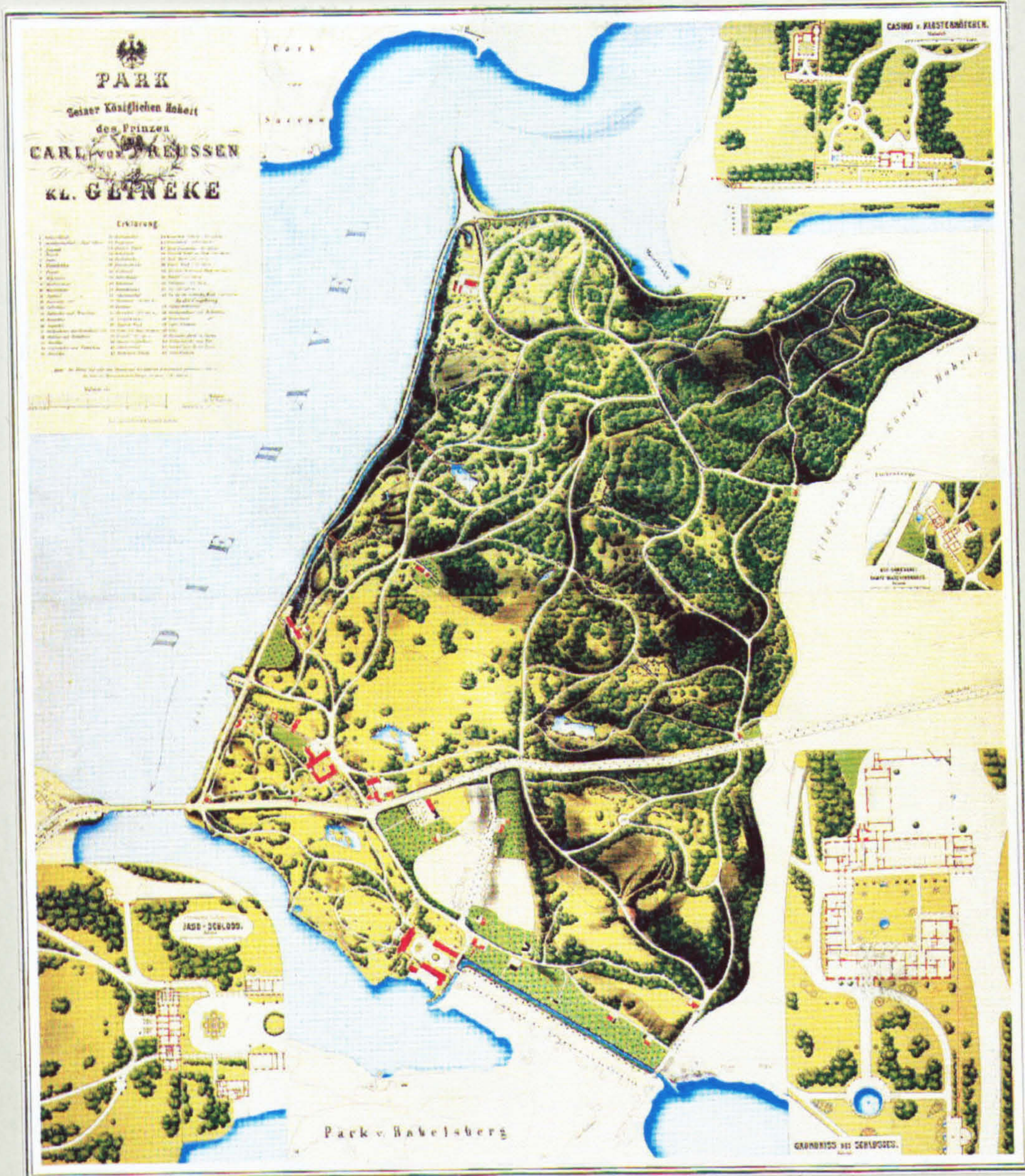
As for the shape of the flower garden, it appears that most garden writers had no particular opinion. Shape was most likely determined by the land and the situation as well as the owner's taste. According to Bosse there were no fixed rules. He gave preference to a longitudinal garden. Where space did not allow this, the effect could be optically enhanced by the careful grouping of plants.⁴

Bosse claimed that the smaller flower garden was usually laid out with flower beds of various forms, surrounded by gravel paths. The garden was then edged with borders. Larger flower gardens on the other hand tended to have a large lawn expanse with artificially raised areas and winding paths and some trees (small species with

³ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 422

⁴ Gruner, Heinrich: *Heinrich Gruner's praktischer Blumen Gaertner*, 1817, p. 4; Bosse, J.: *Handbuch der Blumengaertnerei* 1859, p. 122

ILLUSTRATION 65: 1862 MASTER PLAN FOR KLEINE GLIENICKE PARK



(Original in colour)

The 1862 master plan of Kleine Glienicke Park shows the informal setting within which flower beds were used as the occasional decorative touch, as a focal point or at path intersections.

(Gartendenkmalpflege Berlin: Der Landschaftsgarten von Klein-Glienicke, 1984, cover.)

ILLUSTRATION 66: FLOWER BED WITH SPRING BEDDING



(Original in colour)

Like little jewels, these circular flower beds filled with bedding plants were studded around the lawns to act as focal points.

(Author's collection)

ILLUSTRATION 67: BRICK FOUNDATIONS FOR FLOWER BEDS



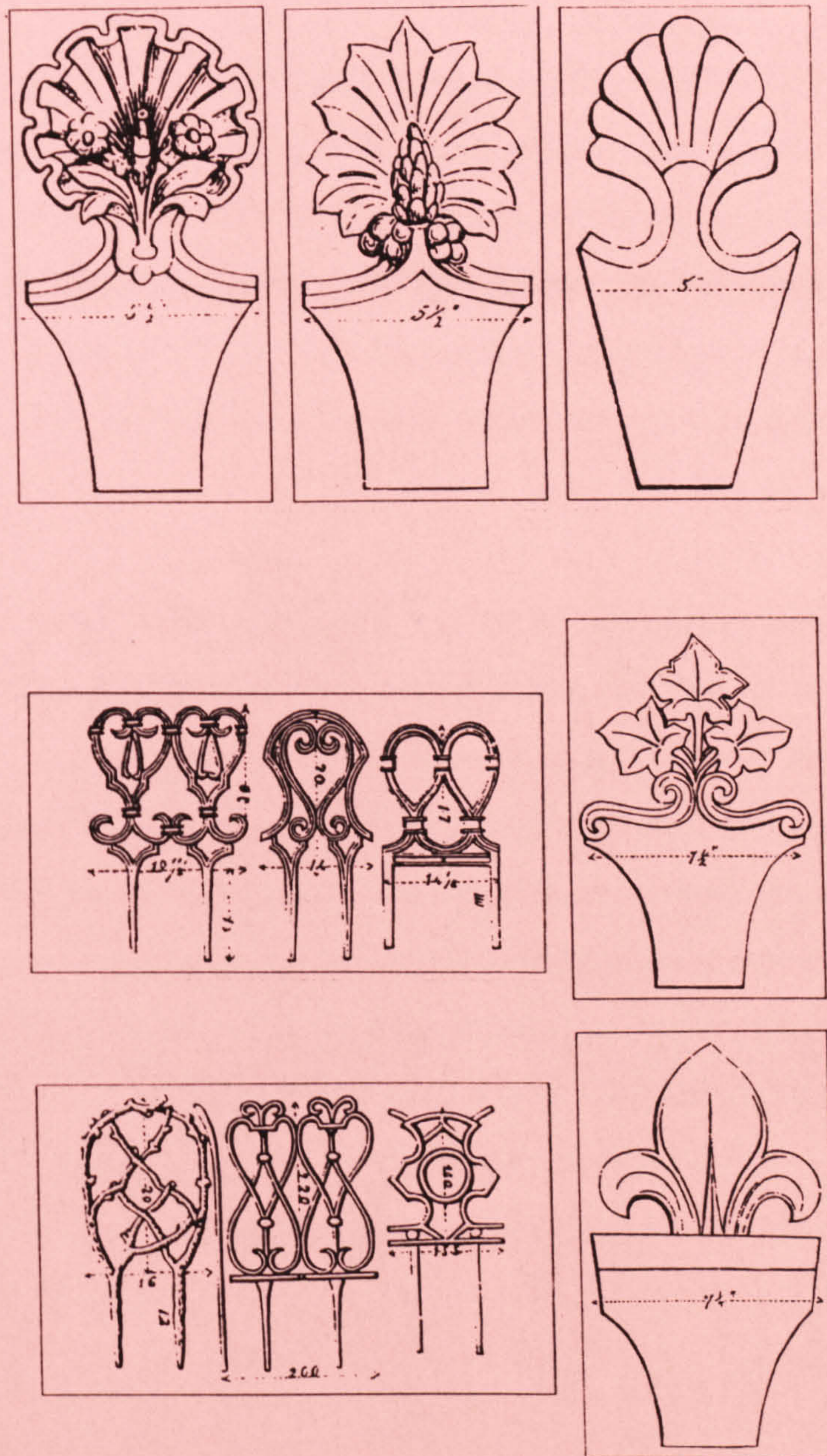
(Original in colour)

The flower beds on the preceding illustration were constructed on proper brick foundations with irrigation pipes, ensuring that their shape would not be lost over the years and plants were given optimum growing conditions with well-prepared planting pits and irrigation. These foundations were revealed at Kleine Glienicke following excavation work.

(Gartendenkmalpflege Berlin: *Der Landschaftsgarten von Klein-Glienicke*, p. 10, 1984.)

Chapter 4.3: Design Elements of German Flower Gardens

ILLUSTRATION 68: TYPES OF ORNAMENTAL EDGING FOR FLOWER BEDS



The preceding flower beds could be edged with low decorative wrought iron or clay tiled shapes to enhance the jewel-like effect they were supposed to achieve.

(Gartendenkmalpflege Berlin: *Der Landschaftsgarten von Klein-Glienicke*, pp. 15-6, 1984.)

columnar habit) as one would expect to find on a larger scale in a pleasure ground.⁵ These ideas were confirmed in an article in *Neubert's Gartenmagazin*.

Small gardens tended to be laid out more formally with geometric beds and borders, surrounded by gravel paths, whereas the larger gardens usually were laid out in an informal manner with winding paths, flower beds and shrubberies. There was space for a few beds for plants with special requirements such as ericaceous plants, whilst others were bedded out (see illustration 66, Kleine Glieniche), and further away stood a few beds or clumps of perennials which would provide colour from spring till autumn.⁶

Shelter against strong winds and colds was very important particularly in those gardens where spring flowers were encouraged to come into flower early. Hedges of flowering shrubs (Gruner suggested *Carpinus betulus*, *Crataegus monogyna* or *C. oxycantha*⁷), tasteful metal or wooden screens covered with herbaceous plants or evergreen woody plants, fences coated in climbers, light rails, decorative wooden panels or masonry walls or even a sufficiently deep and wide water canal were all possibly suitable ways of enclosing gardens, depending on what was required. Some were better at providing shelter from severe weather conditions, some would have kept unwanted vermin out, whilst others simply provided a visual backdrop. The canal provided a constant supply for watering and offered reflections in the water.⁸

⁵ Bosse, J.: *Handbuch der Blumengaertnerei*, 1859, p. 122

⁶ Anon.: "Beschaffenheit und Eintheilung eines Blumengartens", *Neubert's Gartenmagazin*, 1851, p. 120

⁷ Gruner, Heinrich: *Heinrich Gruner's praktischer Blumen Gaertner*, 1817, p. 2

⁸ Bosse, J.: *Handbuch der Blumengaertnerei*, 1859, p. 121

Messger had suggested that beds, or even the whole flower garden could be surrounded by a fine fence made of wood, covered in wire and painted white.⁹ Edging beds was not always purely done for aesthetic purposes. Ruempler talked about protecting long beds with low-growing delicate flowers by surrounding them with twenty, twenty-five or thirty centimetres tall planks keeping the midday sun off the blooms and providing shelter from the rain.¹⁰ For practical reasons, Gruner preferred enclosing gardens with walls or wooden fences rather than hedges, which needed regular pruning, could create a weed problem at the base and did not stop rabbits and other unwanted intruders from wandering in.¹¹

In order to enhance definition, add crispness and an impression of tidiness, beds, borders, shrub borders or flower groups could be edged. Clipped box or other, preferably evergreen plants which lent themselves to being trimmed were often used though some gardeners thought box created too much root competition and often harboured unwanted insects. Instead they gave preference to flowers, particularly perennials with a long flowering period. The flowers were considered as an added bonus in comparison to box plants, which stayed uniformly green throughout the year.¹² When selecting flowers they had to be chosen to avoid colour disharmony with the accompanying flowers, they could not be too vigorous and exceed their allocated boundaries, nor could they be too expensive or difficult to maintain.

Ruempler pointed out in 1889 that since several years a great number of annual and perennial flowers were being recommended as suitable edging plants, but he thought that not all were effective. Ideally they had to tolerate occasional trimming of excess

⁹ Messger, Joh.: *Gartenbuch* [1840], p. 288

¹⁰ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Stauden*, 1889, p. 13

¹¹ Gruner, Heinrich: *Heinrich Gruner's praktischer Blumen Gaertner*, 1817, p. 2

¹² Gruner, Heinrich: *Heinrich Gruner's praktischer Blumen Gaertner*, 1817, p. 4

vegetation to recreate a crisp definition line. Some gardeners objected to this type of edging as it did not grow neatly enough, did not flower long enough, or flowered irregularly. They sometimes gave preference to ornamental grasses such as *Festuca ovina* or *F. heterophylla*. In general those plants which were most appreciated were those whose foliage provided a colour contrast to the plants in the bed or border, such as *Festuca glauca*, *Dactylis glomerata variegata*, *Cerastium tomentosum* and *C. biebersteinii*. Regardless of what type of plant was used, its scale and proportion had to relate to the scale and type of that which it enclosed.¹³ Especially, beds were often edged with a hard material to retain the outline definition and give the appearance of a crisply trimmed jewel sitting in the lawn. For more details see chapter 4.3.1. Beds.

The recommendation to replace edgings every two to three years, is likely to have encouraged change. It would have been the right opportunity for the gardener to try a new plant, or even change the bed outline regularly.¹⁴

Particularly the formal beds were usually surrounded by some form of edging made of decorative clay tiles, cast or wrought iron, stone or low clipped hedges. Archaeological evidence at Kleine Glienicke has shown that the flower beds consisted of brick-lined pits, with water pipe. Above ground, a decorative edging was used. (See above and illustrations 67.)

Beds surrounded by wrought iron or wood could be made to look like giant flower baskets similar to those found in Britain. The insertion of a metal handle completed the basket. Along the edge of beds climbers could be trailed, to give the impression of a floral wreath. The latter was only practical for beds standing in gravel areas, as

¹³ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Stauden*, 1889, p. 23-4

¹⁴ Bosse, J.: *Handbuch der Blumengaertnerei*, 1859, p. 124

otherwise it would have been difficult to keep the climbers separated from the surrounding lawn.¹⁵

Alternatively, it was also considered attractive to surround beds by a narrow strip of coloured sand or gravel. Artificial edgings could be coloured, preferably white or a reddish stone colour as these colours were best suited to flower colours. Edging was not considered suitable for irregular beds (see illustration 68).¹⁶

4.3.1. Beds

Beds or *Beete* were free standing areas of dug earth, which could be formal or informal. Jaeger claimed that they made up the main proportion of flower decoration in a garden.¹⁷ According to Ruempler the regular or formal beds were a more frequent occurrence than the irregular ones, even the irregular beds usually had some elements of geometry in them. Quite often they were heart-, clover-leaf or kidney-shaped or with scalloped or lobed edges.¹⁸ The paisley-patterned flower beds and the amoeboid ones, as seen in illustrations 15 and 16, do not appear to have enjoyed the same appeal in Germany as they did in Britain in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

In the pleasure ground beds could be either formal or informal. According to Jaeger garden layout was as much influenced by fashion as was interior decoration. The popular trend in the mid nineteenth century was one of elaborate patterns. Quoting the example of Fuerst Pueckler's garden at Bad Muskaw, Jaeger described how beds

¹⁵ Bosse, J: *Handbuch der Blumengaertnerei*, 1859, p.130.

¹⁶ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 426-9

¹⁷ Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 432

¹⁸ Ruempler, Theodor: *Illustriertes Gartenbau Lexikon*, 1890, p. 107

were laid out in the shape of peacocks tails, coat of arms and various animals, images which had been depicted since Pliny's days. He added in a rather derogatory tone that as time went on people would soon enough be tired of these complicated figures and return to simpler designs. He reckoned it was best to leave these intricate decorations to pastry cooks, and fill the labyrinthine beds with coloured gravels and sands.

The shape and size of beds was determined by the garden style as well as the surrounding space. Particularly in smaller gardens the flower groups displayed on the lawn could be either of mixed colours or produce a colour-coordinated effect.¹⁹ (For more details on the use of colour schemes see chapter 4.4.5.) Although smaller beds were more suitable in smaller sized gardens, and vice versa, larger gardens looked better with larger beds. Some plants were best displayed in small sized beds no matter how large the garden, whilst others were preferably grown in small numbers by themselves to avoid the risk of overcrowding. However, a collection of only small beds was tasteless.²⁰

The very small beds sometimes found in formal gardens, planted with the most sought after flowers were sometimes referred to as 'medallions' or 'Chinese beds'. They looked like medallions in their smallness and elegance, but the reference to Chinese beds came from Jaeger's claim that it was a Chinese custom to bed out pot-grown plants, redecorating them often throughout the season, as and when the display needed refreshing.²¹

¹⁹ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, 1876, p. 182

²⁰ Ruempler, Theodor: *Illustriertes Gartenbau Lexikon*, 1890, p. 107; Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 426; Gruner, Heinrich: *Heinrich Gruner's praktischer Blumengaertner*, 1817, p. 4

²¹ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 426

4.3.1.1. Formal Beds

Thoughts and opinions on the size of flower beds varied from site, situation and size of flowers used as well as from author to author. Messger recommended the following layout for a formal garden. The beds were to be of a rigid shape, square, circular, oval or semi-circular, three to four feet wide (0.90 to 1.20 metres)²², and edged with edging plants. The width of the paths between the beds depended on the overall size of the garden. Stone paths were no less than two feet wide (0.60 metres) main paths no less than four feet wide (1.20 metres). They could be covered with fine sand of different colours.²³

As for the quantity and distribution of flower beds much depended on the overall plan of the garden. Beds could be separated from each other by strips or areas of grass, which helped to divide different spaces. The strips also made mowing easier. As a rule of thumb Jaeger suggested that no more than one tenth of the surface of the lawn area could be dedicated to flower beds, nor should it cover less than one thirtieth.²⁴

Formal beds were not necessarily only part of a formal display. They were sometimes introduced for specific purposes. Florists' flowers for example were grown for their value as a flower not as part of a whole display. It was more important to grow them in optimum conditions where they could best be looked after, than to display them in a fashionable way. With this in mind Bosse recommended growing florists' flowers in narrow rectangular or circular beds of no more than four feet wide (1.20 metres),

²² Gruner suggested beds should be no less than four feet (1.20 metres) wide. Gruner, Heinrich: *Heinrich Gruner's praktischer Blumengaertner*, 1817, p. 4

²³ Messger, Joh.: *Gartenbuch* [1840], p. 286-7

²⁴ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 426

so that they could be easily reached from all sides, rather than growing them in large beds or even clumps.

A display of florists' flowers did not necessarily require formality, but more importantly they needed optimum growing conditions. Simply laid out beds were easiest to cultivate, though they did not have to be straight but could follow the curves of the edge of the garden. Bosse suggested setting aside an area of the flower garden for florists' flowers, pleasantly linking the space with a rose trellis or similar adornment. In order to make the area even more attractive, it could be enclosed for example with box-edged beds filled with bedding plants such as pelargoniums, fuchsias and heliotrope.²⁵

4.3.1.2. Informal Beds

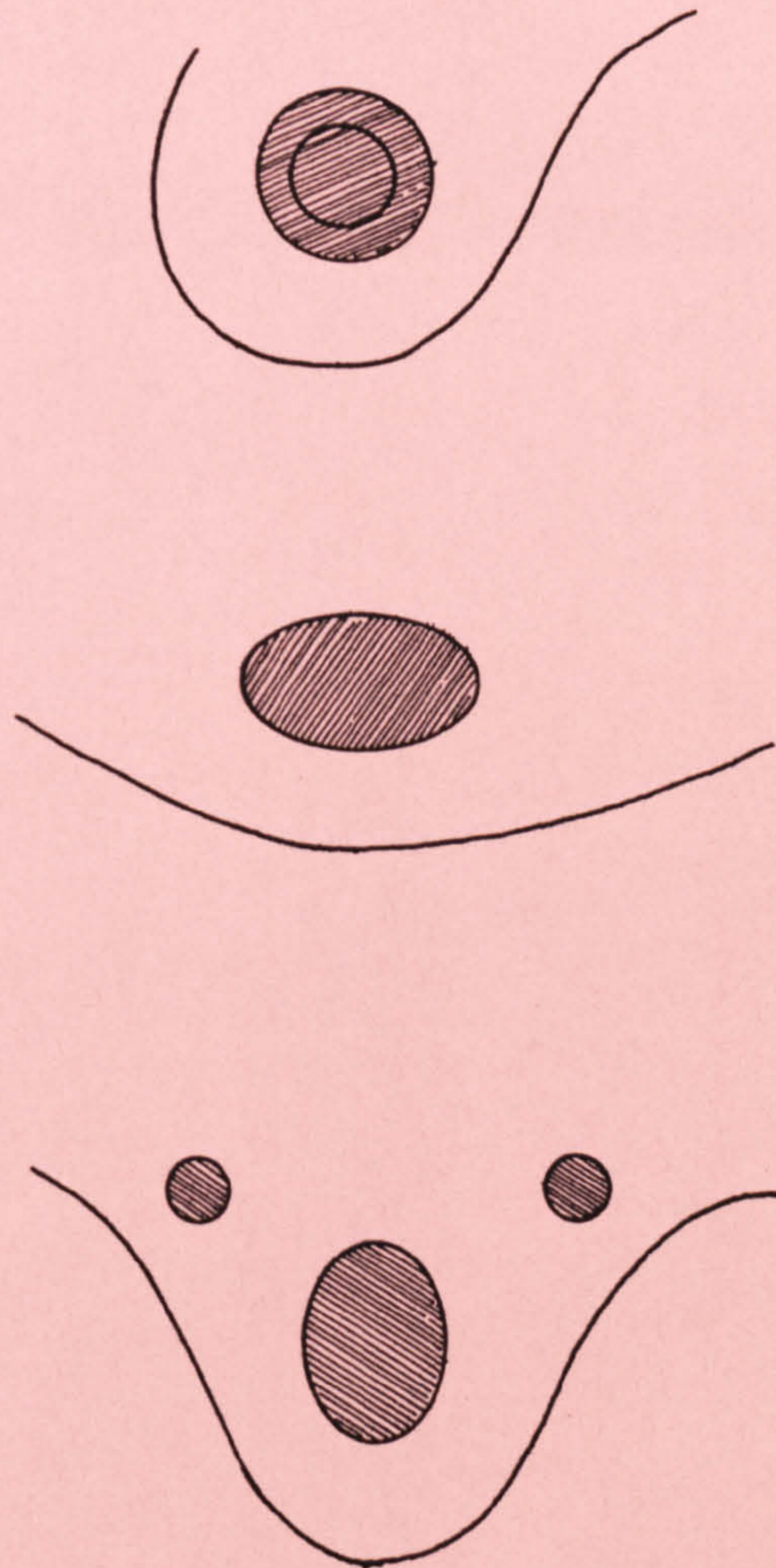
In informal gardens, the centre of the garden was often maintained as the largest lawn space, around which the rest of the garden areas were distributed. Beds were preferably placed in the most visible areas such as near the house, there where paths met (see illustration 70), in path curves or anywhere else where they might be viewed from different angles (see illustration 69). It was wrong to spread them throughout the garden as some areas were better without any beds. In any case they made a bigger impact when grouped together rather than scattered about.

Irregular shaped beds were sometimes referred to as *Klumps* or *Clubs*.²⁶ The word *Klumps* was probably taken from the English "clumps". According to Bosse their shape was fairly unimportant, as long as they were not too sharp-cornered nor too

²⁵ Bosse, J.: *Handbuch der Blumengaertnerei*, 1859, p. 124

²⁶ Gruner, Heinrich: *Heinrich Gruner's praktischer Blumengaertner*, 1817, p. 5

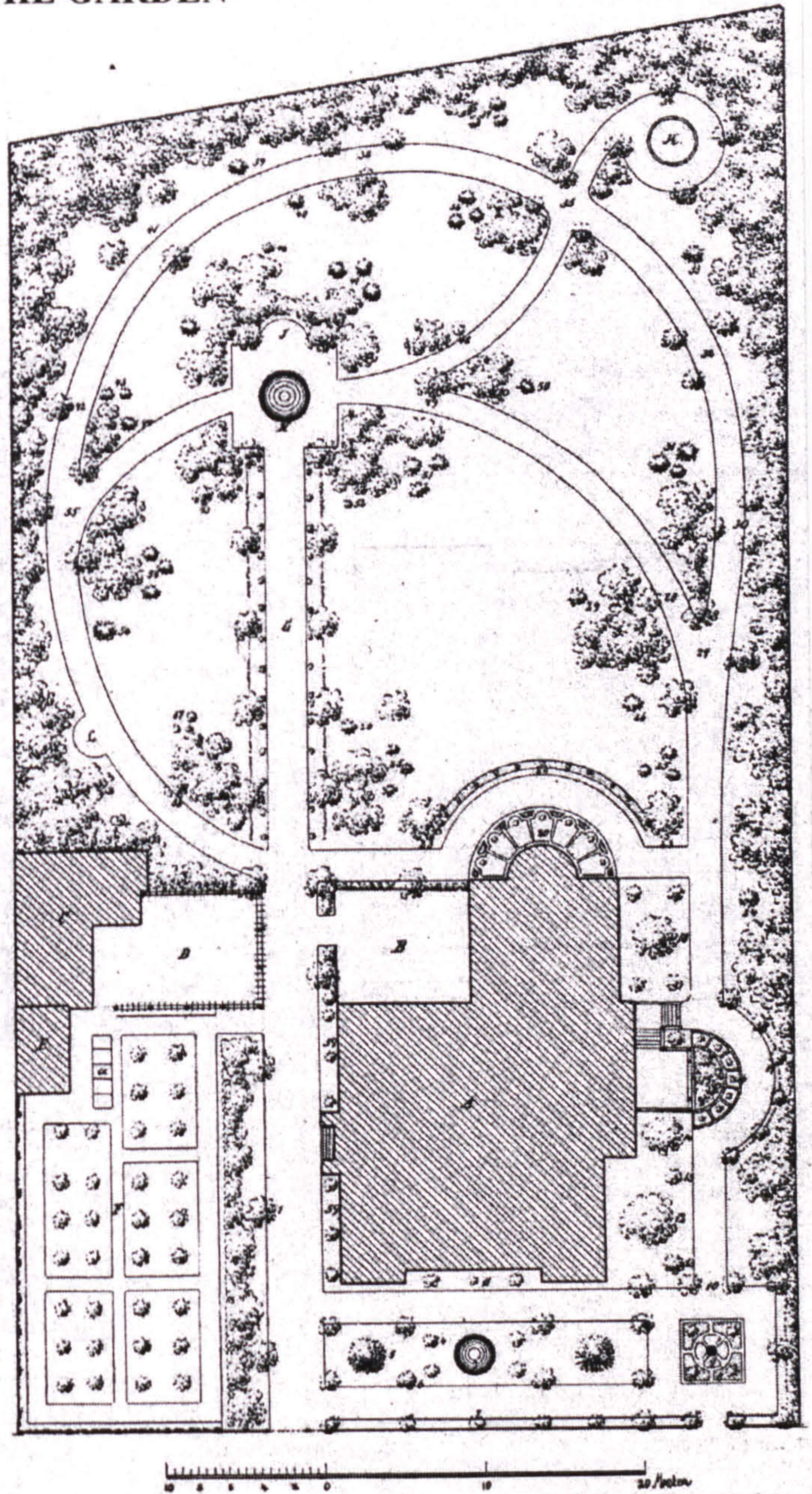
ILLUSTRATION 69: THE MOST ADVANTAGEOUS POSITIONS FOR FLOWER BEDS IN AN INFORMAL FLOWER GARDEN



Jaeger showed three different ways of placing beds along the path edge so they could be viewed from more than one angle.

(Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes Allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 435)

ILLUSTRATION 70: PLAN SHOWING VEGETATION DISTRIBUTION IN THE GARDEN



The villa garden plan shows the grouping of vegetation near paths and at path intersections, so they could be easily viewed to their best advantage from different angles.

(Hampel, Karl: *Hundert kleine Gaerten*, 1894, p. 60)

large and wide. They should not resemble each other in shape, and were to be scattered unevenly on the lawn. Depending on the size of the garden, the middle of the lawn could have a larger and taller group of planting or several plants of the same. Smaller groups, of particularly beautiful plants or very scented ones, could be placed along the edge of the lawn. Small clumps of shrubby plants or for example peonies could be surrounded by a basket, which would show off the bright colour against the grass (see above).²⁷

In the informal surroundings of a garden or pleasure ground laid out in the English style, Jaeger suggested to have pear-, kidney-, heart-, half moon- or tulip-shaped beds where paths met. The actual shape of the bed depended on the shape of the junction.²⁸

Beds with corners were more difficult to merge into the pleasure ground's natural forms. Beds with sharp angles were also more difficult to plant and maintain. With figures based on circles and ovals it was possible to provide many variants which fitted into the scenery and were easier to maintain.²⁹

Unless the garden was on different levels, it was possible to build raised beds for flowers which were most enjoyed when observed from near by. They were preferably sited in areas near buildings and terraces, or at the edge of the garden rather than having them in the middle of the lawn, where they looked like tombs in a graveyard. Raised beds could also be used to direct people and could be made into rock gardens by building them with stone or tufa. They were best grouped in one area, and made to appear as natural and informal as possible. Two different types of rock garden could be discerned. Those in the flower garden were created as a special environment

²⁷ Bosse, J.: *Handbuch der Blumengaertnerei*, 1859, p. 129

²⁸ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 426

²⁹ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 422-3

for plants which needed special conditions. Those in the pleasure ground, such as at Schloss Babelsberg, were created for their dramatic effect. The choice of flowers used in these was less relevant, as long as the effect was natural.³⁰

Some people were putting flower beds around tree trunks, a habit which Jaeger thought unattractive. Not only did the trunk destroy any effect of scale in the surrounding planting, but the tree also lost its beauty. Furthermore flowers did not grow well under trees because of root competition and reduced light levels. This was not only bad for plant health, but what Jaeger found more problematic was that it affected flower colours. It was acceptable with newly planted trees as these had to be watered frequently anyway, and their crowns were still of moderate size³¹, letting enough light through.

Paths could be used to separate different groups of beds or different areas of the garden. A comfortable width was four to five feet (1.20 to 1.50 metres), of a gently curving nature. No sharp bends or intersections at right angles were allowed. They could be topped with a fine crushed gravel sand, or hogging made up of four parts gravel, one part clay and one part lime. To ensure a long-lived, well-drained weed-free surface which was comfortable to walk on, paths had to be dug out to a depth of four to six inches (0.10 to 0.15 metres) filled with broken stone or rubble and then topped with a layer of hogging.³²

³⁰ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 426-7, 430, 433

³¹ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 427

³² Bosse, J.: *Handbuch der Blumengärtnererei*, 1859, p. 124

4.3.2. Borders

Borders or *Rabatte* were elongated squares of dug earth, usually of even width, and creating an edge. They could be straight or curved, depending on the outline of the object they were following.

Jaeger referred to the English word 'border' to explain that it was always on the edge of something, acting as a margin. It could be along a path, building or edging, but not in the middle of a flower garden unless it bordered a path. Ruempler on the other hand explained that the word *Rabatte* originated from the French language, meaning an edge or a seam. In the case of garden borders he described it as a very long bed in proportion to its width (one and a half to two metres wide), surrounding beds which were planted with the same or a different type of flower.³³ Ruempler was referring to the borders which sometimes surround flower gardens.

Flower borders used to be a regular occurrence in the house garden (gardens of the middle classes, surrounding the house, which tended to be of modest size and means), but Jaeger pointed out in 1864 that this type of border was rarely seen any longer. He did not volunteer details on what the difference was in his mind between an old style or new style border, but from his account in *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst* it can be inferred that the old style borders were straight lined (see below).³⁴

³³ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 430, Ruempler, Theodor : *Die Stauden*, 1889, p. 14

³⁴ Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 437

Until the second half of the nineteenth century, borders had usually been straight, surrounding vegetable gardens. As informally landscaped gardens gained in popularity, borders increasingly became curvilinear following the paths, or their use was restricted close to the straight lines of buildings, terraces and walls. In small gardens, where formality was often preferred, borders could be similarly used alongside walls or along the edges of the flower gardens.

Jaeger quoted an example of path which ran along the ledge of a steep cliff top. Here a border was used as a kind of unobtrusive edge to prevent onlookers from falling over the brink, without erecting a barrier or obscuring the view. Borders could furthermore find a home in other garden areas such as the kitchen garden, where they formed an uninterrupted edge along paths or lawns.³⁵

Borders in Front of Shrubberies

Within pleasure grounds and natural style landscape flower gardens, flowers were often planted in association with shrubs, on the edge of shrubberies. This type of setting provided through the informality and naturalness of the environment the best display in pleasure grounds and informal flower gardens.³⁶

Flower displays planted on the edge of shrubberies were more half bed-, half border-like, sometimes clump-like, or sometimes just scattered across the lawn. The main aim was to plant flowers in those areas where they would really stand out, and which were particularly suited to the planting of flowers. Not every shrubbery should be

³⁵ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, pp. 430; Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen* translated by Meijer, Dr H.A.J.: *Onze Tuinbloemen* 1882, p. 183; Ruempler, Theodor: *Ruempler's Gartenbau Lexikon*, 1882, p. 814

³⁶ Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 437

edged with flowers, as shrubs had to be trimmed back to prevent them from invading the borders and losing their natural shape. Flowers also partly screened the shrubs, creating a formal separation between the grass edge and the shrubbery, inevitably giving an air of stiffness by preventing some of the shrubs to trail loosely over the edges. The flower masses had to be positioned in such a way that they could be seen from a distance, as a continuation of the shrubbery. They had to be large enough in size, to allow some space between shrubs and flowers, as flowers would not grow well close to the shrubs.

The borders roughly followed the outline of the shrubberies, but not evenly. Some areas were wider than others, flowing in and out of the shrubbery in an irregular fashion to avoid what in reality was a border, looking like a border. The effect was improved if the border did not run as one continuous stretch along the shrubbery front, but was interrupted occasionally.

If the site was on a slope it was possible to build up the land so that the borders could be positioned on terraces. These did not have to be straight, they could be curved, depending on the lie of the land. Central to the borders could be a focal point such as a bench or a formal water feature. Because of the large space this type of borders needed and the fact that they also could be viewed from above, planting had to be adapted to all these requirements. Jaeger recommended filling the borders with a mixture of different flowers but not in lines. The overall effect aimed at was a regular rising and falling outline, achieved by planting tall flowers such as dahlias, hollyhocks or roses, alternated with lower plants, grading downwards in size as they approached the edge of the border. Here was the ideal position for observing plants which were best viewed from below, such a plants with a pendulous habit or of which the flowers nodded downwards. The requirements of these plants had to be considered when planting terraced borders. A dense planting of tall plants could be used if an unsightly object needed visual screening, but if the borders were at the front of a garden or in

the middle, it was important that one could still look across, using tall plants at intermittent intervals.³⁷

Their length and width, like the size of the main garden paths, depended on the overall size of a border. A minimum of four feet (1.20 metres) was considered important, as without this planting depth it would have been difficult to create a good display. Jaeger added that length was immaterial as long as it was adapted to the surrounding space, though in long borders it was easier to accommodate tall single specimens of roses, dahlias and hollyhocks in between the lower flowers.³⁸ Not everybody had purely aesthetic reasons in mind when suggesting the ideal border width. Meijer suggested that the usual width was 1.60 metres. Any wider would have made it more difficult to maintain and would have also required more plants to fill the space.³⁹ If money was no object, Ruempler suggested that beds with five or even seven rows of plants could be between two and two and a half metres wide, even as much as three metres.⁴⁰

Jaeger was much more generous in his size allocation if scale demanded it. If the flowers were to be seen from a long distance, they were best planted in larger groups to make sufficient effect. These larger quantities inevitably necessitated larger beds or borders, though the wider, the more difficult cultivation became. A width of twelve to fourteen feet (4 to 4.60 metres) was considered wide enough to be able to plant

³⁷ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 430-1

³⁸ Gruner, Heinrich: *Heinrich Gruner's praktischer Blumengaertner*, 1817, p. 4; Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 430; Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 437

³⁹ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen* translated by Meijer, Dr H.A.J.: *Onze Tuinbloemen*, 1882, p. 186

⁴⁰ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, 1876, p. 182

three to four rows behind one another of the largest flowers like dahlias or hollyhocks. Depending on the bed shape, it could be wider in places. On sloping sites it was sometimes more appropriate to have wider beds or borders as it offered a better view of the plants.⁴¹

Resumé

The prevailing impression given in nineteenth century German literature was that informal gardens with informal beds and borders had become strong favourites, particularly where more space was available. Smaller spaces tended to be occupied with a formal or geometric layout of beds with borders along the edges. Although traditional borders had been straight, there was a place for borders in the informal garden, either in the vicinity of the house, in the pleasure ground or edging shrubberies, or even in the vegetable garden.

Although the earlier part of the nineteenth century went through a phase of seeing elaborate bed designs, it would appear that sense prevailed and most people gave preference to simpler patterns. As for borders, their size depended on the scale of the garden, though they appear to have become bolder and wider during the second half of the nineteenth century.

⁴¹ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 426

CHAPTER 4.4: PLANTING STYLES IN GERMAN FLOWER GARDENS

During the latter part of the nineteenth century an increasing number of writers stressed the importance of choosing the right plant for the right situation. The study of plants in their natural habitats coupled with a little experience, were said to show the gardener the correct way of planting. Particularly when dealing with awkward corners of the garden it was helpful to look at nature for inspiration. This advice was, however, more applicable to informal planting than to the rigidly controlled and ordered massed style.¹ (See chapter 4.2.4.3 for more details.)

A good plant knowledge was paramount; without which it was considered virtually impossible to make a successful flower display.² Different plants were suitable for specific purposes, and perennials were used as colour-providers for the spring and early summer seasons, until June. Then the early-sown annuals started flowering, together with dahlias and indoor-raised tender plants. Although perennials were used to a lesser extent in the flower garden near the house, they were very prominent in the pleasure ground.³

Not all plants could be treated the same way. Some were most effectively planted by themselves, whereas others only made an impact if planted in large masses. Besides height, flower colour and time of flowering, the actual shape and impact of inflorescence was considered important. Some flowers were best observed from above, whereas others needed to be viewed from the side to fully benefit from their beauty. Plants with a wide-open flower, which was best seen from above, could be planted closely together. Taller roses and dahlias were therefore less popular

¹ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Stauden*, 1889, pp. 24-5, 45

² Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 340

³ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 392

according to Jaeger, as their flower-beauty could not be fully enjoyed. Trumpet-shaped flowers and flower spikes were most beautiful when seen in profile, whilst smaller flowers such as narcissus and violets were best planted at a raised level. Certain flowers tended to orientate themselves towards the sun, and had to be seen from the south side.

Flowers were not the only decisive element in planting design, available facilities played a role too. If there was a greenhouse, it became easy to produce successive displays of tender flowers, and a formal garden laid out in the massed style became a definite possibility. However if a greenhouse was not within the financial means of the owner, plants could be grown on in the reserve garden until they were ready to be moved into the flower garden for the duration of their flowering season. Plants suitable for growing in the reserve garden were perennials and hardy annuals or biennials. By sowing annuals at different times of year, it was possible to spread out their flowering season. If there was insufficient room for a reserve garden, then the best option was to have more permanently planted flowers, so that some would be flowering at all times of the year. Young plants could also be planted in gaps in the beds and borders, though they could get lost in amongst their stronger neighbours.

Jaeger included the following list of plants which would flower for a long period of time and, which he asserted, did not require any greenhouse treatment.⁴

- Bulbs: dahlias, *Oxalis*, *Mirabilis*, *Salvia patens*;
- Perennials and biennials: *Viola tricolor* and *altaica*, *Antirrhinum*, *Anthemis*-, *Matricaria* varieties, *Centranthus*, *Mimulus*, *Lysimachia Lechenaultii* (?), *Anemone coronaria (semperflorens)*, *Dielytra formosa* (syn. *Dicentra formosa*), *Potentilla* varieties, *Stachys coccinea*, *Vinca major*;

⁴ Although Jaeger claims none of these require greenhouse treatment, in fact, a number of these plants, such as dahlias and petunias, need to be raised in frost-free conditions. Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 341

- Annuals: *Phlox drummondii* with its many beautiful colour shades, *Lupinus*-, *Tropaeolum*-, *Petunia*-, *Cuphea*- and *Zinnia*-varieties, *Sanvitalia procumbens*, *Convolvulus*, *Ipomoea*, *Ageratum*, *Senecio*, *Reseda*.

Accessibility was another point to consider in the planning and planting of a garden. The main flower garden was often situated near the house so it could be seen from within a warm and dry and environment. It was also possible to have flower gardens in an isolated spot in the pleasure ground, preferably not too far from the house.⁵ Sometimes areas were dedicated to spring and autumn gardens, which preferably were in a sheltered position, so that the flowers would be encouraged to come into flower earlier, and carry on as late as possible in autumn without being damaged by frosts. As these gardens would be in full flower at a time when the weather was not always as nice or warm, it was usual to have them not too far from the house, so that owners could reach them easily.⁶

Besides these issues, the garden of course had to be furnished for those seasons when the owner was in residence.⁷ Seasonal effect could be achieved with bedding-out schemes, but a good display could also be provided in a mingled border or bed, by only including plants which flowered in the seasons when the house was occupied.

⁵ Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 426

⁶ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 341

⁷ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 342

4.4.1. The Massed Planting Style

German gardens did not escape the bedding craze any less than British gardens. Judging by the frequent references to this style one could safely say that it was popular.

As in Britain, the massed style was a fashion with limited use for hardy herbaceous perennials. They were expected to flower for a long period of time, be synchronised with the other plants; be of an even, consistent habit, and flower evenly and profusely.

Most schemes contained mainly bedding plants and were replanted twice or even three times a year. A list published by Jaeger gave appropriate planting successions which could be bedded out two or three times a year, included many spring- as well as summer- and late summer-flowering perennials. They were treated in just the same way as the other bedding plants, but would have been grown on in the reserve garden rather than the greenhouse. Some of the perennials he mentioned were:

- spring: *Gentiana acaulis*, *Primula acaulis fl. pl.* (syn. *P. vulgaris*), *P. elatior* and *Aubrietia deltoidea*;
- summer: *Dianthus chinensis*, *D. barbatus*, *Lychnis viscaria* and *Silene orientalis* or perennial *Phlox*;
- autumn: asters.⁸

It was not unusual to use some permanent plants, which could remain *in situ* all year round. Conifers, evergreen shrubs and roses were particularly suited for this purpose.⁹

Massed planting was most likely encountered within the context of a formal flower garden. Formal beds were planted with large quantities of bedding plants in order to

⁸ Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 449

⁹ A.: "Eine Blumengruppe", *Zeitschrift fuer Bildende Gartenkunst*, 1893, pp.11-2

achieve even colour patterns, of the right proportions and correct height. The design had to create an effect of unity, and show the plants as an ensemble, not as individual specimens. If flowers of varying height were planted in different beds as part of an intricate design, they had to be arranged according to their height. Either the central beds were filled with the lowest plants, allowing the height to increase towards the perimeter of the flower gardens, or vice-versa, the tallest plants were planted in the middle, their heights grading down towards the edge. Alternatively the middle and the outer plants could both be low, but in between there could be a band of taller plants (see illustration 71).

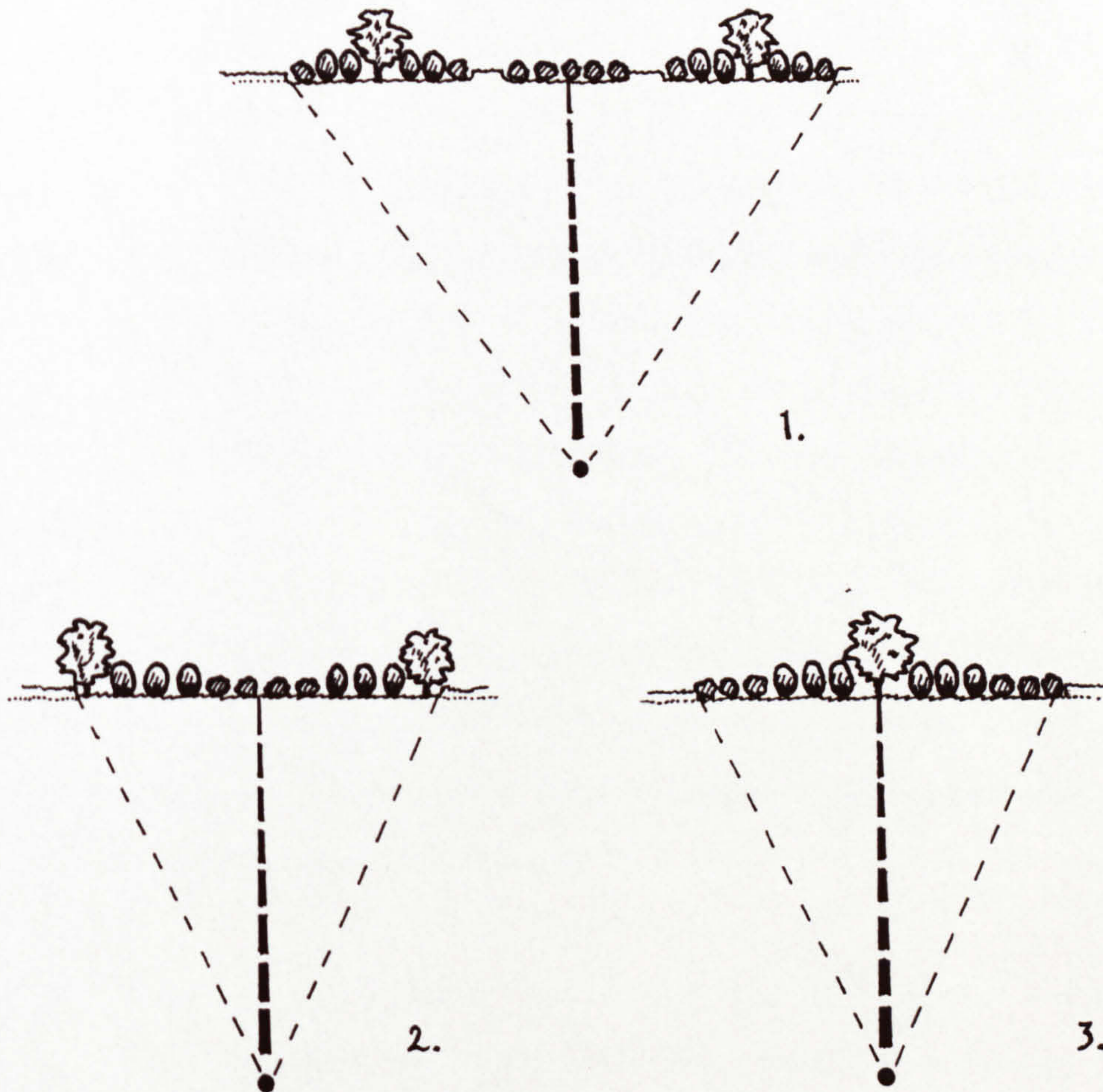
Which silhouette was opted for depended on the angle from which the flower garden was observed. If it was to be looked at from the ground-floor windows of a house, then it was better to avoid planting tall plants near the front edge, as they would obstruct the view. If on the other hand the garden would be looked down on then this did not matter. Usually low-growing plants were more suited for massed displays as they could be looked down onto, and in addition they needed less attention than taller plants and were easier to cultivate.¹⁰

If several beds made up a geometric display, then geometry had to be observed in their planting. Too many differences in plant height disrupted the effect, and opposing beds were best filled with plants of the same height. The smaller the garden the simpler the layout had to be. Only in larger gardens was there sufficient space to display complicated figures. More importantly though, larger gardens were more likely to employ well-experienced gardeners who could deal with the intricacies of such a display.¹¹ But however simple the design, there was no need to skimp on the

¹⁰ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, pp. 336-7, 422

¹¹ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 337; Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, translated by Meijer 1882, p. 193

ILLUSTRATION 71: CROSS-SECTIONS OF DIFFERENT PLANTING HEIGHT ARRANGEMENTS FOR FLOWER BEDS



The above three cross-sections show different ways of arranging plants in parterres. Which option was chosen depended on the way the beds were viewed. If seen from above, then the taller plants could be planted in the outer beds. If they were seen from the side, the taller plants had to be planted in the central beds as they would otherwise obstruct the view.

1. Low plants in the centre, a row of tall ones in the outer beds.
2. Low plants in the centre, tall ones on the edge.
3. Tall plants in the centre, low ones on the edge.

(Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 336)

planting, it was always possible to insert a few round or polygon-shaped beds in the middle or in the far corners which were best suited to architectural plants like cannas, double *Achillea ptarmica* and *Campanula carpathica*.¹²

Massed displays of flowers were not only associated with bedding schemes and formal gardens. Certain plants, including perennials, which were available in a wide colour range could be planted in beds by themselves, rather than being displayed together with other perennials. A circular bed, of which the soil was slightly raised towards the centre in order to improve viewing, could for example be planted most effectively with different varieties of *Paeonia officinalis*, and edged with the fine-leaved *Paeonia tenuifolia*. Other plants which could be exhibited in this way were primulas, tulips, ranunculus, wall flowers, anemones, hyacinths, auriculas, antirrhinums and mimulus. Some ground covering perennials which were known for their prolific habit and inflorescence, such as *Saponaria ocymoides*, *Gentiana acaulis* or *Arabis alpina*, could be planted in small circular beds which would show off well against the fresh-green colour of the grass.¹³

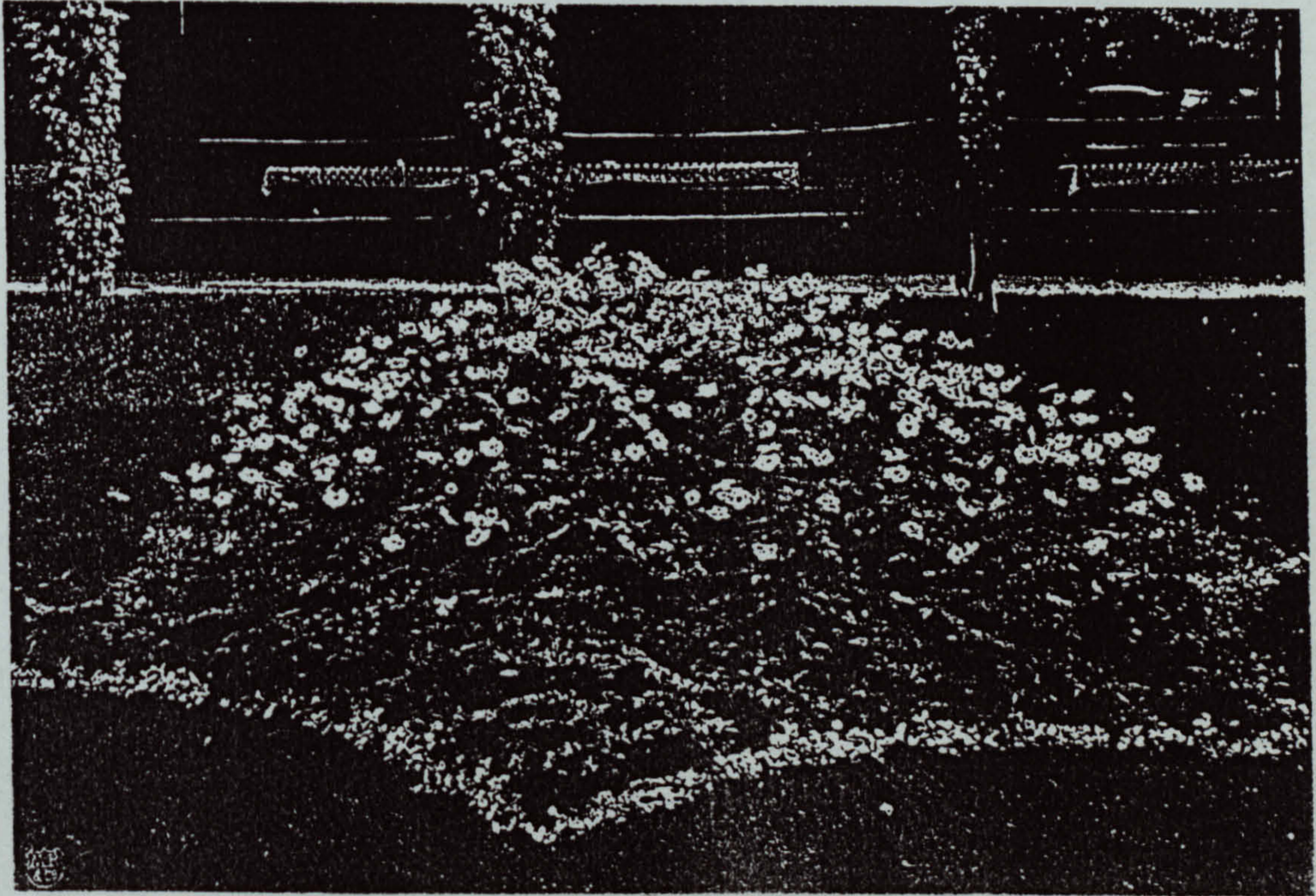
Illustration 72 shows a star-shaped bed filled with Japanese anemones for late summer show. *A.* 'Honorine Jobert' and *A.* 'Brilliant' were enclosed by *Gnaphalium lanatum*. The different colours were used to accentuate the points of the star.

Although this practice was also encountered in British gardens, it was not always a popular one, as the beds were deprived of colour for many months of the year unless other plants were bedded out to replace them. If placed among other perennials in a

¹² Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Stauden*, 1889, p. 14

¹³ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, translated by Meijer, 1882, p. 187; Ruempler, Th.: *Die Stauden*, 1889, p. 13

ILLUSTRATION 72: BEDDING OUT SCHEME WITH PERENNIALS



This example shows Japanese anemones being used for a late summer bedding display. White, pink and dark pink ones were used to enhance the star-shape of the bed, and were surrounded by an edge of *Gnaphalium lanatum*.

(Goetze, Karl: *Album fuer Teppichgaertnerei* 189?, p. 222)

mingled or mixed planting, their boldness interrupted the unity of the display. In either case they did not fit in with massed or mingled planting.¹⁴

Carpet Bedding

Carpet bedding became very popular towards the end of the nineteenth century. Carl Hampel had written a book on the subject, which showed 333 designs for carpet bedding displays. W. Hampel published one in 1896 with 150 plans and drawings of carpet bedding schemes, ranging from the relatively simple ribbon borders to beds which looked as if they had been moulded in a pudding basin. (See illustrations 73 and 74 for a planting plan and elevated drawing of one example of such beds, showing the architectural importance of plant shapes). Goetze produced a similar work in the eighteen nineties, containing 300 plans, illustrations and plant lists.

Although carpet bedding schemes may have resulted in a revival of some perennials, they could hardly be classed as border plants. They consisted of many crassulaceae and other low-growing plants which were suited to growing in low, dense mats for the purpose of creating colour effect.¹⁵

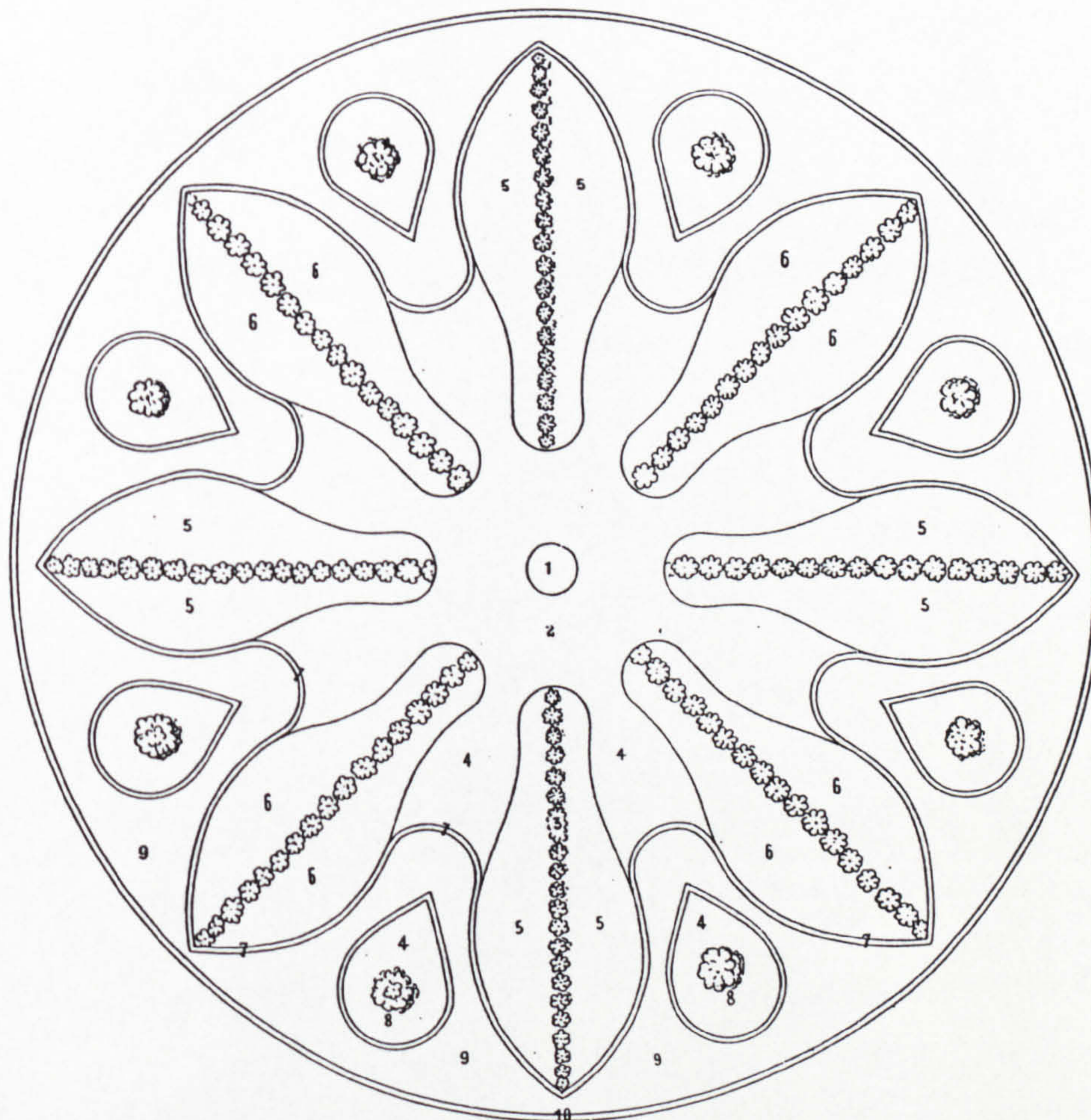
4.4.2. The Mixed Planting Style

It appears that German gardeners were familiar with a mixed style which was very reminiscent of the one known in Britain. Unlike the massed style, it was associated with the more humble and traditional ways of gardening. Jaeger described a garden

¹⁴ Loudon, John Claudius: *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, 1822, p.905

¹⁵ Goetze, Karl: *Album fuer Teppichgaertnerei*, c.1890; Hampel, Carl: *Gartenbeete und Gruppen*, 1893; Hampel, W.: *Teppichgaertnerei*, 1896

ILLUSTRATION 73: PLAN FOR A CARPET BEDDING DISPLAY



Carpet bedding displays became increasingly elaborate and three-dimensional as time progressed. The above plan looks fairly straightforward, until one sees the elevation for it in illustration 74. Plants were used for their decorative foliage effect either as shape or colour.

(Hampel, W.: *Die modernen Teppichgaertnerei* 1901, p. 34-5)

ILLUSTRATION 74: IMAGE FOR A CARPET BEDDING DISPLAY



The above image is based on the design for a carpet bed plan illustrated previously. It shows how plants are used in a purely graphic way, for their shape and outline, rather than their flowering performance.

(Hampel, W.: *Die modernen Teppichgaertnerei* 1901, p. 34-5)

where flowers for all seasons were grown all mixed up in a few beds and borders, as poor or ordinary. Instead he suggested placing together those flowers which flowered at a similar time to create much more of an impact.

Only in larger beds and on the edges of shrubberies was it appropriate to introduce flowers with a successive flowering pattern. These displays did not fit in the main areas of the flower garden, but on the edges or in the pleasure grounds.¹⁶

Bosse was in favour of using a range of plants, explaining to his readers how carefully selected plants in the main flower colours, chosen so that some would flower in each of the main flowering months, could produce a very attractive effect. Jaeger, on the other hand, felt that it was not necessary to have a large selection of plants, instead it was better to have a few of the best plants, rare or common, so that every month would have a main flower on display. By bringing together as many different sorts and colours of one genus, they really made an impact, whilst allowing for variety. This way one achieved a display far superior to any which relied on ten times as many different plants.¹⁷

Whereas Jaeger opted for a select few, Bosse's aim appears to have been very similar to that of Loudon: to have a good mixture of different colours flowering throughout the year.¹⁸ However, volunteering no more information, Bosse did not go as far as mentioning the need for planting in lines as Loudon did, nor the need to adhere to a strict colour-repetition pattern, although others such as Ruempler and Jaeger did refer

¹⁶ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 340

¹⁷ Jaeger, Hermann: *Der Immerbluehende Garten*, 1875, p. 3

¹⁸ Bosse, J.: *Handbuch der Blumengaertnerei* 1859, p. 125

to planting borders in lines.¹⁹ (See chapter 3.4.1.1. for Loudon's theories on mingled borders.)

Germany does not appear to have witnessed so strongly the divided opinions which were seen amongst British gardeners. The discussions which went on between the followers of bedding schemes, and the admirers of perennial displays were more of a British than a German event. Although there was a call for the revival of perennials in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the movement appears to have been less strong. (See chapter 4.4.6) Popular garden writers such as Jaeger and Ruempler had no qualms about recommending the use of perennials in bedding displays if they were the right plant to use. The same rule applied to annuals and biennials. Their use in mingled borders was as much encouraged.

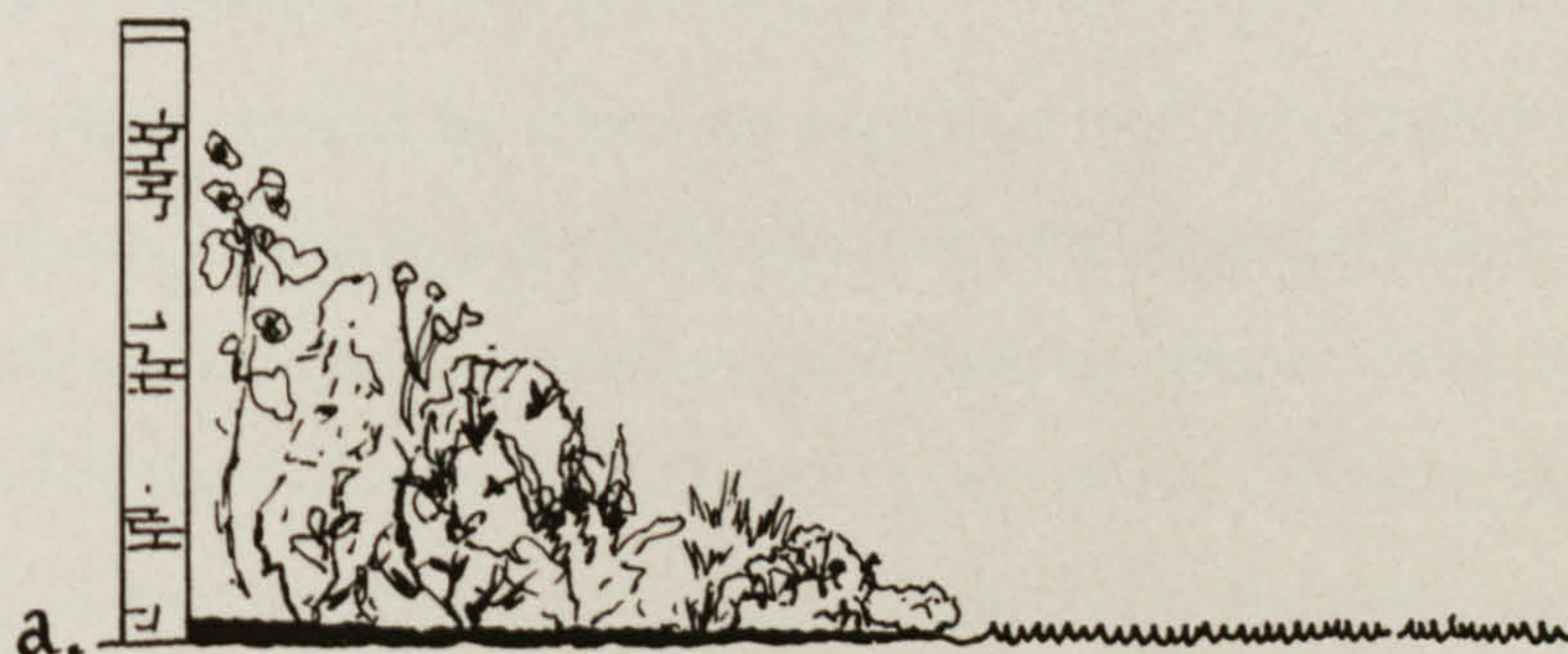
British planting of borders in a mingled style was predominantly associated with perennials, with the possible addition of a few annuals, bulbs or biennials. German gardeners seemed much more inclined to make use of all flowers available to create a good display. An article in the *Gartenzeitung* of 1873 stated that hardly a garden existed in which there were no perennials. They were so beautiful and versatile in form, colour and time of flowering, easy to cultivate and not sensitive to cold in winter that they deserved an important place in the garden.²⁰ Regrettably the author did not specify what role he had in mind for perennials.

Borders were usually planted with a mixture of perennials and annuals. The same planting rule applied as in British borders. If they were backed by something tall such as a wall, then the tallest plants were situated at the rear and the front was edged with

¹⁹ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, 1876, p. 182; Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 426

²⁰ Kuehnau, W.: "Einiges ueber die Verwendung der Staudenpflanzen in Gaerten", *Gartenzeitung*, 1873, pp. 116-20

ILLUSTRATION 75: CROSS-SECTION OF A HERBACEOUS BORDER AND BED



These two sketches illustrate what a border against a wall, or one which could be viewed from either side, would have looked like in cross-section. Both British and German authors agreed that tallest planting had to be at the rear of a border or in the middle if it could be seen from either side. The lowest plants had to be planted near the edge, creating an even gradient. This profile would have been common throughout much of the nineteenth century. In many cases authors also recommended raising the soil level towards the rear or centre, depending how the border was viewed, as this enhanced the display. Although many authors recommended spacious planting, contemporary accounts inform us that in reality this was not always done.

a suitable edging plant. If on the other hand they were seen from both sides, the taller plants were positioned in the centre, the lowest ones along the edge (see illustration 75). As beds, it was preferred to have a strip of edging plants or an edge made of tiles or other non-organic material. (See above for more details on types of edgings.)²¹

The list of plants suitable for mixed planting listed by Hampel included more annuals than perennials. In *Die Stauden* Ruempler described a garden he had visited in May 1860 in Silesia, in which perennials were happily combined with foliage and tender plants. In *Die Gartenblumen* he included an example of a box-edged border planted in a mingled style which could be used to fringe lawns. Here too annuals dominated over perennials.²²

Natural irregularity was recommended in mixed planting, but it was nonetheless advised to retain a certain regularity, even symmetry, in the colour distribution. This would not have been noticeable to the observer, but it would have produced a satisfying effect.²³ This opinion helps to explain why it was thought by German garden writers that perennials fitted better within the context of the pleasure ground rather than the flower garden, as can be seen below.

Mingled Planting in the Flower Garden

Although flower gardens often contained a display of flower beds, there were instances where it was appropriate to introduce borders to edge lawns or paths for example. These borders could be permanently planted in a mixed style. The usual

²¹ Dendrophilus: "Der Wilde Garten", *Gartenzeitung*, 1882, p. 83

²² Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, 1876, pp. 182, 186; *Die Stauden*, 1889, p. 15; Hampel, W.: *Gartenbuch fuer Jedermann*, 1890, p. 314

²³ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1958, p. 373

width for such borders was approximately 1.60 metres, which made them easy to maintain. They were filled with three, or perhaps four rows of plants. If the border was wider then more plants were needed, making it more expensive and labour intensive. It could be 2 metres, 2.50 metres or even 3 metres wide, in which case there was enough place for five or even seven rows of plants. (See illustration 84 and chapter 4.4.5.)

If a border was positioned against a wall or other tall background, then the lowest plants were at the front, the tallest ones at the rear. If the border was seen from both sides, it was edged with a low hedge. The central row was for tall plants, the outer rows low plants.

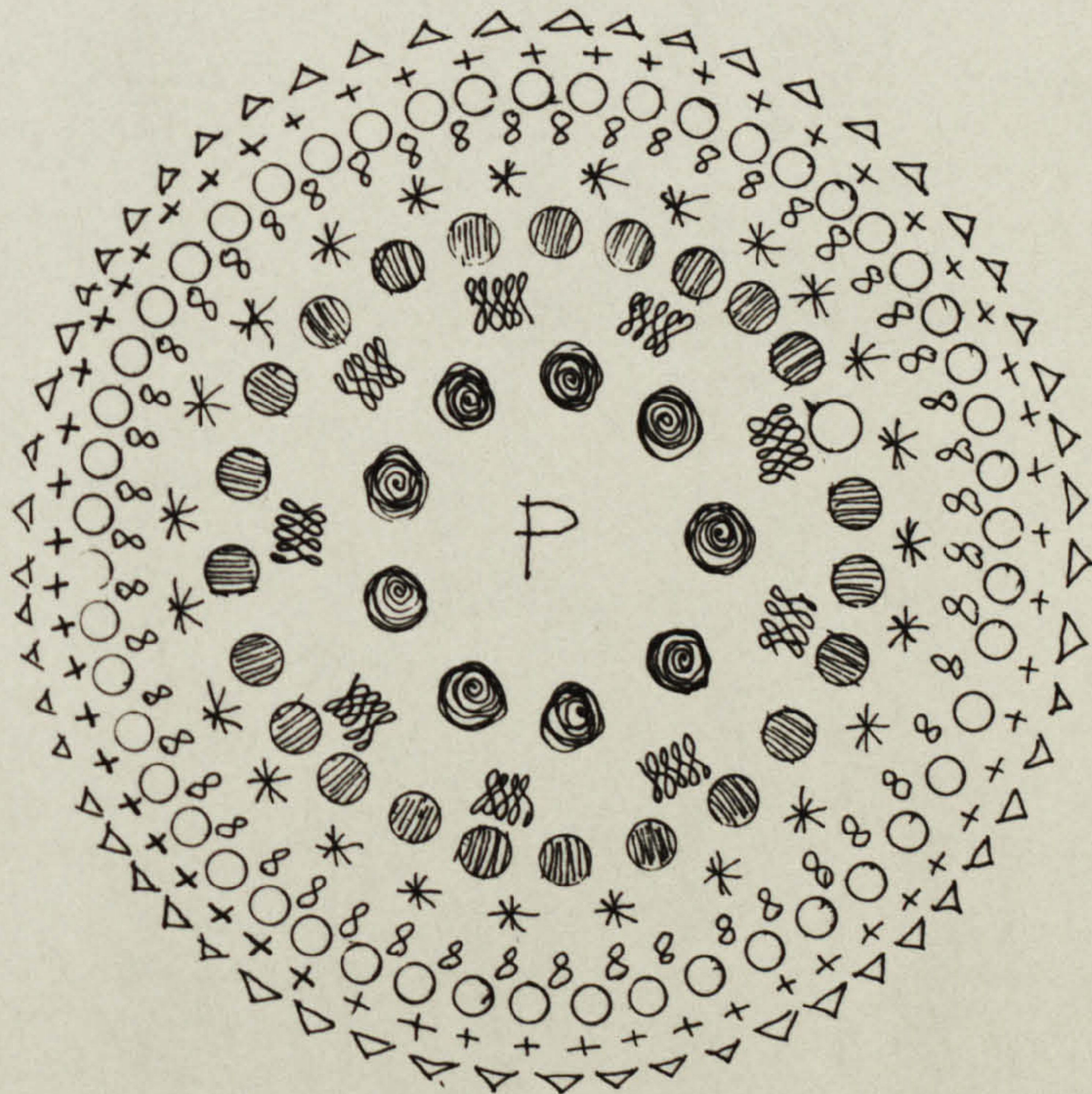
Even though the planting which Ruempler recommended was mixed, the plants used were predominantly annuals. He thought it was difficult to combine annuals and perennials in one display, but if anything, the central row was considered more suitable for perennials and shrubs. He used *Gaura lindheimeri*, *Oenothera fruticosa glauca*, *Iberis*, *Alyssum saxatile*, *Cerastium* and *Doronicum orientale*. If box was not planted to edge the border, then ivy, grasses, annuals or perennials could also be used.²⁴

Borders planted so that they could be viewed from both sides were also a recurring pattern in Britain. Richard Bradley's eighteenth century plan (see illustration 5), Loudon's way of planting borders (see chapter 3.4.1.1), and the example of the circular flower garden (see illustrations 46 and 47), all show similar planting in rows according to height as does this illustration.

²⁴ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, 1876, pp. 182, 186; ditto, translated by Meijer, 1882, pp. 183-4; and Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 426

ILLUSTRATION 76: PLAN FOR A CIRCULAR FLOWER GARDEN

EXAMPLE 1



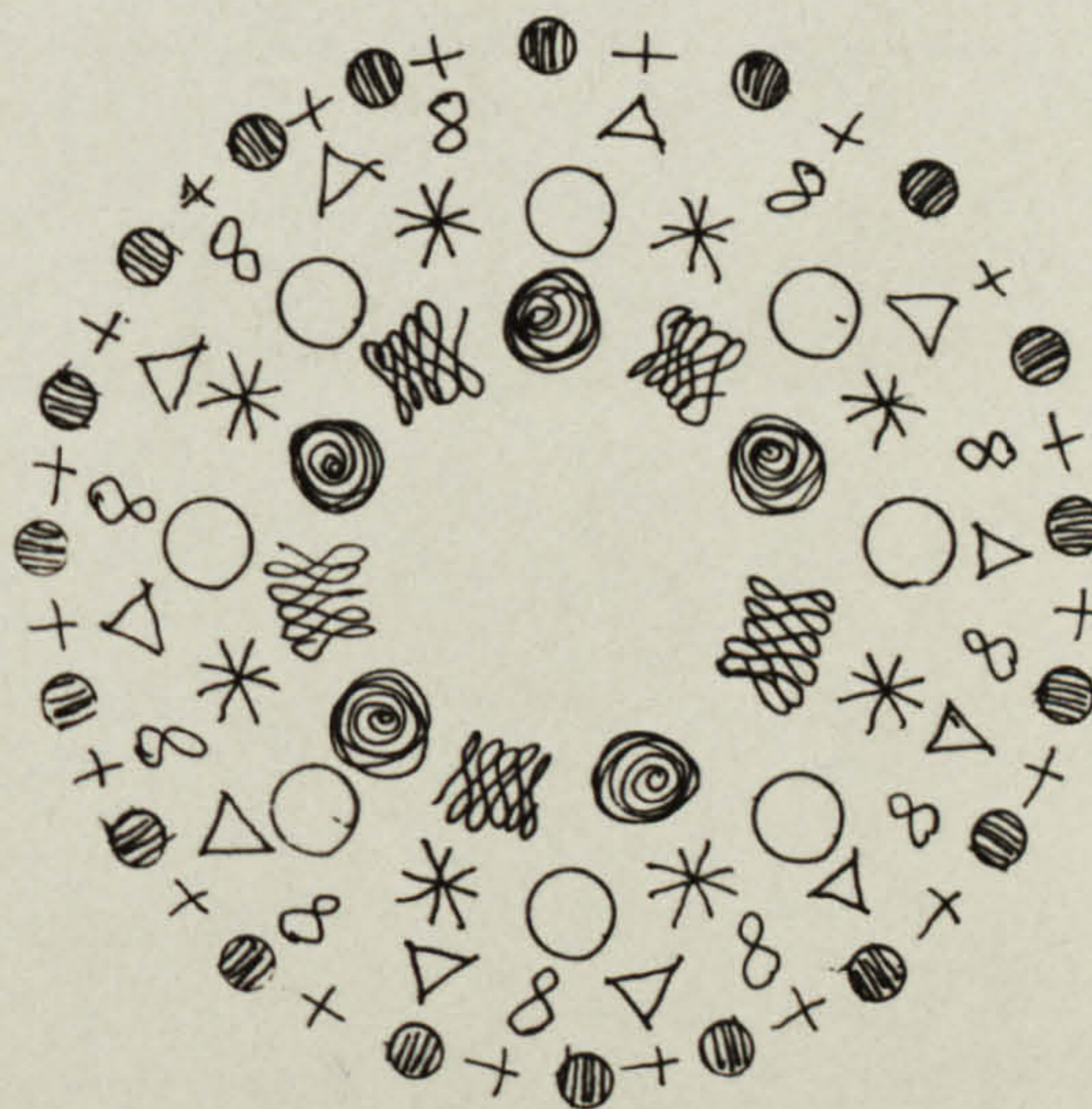
- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|---|
| ⌘ | <i>Paeonia officinalis</i> | | |
| ⊙ | <i>Geranium platypetalum</i> | ⊗ | <i>Achillea ptarmica</i> flore pleno |
| ⊖ | <i>Aquilegia canadensis</i> | * | <i>Aster amellus speciosus</i> or <i>Erigeron speciosus</i> |
| 8 | <i>Spirea vulgaris</i> | ○ | <i>Lychnis viscaria</i> |
| + | <i>Phuopsis stylosa purpurea</i> | △ | <i>Hepatica nobilis</i> |

The above plans for circular flower beds are based on Ruempler's planting proposals. Planted in concentric rings of decreasing height, the pairs of plants could either be planted as a double row as can be seen in example 1, or alternately as shown in example 2.

(Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, 1876, pp. 182, 186)

ILLUSTRATION 77: PLAN FOR A CIRCULAR FLOWER GARDEN

EXAMPLE 2



◎ *Aconitum variegatum* or

* *Delphinium hybridum*

△ *Ageratina altissima*

Asclepias tuberosa

⊙ *Alyssum saxatile*

Campanula caespitosa

⊘ *Solidago canadensis* or

○ *Kniphofia uvaria*

∞ *Lychnis chalcedonica* single or double

+ *Veronica prostrata*

The above plans for circular flower beds are based on Ruempler's planting proposals. Planted in concentric rings of decreasing height, the pairs of plants could either be planted as a double row as can be seen in example 1, or alternately as shown in example 2.

(Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, 1876, pp. 182, 186)

Ruempler's proposals for a Round or Circular Flower Bed

Ruempler described two planting proposals for round or oval beds using perennials. The planting of these beds was actually rather formal and could almost be a display of bedding plants. For most beds he listed two plants which could be either planted as a double row, or alternately. The plants were chosen to have colour at most times of the year. The silhouette of the bed would have been dome-shaped as shown in illustration 75. Illustrations 76 and 77 are plans based on Ruempler's recommendations. The suggested plants were the following (working from the centre of the bed outwards):

- a. *Paeonia officinalis* mixed colours (May)
- a. *Geranium platypetalum* (May-July)
- b. *Achillea ptarmica* flore pleno (July-August)
- c. *Aquilegia canadensis* (May-June)
- c. *Aster amellus latifolius* (?) or *Erigeron speciosus* (August-September)
- d. *Spiraea filipendula* flore pleno (syn. *S. vulgaris*) (August-September)
- d. *Lychnis viscaria* flore pleno (May-June)
- e. *Crucianella stylosa purpurea* (syn. *Phuopsis stylosa purpurea*) (June-August)
- e. *Anemone hepatica* (syn. *Hepatica nobilis*) (March)

An alternative planting suggestion was:

- a. *Aconitum variegatum* or *Delphinium hybridum* (July-August)
- a. *Solidago canadensis* or *Tritoma uvaria* (syn. *Kniphofia uvaria*) (August-September-October)
- b. *Eupatorium ageratoides* (syn. *Ageratina altissima*) (July-October)
- b. *Lychnis chalcedonica* single or double form (June-July)

- c. *Asclepias tuberosa* (June-August)
- d. *Alyssum saxatile* (April-May)
- d. *Veronica prostrata* (May-June)
- e. *Campanula caespitosa* (July-August)²⁵

Another example of a fairly formal display of mixed planting, where perennials were combined with bedding plants, can be seen in illustration 78. They were placed in a geometric pattern, using perennials, grasses and annuals. The plants listed were:

1. *Helenium autumnale* 'Superbum'
2. *Coleus verschafeltii* (syn. *Solenostemon* sp.)
3. *Helianthus multiflorus* - double form
4. *Perilla nankinensis* (syn. *P. frutescens* var. *nankinensis*)
5. *Zea vittata* (?)
6. *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Zebrinus'
7. *Lupinus polyphyllus*
8. *Phlox paniculata*
9. *Anthemis kelwayi* (syn. *A. tinctoria* 'Kelwayi')
10. *Geum heldreichi* (?)

Perennials in the Pleasure Ground

German borders may not have had such a strong association with perennials as British borders did, but informal borders along shrubbery edges and flower beds set in lawns in the pleasure ground were considered as an ideal place for perennials.

²⁵ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, 1876, pp.182, 186

W. Kuehnau, who used to work for Fuerst Pueckler at Branitz, extolled the virtues of perennials in the pleasure ground. Their stature, habit and height made them the perfect plants to create a transition between uniform and low flower beds in the flower garden, and the tall flowering shrubs of the pleasure ground. Pueckler used to have quite a number of such beds of perennials in the pleasure ground at Branitz as well as at Bad Mustaw (see illustration 80). These beds were simple in form and generous in size. They provided colour for most of the year, and besides weeding did not need any attention for several years in a row, as long as the plants had been carefully selected. He found it adviseable to confine the more rampant species to areas on the edge of shrubberies or informal water features.²⁶ (See also chapter 4.2.4.2.)

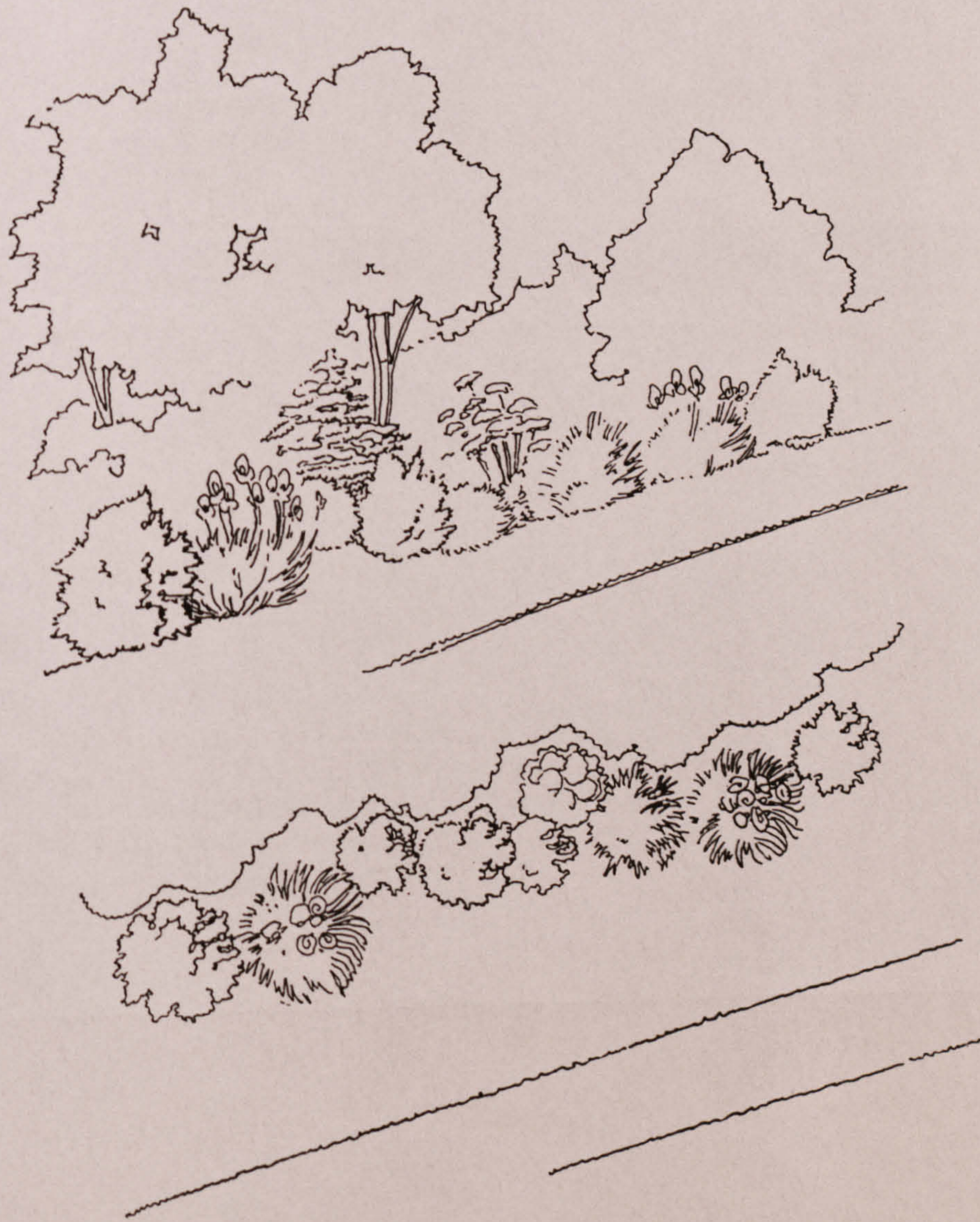
From a design viewpoint, perennials in front of shrubberies provided a visual continuation of flowers from the tall shrubs in the background, down to the grass level. For practical reasons perennials were perfect for planting, as many of them did not mind shrub roots robbing the soil nutrients, which would have affected the growth of annuals and tender plants.

How such a shrubbery edge border was planted can be seen in illustration 79. The upper elevation sketch shows the loosely placed clumps, whilst the plan drawing below illustrates the placement of the plants.

Flowering plants had to be spread out evenly, so that no big gaps appeared at any one time. There does not appear to have been any particular desire to create special colour effects, as long as flowers contrasted pleasantly with one another. White flowers could be used generously as white was a colour which associated well with others and could be seen from far. This was particularly useful in the pleasure ground, as the flowers

²⁶ Kuehnau, W.: "Einiges ueber die Verwendung der Staudenpflanzen in Gaerten", *Gartenzeitung*, 1873, pp. 116-20

ILLUSTRATION 79: SKETCH OF PERENNIALS PLANTED IN FRONT OF SHRUBBERY EDGE



Plan view and sketch showing perennials loosely planted in front of a meandering shrubbery edge, gradually bringing the plant height down from the level of the tree canopy to grass level.

(Meyer, Franz Sales, Ries, Friedrich: *Die Gartenkunst in Wort und Bild*, 1904, p. 222)

ILLUSTRATION 80: PROPOSAL FOR THE LANDSCAPING OF BAD MUSKAU, SHOWING FLOWER PLANTING ON THE EDGE OF SHRUBBERIES



(Original in Colour)

The above illustration was drawn as a proposal for the park at Bad Muskau. Informal flower borders, planted with mixed perennials are shown in front of shrubberies on the edge of the lake. Although the plants are difficult to identify, there were hollyhocks, campanulas or delphiniums, and possibly herbaceous peonies as well as other perennials.

(Badar, R., Brucksch, E., Mrosko, A, Rippl, H.: *Der Muskauer Park - Ein Spaziergang*, 1992, p. 10)

were more likely to be seen from a great distance.²⁷ Illustration 80 shows a view of Fuerst Pueckler's park at Bad Muskau in which borders with perennials are clearly visible in front of shrubberies and edging the water.

The lack of information on the subject could perhaps be put down to the fact that Ruempler said it was impossible to write down any strict rules on the details of such a garden, although it was perhaps possible to draw a plan. Nothing about these gardens was straight-lined or symmetrical, neither in layout nor in planting. The paths alongside and the shrubbery at the back were supposed to be curved, the perennials were not planted in a symmetrical layout but in a free and natural style. Depending on their size, they were planted individually as *solitaire* plants or in small groups to enable them to come into their own right. Taller plants were grown at the rear, the lowest at the front could even consist of alpines planted in bushy patches or carpets if the conditions suited them. This style of planting is reminiscent of the mingling style encountered in earlier nineteenth century Britain.

'Dendrophilus' confirmed that even in the eighties, borders were usually found as a foreground to larger groups of trees and shrubs, adding lively colour to the green background. The aim was to have as long a flowering season as possible, which was best achieved by mixing annuals and perennials.²⁸

The planting of such areas had to look natural, as if the plants had come there by themselves, which often was the case as many self-seeded once established. Unlike in the borders described above, flowers could be alternatively tall and low, they could form a natural continuation of the shrubs or form a contrast with them. It was difficult

²⁷ Kuehnau, W.: "Einiges ueber die Verwendung der Staudenpflanzen in Gaerten", *Gartenzeitung*, 1873, pp. 116-20

²⁸ 'Dendrophilus': "Der Wilde Garten", *Gartenzeitung*, 1882, p. 83

to make narrow stretches of planting look right. In no case should it resemble an edging, and long strips of the same colour had to be avoided. When planting narrow edges it was best to avoid plants with a stiff growth habit, especially when they were planted out when already flowering, as they would look artificial. Curved stems enhanced the natural appearance of the whole. In larger borders more plants could be planted, thus providing a greater variety of form and shape, so that stiffness was rarely a problem.

From Jaeger's comment about planting out plants when already in flower, it is possible to deduce that these borders were not necessarily planted on a permanent basis. He did not specify if it was customary to completely replant these areas regularly, or whether just certain areas were filled with annuals or biennials.

As a general rule for larger areas not too far from the path, Jaeger recommended planting the brightest colours furthest away, the less luminous ones nearer to the path where they could be enjoyed better. Delicate flowers were best avoided, as they ran the risk of getting swamped. It was better to choose normal, strong varieties of perennials, annuals and biennials with lively colours which were known to do well in the more difficult growing environment of a shrubbery. Large leaved plants such as *Petasites*, *Tussilago*, *Heracleum*, *Gunnera scabra* (syn. *G. tinctoria*), *Cynara scolymus*, *C. cardunculus* and *Sambucus ebulus* were also considered effective planted near the shrubbery edge. Large masses of flowers could also be added to small shrub groups where a big impact was required.²⁹

²⁹ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 431-3

ILLUSTRATION 81: PLANTING PLAN FOR A HERBACEOUS BORDER IN FRONT OF A SHRUBBERY



The above plan shows an irregular border in front of a shrubbery, planted with small groups of perennials or as individuals, scattered about irregularly to create an informal shrubbery edge planting.

(Ruempler, Theodor: *Illustriertes Gartenbaulexikon*, 1890, p. 867)

Ruempler's Planting Plan for a Shrubbery Edge Border

In his *Illustriertes Gartenbau Lexikon* of 1890, Ruempler used two illustrations depicting herbaceous borders. The first one is the drawing of a very informal herbaceous border in front of a bank of shrubs, which was originally published to accompany an article by Noel Humphries in *The Garden*, and later used by Robinson in *Hardy Flowers*. (See chapter 3.2 for illustration 28.) On the facing page was a planting plan for a very informal border (see illustration 81). This shows plants planted either singly or in groups of up to eight plants. Although the groups were tightly planted, the distance between them was very generous. They were scattered about in a very informal manner, without obvious relation to one another.

To enhance the scene some flowering shrubs and trees such as *Laburnum*, spireas and lilacs were added, and in front of these perennials were scattered irregularly. The following is the list of plants which Ruempler included with the plan³⁰:

- . *Bambusa aurea* (syn. *Phyllostachys aurea*)
- . *Gynerium argenteum* (syn. *Cortaderia selloana*)
- . *Lilium tigrinum*
- . *Geranium pratense*
- . *Arum italicum*
- . *Dielytra spectabilis* (syn. *Dicentra spectabilis*)
- . *Funkia japonica* (syn. *Hosta longissima*)
- . *Yucca flaccida*
- . *Digitalis purpurea*
- . *Lilium candidum*
- . *Aconitum napellus*
- . *Cypripedium calceolus*
- . *Dodecatheon meadia*
- . *Geranium platypetalum*
- . *Viola cornuta* var 'Perfection' or *V. Munbyana*
- . *Arundo conspicua* (syn. *Chionochloa conspicua*) or *Arundo donax*
- . *Aster roseus* (syn. *A. novi-belgii*)
- . *Gynerium roseum* (syn. *G. selloana* 'Rosea')
- . *Paeonia edulis* (syn. *P. lactiflora*)
- . *Saxifraga hypnoides*
- . *Iris persica*

³⁰ With the exception of a few, such as *Cortaderia selloana* and *Arundo donax*, which are only hardy in the milder southern and western parts of Germany, all of these plants are hardy in Germany.

- . *Papaver bracteatum*
- . [The letter W was not included.]
- . *Liatris spicata*
- . *Yucca flacida*
- . *Campanula latifolia*

Not quite hardy plants could be replaced by hardy ones in the absence of a greenhouse. Hardy species recommended by Ruempler were *Veratrum nigrum*, *Macleaya cordata* and *Solidago canadensis*. In between the groups patches of bulbs could be planted such as crocuses, narcissi, hyacinths, snowdrops, winter aconites, colchicums, *Erythronium dens canis* and other small bulbs, which either started the flowering season, or concluded it. By draping climbers such as hops, *Bryonia* or *Solanum dulcamara* over the shrubs at the rear, some artistic brush strokes were added, though it had to be done carefully so as not to become excessive.³¹

Size of Planting Group

The quantity of plants in a group varied from opinion to opinion, and from situation to situation. German authors seemed concerned with achieving the right effect, either through colour contrast, or impact. Some larger plants were better seen on their own, whereas small plants made more impact in larger groups. Bold patches were more visible from a distance.

Ruempler suggested that in herbaceous borders in kitchen gardens, plants were best in groups of three to five plants, Jaeger suggested three to six.³²

According to an article in *Neubert's Gartenmagazin*, group sizes within a display could vary. The aim was to produce a pleasant colour contrast, which could be

³¹ Ruempler, Theodor: *Illustriertes Gartenbau Lexikon*, 1890, pp. 866-7

³² Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Stauden*, 1889, p. 14

achieved by juxtaposing small and large groups of contrasting colours, although single plants or anything which created a checkered effect had to be avoided. Instead, a good effect could be created with groups of just a few different plants.³³

Not everybody was of this opinion as illustration 82 shows. If the shrubbery was large enough, then the border in front could also be large to retain the right proportions. In this case, the plants appear to have been planted as individuals, more like earlier English examples such as Loudon's, although they were not placed in any rows, and no indication is given that they were graded according to height. The little edge in front would have created a certain formality.

Group size depended on the way the display would be viewed. If it was seen from a distance, it would only be effective if the masses were bold enough. Thus large groups of lighter colours were recommended. If the bed or border was near a path and was viewed from nearby, smaller groups of plants would be sufficient, becoming larger towards the rear of the display.³⁴

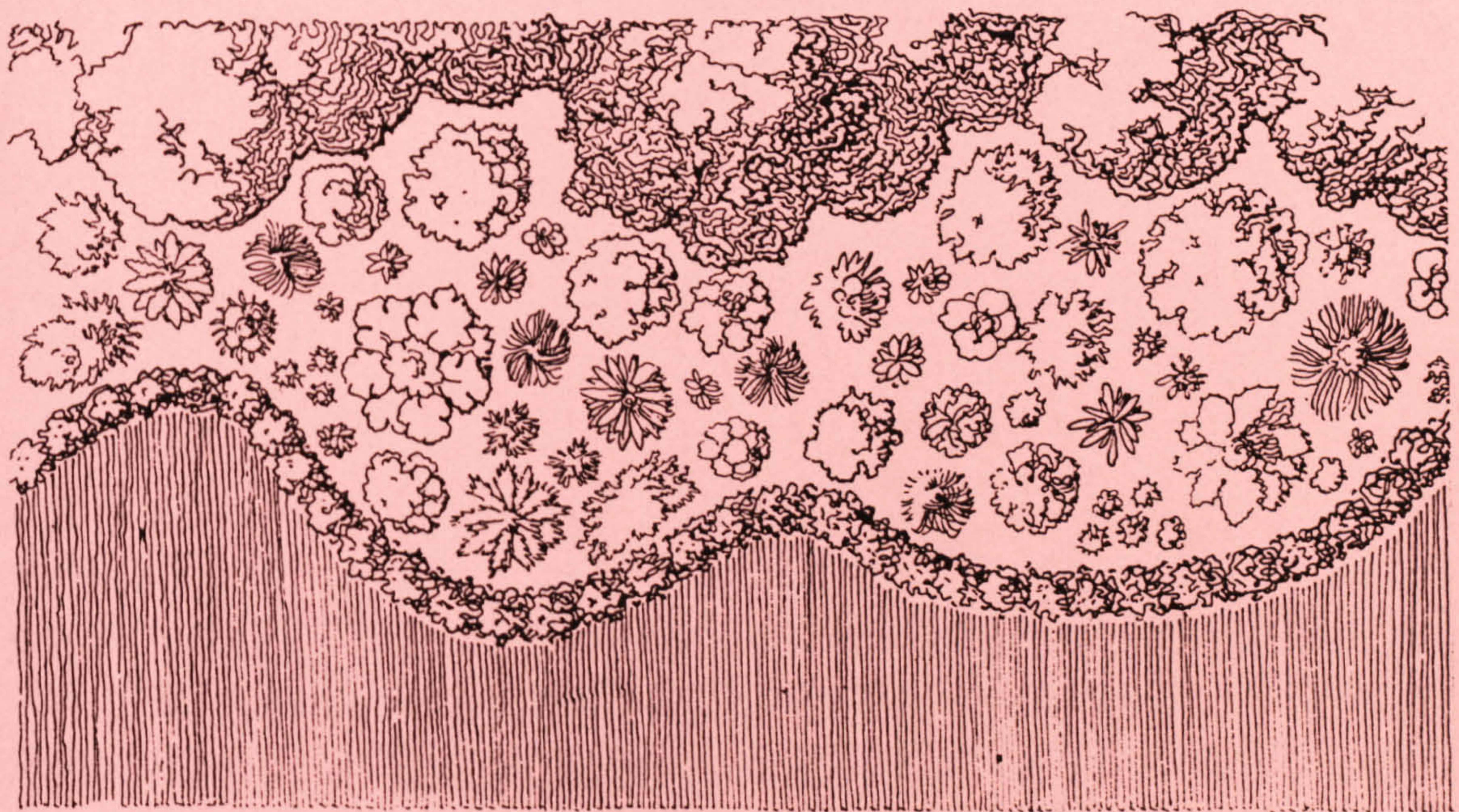
With the aim of achieving a more naturalistic effect, Jaeger thought it was advisable when larger groups were planted, to scatter a few of the plants in amongst other groups nearby. What Jaeger intended to achieve here is what could be observed in nature, where a large mass of plants of one species could self-sow at a distance from the mother plants, so that some seedlings appeared quite isolated, but still in view from the original group. Jaeger felt it was precisely this irregularity and variety which made nature so attractive³⁵; he was following nature's example for planting.

³³ Anon.: "Beschaffenheit und Eintheilung eines Blumengartens und Gruppierung der Pflanzen", *Neubert's Gartenmagazin*, 1851, pp. 118-24

³⁴ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 373

³⁵ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 373

ILLUSTRATION 82: PLAN OF A WIDE BORDER IN FRONT OF A LARGER SHRUBBERY



In front of large shrubberies perennials could either be planted in bolder groups or the border could be made large enough to be in keeping with the scale of the shrub planting. In this case the border was trimmed with a low-growing plant.

(Meyer, Franz Sales, Ries, Friedrich: *Die Gartenkunst in Wort und Bild*, 1904, p. 222)

Planting Distance

German garden writers had rather similar opinions on how far apart plants should be planted. They had to be grown far enough apart so that they could fully develop without touching one another, or over-crowding each other. An article in *Neubert's Gartenmagazin* suggested planting smaller plants one to two feet apart (0.30 to 0.60 metres apart), larger ones three feet apart (0.90 metres). Bosse looked at the spread of plants rather than assess them by their height. Invasive garden terrors should be three to four feet apart (0.90 to 1.20 metres), whereas plants with a weak spreading habit were fine planted at distances of one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half feet (0.45 to 0.75 metres).³⁶

Ruempler gave his readers very specific planting instructions for individual plants. Hollyhocks and lupins were most effective planted in large groups, with something low growing in front of the hollyhocks to hide their bare stems. Phlox was a very good plant for borders and beds as well as for planting in rows along woodland edges. They should be planted 0.40 to 0.60 metres apart, *Galega officinalis* 0.50 to 0.60 metres, potentilla 0.30 to 0.40 metres, *Campanula medium* 0.40 to 0.50 metres, *Iris pumila* and wall flowers 0.25 to 0.30 metres.

The box-edged borders around lawns as described above by Ruempler, were ideally planted with three rows of plants. The distance between the rows had to be 0.30 to 0.50 metres, whereas the distance in between the plants had to be 0.40 to 0.60 metres. Plants had to be staggered so that they would not end up in a regimented grid fashion, which helped them to make best use of the available space.³⁷

³⁶ Anon.: "Beschaffenheit und Eintheilung eines Blumengartens und Gruppierung der Pflanzen", *Neubert's Gartenmagazin*, 1851, pp. 118-24; Bosse, J.: *Handbuch der Blumengartnerie*, 1859, p. 77

³⁷ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, 1876, pp. 66, 184

Plant Choice

Unlike in massed displays, plants selected for mingled planting schemes were chosen more for their growth habit than their colour. The colour effect of a plant could always be rectified by its neighbouring companions, but its habit could not. If a tall plant was chosen for a position where only a low one would fit, the entire effect could easily be destroyed. Sometimes it was necessary to replace badly-developed plants in the course of the summer because they had not reached their desired size. On the other hand, it was sometimes necessary in spring to plant a taller, but slower growing plant in front of a low but fast-growing plant, which would catch up by summer. A standard rule recommended by most garden writers was to put the tallest plants either at the rear of a border if it backed onto something, or in the centre of the bed if it could be viewed from different sides. In this case it should look like a large flower bunch.³⁸ (See illustration 75 b, chapter 4.3.)

'Groups' and 'Clumps'

Jaeger described another type of informal beds as 'groups'. Although they could be considered as a type of bed, not all beds were groups. Groups fitted better in the informal setting of a pleasure ground or even a park than a formal flower garden. They were supposed to be ideal for showing off the beauty of individual plants, something which was impossible to do in beds because of the numbers of plants involved. Its characteristic was the loose interconnection of small quantities of plants (three to six) whose individual effect was to be singled out. The result was transparent, as taller plants were used and planted in small groups or even as individuals. The achieved effect was described by Jaeger as 'malerisch' or painterly.³⁹

³⁸ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 335

³⁹ The term 'Malerisch' could also be interpreted as picturesque, but as German gardeners did not get involved in the picturesque debate, the term has been literally translated into 'painterly'. (See also chapter 4.2.4.1.)

Groups were best observed in profile to show the plant outlines, whereas beds were ideally viewed from above, so people could look down into the flowers.

Particularly suited to planting in groups were very handsome plants such as foliage plants which were often used for solitaire planting. Groups were also a good way of displaying rarer plants of which the gardener did not possess large quantities, or of which the effect would have got lost if planted in large masses. Many tender container-grown plants were also ideal candidates for planting in groups. Furthermore, groups were also a good home to trailing plants which did not really fit into beds or borders. Here plants such as *Tropaeolum* could trail over early dying-down clumps of *Rheum*, or taller plants could support climbing *Lathyrus*.

Groups belonged in the informality of grass, they looked out of place in areas of gravel or other hard surfaces. The overall bed shape was rounded, but the edges were ideally irregular, scalloped or like a clover leaf. Several smaller groups could be made into a large collection to which some solitary plants could be added, with a few feature plants or tall plants as centre point. Jaeger warned his readers that this type of display was best not repeated too often in the garden.⁴⁰ From the descriptions it appears that these groups were ideal for the keen plantsman, in which case they would not necessarily have featured in everybody's garden.

Other references to the term 'group' found in the course of this research alluded usually to bedding schemes, and would have contained one or a few species planted in the massed style, and changed as soon as the display was over.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 432

⁴¹ Anon.: "Beschaffenheit und Eintheilung eines Blumengartens und Gruppierung der Pflanzen", *Neubert's Gartenmagazin*, 1851, pp. 118-24; A.: "Eine Blumengruppe", *Zeitschrift fuer Bildende Gartenkunst*, 1893, pp. 11-2

There was another type of bed which was referred to as clumps. Gruner described them as irregular-shaped beds, filled with groups of plants. Like the effect created by bedding displays, clumps were intended to have a profuse flower display, but instead of achieving this with one or two different plants, it was achieved by putting together different groups of plants, preferably of a similar flowering period so no gaps appeared in the display. Plants such as roses, peonies and hydrangeas were very suitable for planting in clumps.⁴²

About forty years later Bosse also referred to clumps, but he had plants with special needs in mind. Clumps could be filled with special soil suitable for acid soil-loving ericaceous plants. They were also ideal to display species which occurred in a large colour range, and which many German garden writers thought were best displayed in a bed by themselves. Dahlias, hollyhocks, *Antirrhinum majus*, asters, *Dianthus barbatus*, *D. chinensis*, stocks, peonies, roses, phloxes (annual and perennial), petunias, flag irises, gladioli and *Alstroemeria* were some of the plants suitable for growing in beds by themselves.

4.4.3. Solitaire Planting

German garden writers were familiar with the concept of using solitaire plants or *Standpflanzen*⁴³ to embellish a display. Three of the more prolific writers whose work appeared in the course of the second half of the nineteenth century dedicated ample space to the subject.

⁴² Gruner, Heinrich: *Heinrich Gruner's praktischer Blumengaertner*, 1817, p.5

⁴³ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 412

As Ruempler explained to his readers, the monotony of a grass area could easily be broken by planting individuals or small groups of the same plants, but the individuals had to be large plants to make a suitable impact. They did not necessarily relate to the plants in the beds around them, but could be used to create an interruption in a display. In case the plants were small in stature, Jaeger explained they could be planted in small groups of three to four plants, to make them look as if they formed one large plant.⁴⁴

How to plant solitaire plants is depicted on the plan and elevated sketch in illustration 83. It shows how perennials with bold, architectural outlines were used, scattered in small clumps on the edges of shrubberies and in front of trees.

Unlike in Britain, where solitaire plants were associated with informal designs, the way these were displayed depended on the layout of the garden. If it was a formal, symmetric garden then the solitaire plants had to be positioned accordingly, respecting the symmetry. If they were used in an informal flower garden or pleasure ground, then they had to be planted with the same irregularity as one would have done with individual trees. It was better not to spread solitaire plants evenly across the garden, but to group them more or less together in areas. This was not only beneficial for the general overview of the garden, but as these plants were often tropical, they were best united in one area to give it an exotic character. This made it also easier to maintain.

In gardens which prided themselves on having large plant collections, it was possible to unite these solitaire plants into areas according to family. Thus bringing together three, five or more plants of the same family gave an area a particular identify. If not by family, then it was also possible to unite the plants on the basis of character and

⁴⁴ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Stauden*, 1889, p. 49; Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, pp. 336, 412

looks, which produced a much more effective display. An example of planting in a botanical system was described in an account of the garden of Haus Bockdorf near Kempen am Rhein. The flower garden of this establishment consisted of a series of beds with bedding plants and roses, as well as a number of informally and loosely planted beds of foliage plants⁴⁵, which had been arranged according to their physiognomic and systematic relations.⁴⁶

In between the different areas it was possible to put a few particularly beautiful plants all on their own.⁴⁷ The plants which deserved such an accolade had to be of the highest beauty, bearing not only attractive flowers, but also handsome foliage, a good habit and form. Although carrying attractive flowers was considered an added bonus, it was not the most important criterion. Their beauty in habit and leaf was more valued, as well as the characteristic of standing well for a long period, without collapsing or looking untidy.⁴⁸

Jaeger suggested that the most suitable plants for solitaire planting tended to be shrubs and shrubby tender plants raised in pots. Palms and cycads were considered very worthy if they would tolerate the situation. To a lesser extent perennials and annuals were used too. Ruempler regarded annuals as less suitable, since they soon started to look untidy when they finished flowering and needed instant replacement when this time came. The taller perennials with an imposing habit were preferred by many

⁴⁵ This example could equally be cited in chapter 4.4.4 on the use of foliage plants, but, as in Britain, many of the plants listed as good solitaire specimens were equally suitable for use in displays of foliage plants.

⁴⁶ Otte, B.; "Die Gaertnerische Anlagen aus Haus Bockdorf bei Kempen am Rhein", *Zeitschrift fuer Bildende Gartenkunst*, 1893, pp. 161-6

⁴⁷ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, pp. 412-4

⁴⁸ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 412; ditto, 1864, p. 430

ILLUSTRATION 83: PLAN AND SKETCH OF SOLITAIRE PLANTING



Perennials with bold or statuesque foliage were ideal for planting as solitaire specimens on the lawn, to break up the lines created by flower beds or shrubberies, and enhance the effect of informality.

(Meyer, Franz Sales, Ries, Friedrich: *Die Gartenkunst in Wort und Bild*, 1904, p. 221)

garden writers, because they had much to offer. They were appealing from the start till the end of the growing season, as many had attractive shoots, flowers and seeds which could all be enjoyed. Many of the tender foliage plants only produced foliage, and would just reach their most beautiful stage when they were killed by frost.⁴⁹ In a chapter on ornamental foliage plants, Meijer recommended planting these singly, as individuals or in small groups to heighten effect.⁵⁰

If perennials were used which took a while in spring to reach full size, and which consequently showed an area of bare earth around their base for several weeks, they could be underplanted. Early spring bulbs such as snowdrops, grape hyacinths, scillas, crocuses or even tulips would provide a show whilst the solitaire plants were coming into growth. Once fully grown their foliage would cover the dying foliage of the bulbs. Perennials which died back early, such as the ornamental rhubarbs and the hogweeds, could be given a similar treatment. These could be underplanted with shade-tolerant ground covers such as vincas, *Anemone hepatica* (syn. *Hepatica nobilis*), *Sedum spurium*, *S. roseum* (syn. *Rhodiola rosea*) and *Glechoma hederacea*. Alternatively Jaeger suggested making larger beds around the solitaire plants and planting flowers in these, but this would have defeated the whole object of planting solitaire plants.⁵¹

In the eighteen-fifties Jaeger listed twenty-five suitable genera of perennials with attractive flowers and ten with handsome foliage, but Bosse had less than a dozen. Ruempler listed 116 genera suitable for planting as solitaires, in small groups or in

⁴⁹ Kuehnau, W.: "Einiges ueber die Verwendung der Staudenpflanzen in Gaerten", *Gartenzeitung*, 1873, pp. 140-2

⁵⁰ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Stauden*, 1889, p. 49; Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, translated by Meijer, Dr H. A. J.: *Onze Tuinbloemen* 1882, p. 165

⁵¹ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 417

association with other plants in bed or borders. Further on he mentioned more which were suitable for planting as solitaires or in small groups in association with grass parterres. Here more of the expected bold or large leaved solitaire plants were listed such as *Arundo donax*, *Macleaya cordata*, *Crambe cordifolia*, different *Heracleum* species, peonies, several *Rheum* species as well as *Veratrum*. This list totalled sixty-four genera, a remarkable increase in comparison with the Jaeger and Bosse lists of thirty years earlier.⁵²

4.4.4. Form, Foliage and Plant Texture in Planting Design

Foliage plants played quite a role in German flower gardens. As in Britain, the use of hardy herbaceous perennials for their foliage was probably a follow on from the wide range of exciting tender foliage plants which were being used in bedding schemes.

The use of foliage plants was well established in Germany in the mid nineteenth century. Ferdinand Fintelmann (1774-1863), who was the Royal gardener at the Pfaueninsel, and his son Gustav Adolph Fintelmann (1803-1871), were both experts at using decorative foliage plants. Glienicke (a neighbouring estate to the Pfaueninsel) was praised in 1859 for its attractive displays of small plants with colourful foliage.⁵³

In 1858 Jaeger explained that he thought gardens had gained much from the introduction of foliage plants which had added a formerly unknown richness of shapes. He thought they increased the picturesqueness of a garden, as these were the

⁵² Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 416; Bosse, J.: *Handbuch der Blumengartnerie*, 1859, pp. 122-3; Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Stauden*, 1889, pp. 317-20, 329-30

⁵³ Senator fuer Stadtentwicklung und Umweltschutz, Berlin: *Gartendenkmalpflege: Des Landschaftsgarten von Kleine Glienicke*, Hefts, 1904, p.10

kind of plants a painter would put in the foreground of his picture, where they would create a link between the woody plants and the actual flowers. Foliage plants belonged as much in the flower garden as in the larger parks; they gave the finishing touch to a garden. However, Jaeger warned his readers not to use too many foliage plants, which he said was often done in the gardens of Berlin and Potsdam, probably referring to the Pfaueninsel and Kleine Glienicke amongst others.

Although referring to bedding schemes, Jaeger suggested that flowers should dominate over foliage plants at a ratio of ten to one.⁵⁴ Six years later, in 1864 he had changed his mind: according to what he referred to as "today's" principles, flowers no longer counted, instead plants with beautiful leaves, attractive habit and interesting fruit were in. It would appear that the use of foliage plants had made a definite entry into German gardens. His list of suitable plants contained thirty-six genera of hardy perennials, including ferns and plants suitable for moist areas, as well as a list of twenty-four genera of annuals and twenty-three genera of tender plants.⁵⁵ Many of these plants also occurred on the list of those suitable for solitaire planting.

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century foliage plants were a well established feature in flower displays. In 1876 Ruempler complained that gardeners of that period could not resist using foliage plants to tone down the colour splendour of flowers. They preferred using plants with fewer flowers, but which had architectural beauty, and of which size, cut and colour of the leaf were as important as aesthetic opposition. He described these plants as foliage or effect plants, used as solitaires or in groups. Their role was most important, especially in the smaller garden, where they offered

⁵⁴ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 333

⁵⁵ Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, pp. 431, 456-7

a point of visual relief in a busy sea of flowers. Plants which had what Ruempler called a strong character, offered an excellent point of visual repose.⁵⁶

Although according to Jaeger painters placed the most architectural plants in the foreground of their pictures, in reality it was usually best to place foliage plants in the middle ground, where they often were most effective.⁵⁷ The way plants brought variety into the outline of schemes, rather than just using them as an exclamation mark or dot plant in bedding displays, seems to have played a role too. For example Jaeger recommended adding daylilies to a bed or border, so that their attractive foliage could be enjoyed. They would have introduced a strong vertical, linear effect into the planting scheme.⁵⁸

To some, leaf colour was less important than leaf shape. Although there were different shades of green, red and variegated leaves available, the actual colour was not so relevant, as long as it contrasted well with the green of the lawn. What Jaeger called the new fashion plants, which were well loved by gardeners, had either white-, yellow- or red-variegated leaves or all-red or all-white leaves. Leaves which contained yellow or white, or those which were blue-green, whitish or very pale green, were best used in association with dark foliage or a dark background, such as grass, trees or green walls, but never against a light path. These plants were also most suitable as centre point to a bed where they could be surrounded by darker plants. Whenever using these coloured foliage plants, one had to consider similar colour associations

⁵⁶ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, 1876, p. 162

⁵⁷ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, pp. 418-9

⁵⁸ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 394

as with flowers: red leaves contrasted well with green, light leaves stood out best against a dark colour.⁵⁹

In his book *Album fuer Teppichgaertnerei* Goetze included a list of what he considered the best plants for carpet bedding, foliage effect and flower groups. Although these plants were primarily intended for short-lived displays, many perennials were included. The list was sub-divided according to colour, foliage or flowering plants, height and finally according to flowering season in the case of the flowering plants. The leaf colours were white and silvery grey or white variegated, yellow or yellow variegated, black or dark brownish red, bright brownish red and dark red, bright red, blueish or violet shimmering and finally plants with green coloured foliage.⁶⁰ (For an example of these see illustrations 73 and 74.)

4.4.5. Colour Theories and their Application

As for many other subjects related to gardening, we can learn much from Jaeger's details on the use of colour in the garden. His elaborate description on the subject reflects the importance he ascribed to the subject. In comparison, Messger's comment on colour arrangements, saying that one had to unite colours which harmonize, and which would make a nice bouquet, was rather vague. He added that gardeners knew how various plants fitted together, and that it was up to them to sort them out.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, pp. 368, 376; Ruempler, Theodor: *Ruempler's Gartenbau Lexikon*, 1882, p.292

⁶⁰ Goetze, Karl: *Album fuer Teppichgaertnerei*, n.d. 189?, pp. I-X

⁶¹ Messger, Joh.: *Gartenbuch* [1840], p. 288

The use of colour in a garden could not be compared to that in a building or in fashion. In a garden environment Jaeger thought it was important to use bright colours rather than dull ones. Carmine, pink, red, blue and white with gold, yellow or orange gave a good effect. Pale and neutral colours may have been effective on a building or in somebody's clothes, but had no effect in a garden.⁶²

Jaeger described the way colour theories worked and what their consequent application was in the garden and which colour effects did or did not work. He explained that although nature offered a wide range of flower colours to the gardener, the recent efforts of florists had considerably widened the spectrum of colours available. The different shades of green, grey, brown and black found in the leaves, stems, stalks and fruit alone amounted to at least eighty. As will be made apparent below, it was not only the flower colour which played a role in the disposition of plants in a garden; luminosity was considered just as important.

Jaeger was rather relieved that differences in flowering time, growth rate, cultural requirements and other such practical details forced gardeners to sit down and work out a suitable colour scheme, rather than re-use time after time a faithfully tested and tried colour combination, leaving no space for novel ideas. It was important to follow one's own taste, colour was a matter of mood and taste, not science.⁶³ Several authorities, including Fuerst Pueckler had said that once one had worked out a good colour scheme for a garden, one should adhere to it until the garden layout was changed. Jaeger disagreed with this for the practical reason that the gardener was not always in the position to obtain the right amount of plants of the right colours. His second argument was more emotional, in favour of people's love for change in the

⁶² Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 344

⁶³ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, pp. 343-344

garden. They were then, and still are today, always trying out new plants and combinations.⁶⁴

Although Jaeger may have felt that the arrangement of a colour scheme was an emotional and personal undertaking, his colour theories were nonetheless the same as those found in Britain and corresponded with what his other contemporaries wrote.⁶⁵ (See chapter 3.4.6.) He explained to his readers the three primary colours, yellow, red and blue, and how these made the secondary and tertiary colours. He described this as the chromatic opposition on which the principles of contrast were built with the following contrasting colours:

blue - orange	red/orange - blue/green
red - green	red/purple - yellow/green
yellow - purple	yellow/orange - blue/purple

Blue and orange, red and green and yellow and purple formed the harmonious contrasts. Adjoining colours like yellow and green or red and orange did not provide a very nice contrast. Their proximity made the colours appear impure. Yellow, orange and red were warm or active colours and were associated with the sun, whereas blue, green and purple were cold and passive colours and shade associated. The further away colours were from the observation point, the colder and weaker they became, especially when the ground level was even. If the ground level ascended, then it became less of a problem.

Jaeger felt that cold colours stood better in the sun; they may have lost some of their strength but not their purity. Particularly bright blue was said to hold well in bright

⁶⁴ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 375

⁶⁵ Bosse, J.: *Handbuch der Blumengaertnerei*, 1859, p. 126

sunlight, which could not be said for red, and even less so for yellow.⁶⁶ When one mixed cold and dark colours together in the same scheme it was best not to use them in equal proportions as this destroyed the harmony. The recommended proportions were as follows:

5 red : 3 yellow

3 yellow : 8 blue

3 yellow : 13 purple

5 red : 11 green

3 blue : 8 orange

Applying colours in different proportions could be used with advantage to a scheme. For example, if one wanted to enhance a particular colour, then its opposing colour was used in smaller quantities. If too much of the opposing colour was added, the effect was lost. According to Jaeger, the use of incorrect proportions of colours destroyed many compositions, because one colour was lacking or another was too much in evidence. Certain colours were more dominant in certain seasons, making this more of a problem.⁶⁷

Jaeger liked to use his knowledge on the levels of luminosity of different colours, to make rules which could be used when laying out plants. Consequently, if one wanted to plant flowers at a further distance, it was important to plant luminous colours such as white, yellow, yellowish red and other bright colours. Near the paths or other places where one was likely to view flowers from near by, darker coloured flowers

⁶⁶ The interpretation of colour being rather subjective, it is worth noting that Jaeger's opinion is not shared by all. There are those who feel that on the contrary, the hot colours such as red and yellow, are most effective in bright sunlight, whereas the pale, cool colours are more successful in indirect sunlight.

⁶⁷ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, pp. 345-6, 352-4

could be used. The same rules applied to cold colours, they were better seen from close by.⁶⁸

Warm colours were considered the most luminous. Going through the spectrum, from purple to green shades, the luminosity of colours dropped, dark blue being the weakest. The lighter tints of a cold colour were more luminous than the darker ones because there was a higher proportion of white in them. Jaeger put the levels of luminosity into figures which gave the following results:

Yellow to orange:	1000
Orange:	640
Green:	480
Red:	94
Dark red:	32
Purple blue:	31
Violet:	5
Sky blue:	140

The reason why sky blue was relatively high in luminosity for a blue, was because it contained white. White was considered as the most luminous, as it could be seen the furthest away and even at night. Following white came in order of decreasing luminosity whitish yellow, orange-yellow, golden yellow, middle yellow, orange, orange-red, carmine, dark pink, pink, bright blue, dark blue and purple.

Besides the luminosity factor of the flower, there were also the leaf and petal surface which had to be taken into account, whether they were shiny or matt. Shiny ones could be seen from further away, but as Jaeger pointed out they were affected differently by natural day light or artificial light, something which he reckoned was important to consider when dealing with garden lighting, exhibitions, flower

⁶⁸ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 353

arrangements and ballroom decorations. The warm colours were said to gain in artificial light, whereas the cold colours lost their effectiveness with dark blue almost looking black, the others greyish or brown. Yellow flowers usually ended up dominant as they tended to appear white.⁶⁹

Jaeger described all colours in great detail, telling his readers when, where and how to use them to their best effect. Although in reality colourless, white was the key to combining flowers of different colours. Every unharmonious or dull flower composition could be livened up with the addition of white and if two colours did not suit each other, adding white as a third colour improved the effect.⁷⁰ White toned down brighter light colours and contrasted well with the dark ones. It lifted and enhanced any colour, except when used in association with yellow, orange or brown, in which case it was best omitted. Any flower bed where mixed colours were used should not be without white flowers, or where different shades of one colour were planted white could be used with the paler shades or in contrast with the darker ones. The effect of white could be so strong that it should never be used too much, in too large quantities, nor repeated too often. If the gardener had many white flowers, it was preferable to use them on their own in a monochrome planting scheme.⁷¹

The following recommendations were offered by Jaeger as general rules to help gardeners in their planning:

- When using warmer colours it was important to get the balance of the effect of the luminosity right. If too much white was used, the addition of more

⁶⁹ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 354

⁷⁰ Bosse, J.: *Handbuch der Blumengaertnerei*, 1859, p. 126

⁷¹ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, pp. 368-9

- green calmed the scheme. In some cases it was preferable to use yellow and orange rather than white to bring light into a scheme.
- Colours could be made more intense if the same tone of two different colours was used, such as dark red and dark blue.
 - The colour of the edging had to be taken into account when planning the colour scheme. White was safe as it suited all flowers except white ones.
 - Beds seen from a great distance were most effective if planted with only one colour, preferably luminous.
 - Most beds and groups were planted with one colour only. This did not mean that Jaeger considered these monochrome beds as much more beautiful, which many thought they were. Jaeger felt some flowers did not lend themselves to one-coloured displays, and in addition, it was often difficult to obtain sufficiently large quantities of flowers to fill a whole bed.

The following recommendations applied to beds or borders planted in the massed style:

- If a garden had to offer variety, then the colour effect should be varied. This was easiest to achieve with a display of beds and borders of separate colours rather than generally mixed colours, as it had formerly been the case.⁷² When colours were mixed in every bed, then the whole display looked the same.
- In beds part of a larger figure, the colours had to relate to one another as flowers did in a mixed display. Clashes were avoided by having grass strips or gravel paths in between the beds. Contrasting colours were more effective than colour gradations.
- All colours could be used in long borders, divided into sections of one colour, using white where necessary. In a line of consecutive beds each was best filled

⁷² With this last little comment Jaeger implies that in the past there was no regard for colour arrangement in planting schemes, as was often quoted to be the case in British gardens. (See chapter 3.4.5.)

with distinctive colour sections rather than having colours which flowed from one into the other. Colours could occasionally be repeated when the sections were long and large. The sections were best separated with a thin box line or artificial edging.

- In regular flower gardens which could be overviewed, it was important to have colour symmetry. The effect improved if several beds were laid out in the same or a similar colour.
- Large beds or borders could be planted in concentric bands with two or even three colours, in wide enough strips so that it did not look like just a ring of colour.

The following recommendations applied to beds and borders with mixed planting:

- Plant lovers with small gardens could not afford to waste space and have only one plant type or one colour per bed; mixed beds were preferable.
- Colour theories had to be kept in mind, but the distribution of colour had to be done evenly without singling out individual colours. Plants could be planted either in small or large groups of similar tones, depending on the overall impact the inflorescence created. Were the flowers densely massed together, single or double, large or small, it was important to scatter a colour in amongst others if it was recurring in the display in larger masses.
- Even in mixed planting it was best to have a certain regularity in the colour distribution, even symmetry, which would be barely noticeable but would satisfy the observer's eye as it produced a balanced effect.
- Transitional colours were preferable to contrasting ones in mixed planting. However if all colours were used together, then it was preferable to plant them by contrast. Placing a middle colour between two unharmonious groups brought them together.
- If a bed had to be seen from a great distance, only larger groups would provide sufficient impact. Seen from nearby, it was possible to use small groups at the

front and larger groups with fewer and brighter colours at the rear. In the middle distance larger clumps of luminous colours, in not too large quantity were best.

- Small beds situated near the paths were ideal for observing individual flowers, such as rarer specimens or novelties of which one did not have many. Because of this individual effect, it was possible to use individual colours.⁷³

These detailed instructions give a clear picture of what could be planted and where in order to achieve a good effect.

Jaeger was of course not the only German writer to have written about colour. The year after he published *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, Bosse published his *Handbuch der Blumengaertnerei* in which he described the same colour theories, and although less elaborate, he appears to have had the same ideas for example on the virtues of white as a colour. He explained to his readers that when planning the planting of perennials, they had to ensure they would obtain a lively and pleasant mixture of colours as well as seeing to the plants' height and spread.

Particularly in the case of borders planted with a mixture of plants, the rules of contrasting colours were less important. Bosse reckoned that obtaining a good mixture of colours depended more on selecting a few good plants of the main colours which flowered at the same time, rather than starting off with a large mixture of species. These groups were most effective when several examples of each colour for each flowering month were selected. If in addition several small clumps were grouped together, each with one sort of lively colour, they ended up all different. What Bosse described sounds very reminiscent of the English mingled style described by Loudon. The ideas of planting flowers in small clumps, selecting the colours which represented

⁷³ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Bewerbung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, pp. 370-5

the main hues available, having some plants of each of the colours flowering at all time of the flowering year, as well as the repetition of the colours were the same.⁷⁴

Ruempfer said that a good border could be made without colour ordering, as long as not too much use was made of bright red, orange and yellow colours. However, illustration 84 shows eight plants in red or pink tones, ten in yellow or orange, twelve in blue or violet tones, sixteen white and one green flower. Although the white and blue tones dominate, the red and pink, and yellow and orange colours still are represented in a high proportion. White was used as a buffer between stronger colours. However by 1889 he would appear to have become much more aware of colour effects, as he wrote that in displays of plants of different heights the display had to be overviewed in one go. Hence the compilation of flowers and foliage had to be done either according to the laws of harmony or of contrast.⁷⁵

Hampel and Ruempfer were not involved in primary and secondary colours, using the six main colours instead; the three warm or active colours being red, orange and yellow, the three cool, passive colours being purple, blue and green. If the six were brought together into a circle, the warm colours opposed the cool ones. The warmest (orange) opposed the coolest (blue). The warm colours were the most luminous.⁷⁶

Hampel, along with most garden writers, was of the opinion that the colour theories known during the nineteenth century seemed to be mainly applicable to bedding

⁷⁴ Bosse, J.: *Handbuch der Blumengaertnerei*, 1859, p. 125

⁷⁵ Ruempfer, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, 1876, p. 182; *Die Stauden*, 1889, p. 13

⁷⁶ Ruempfer, Theodor: *Ruempfer's Gartenbau Lexikon*, 1882, pp. 290-2

ILLUSTRATION 84: COLOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PLANTING OF A NARROW BORDER

OUTER ROW MEDIUM PLANTS	MIDDLE ROW TALL PLANTS	OUTER ROW MEDIUM PLANTS
red, pink		red, pink
white	blue	white
blue violet	yellow	blue violet
yellow, orange	red	yellow, orange
blue, violet	white	blue, violet
white	pink	white
orange	yellow	orange
blue	violet	blue
white	white	white
red	yellow	red
white	blue	white
yellow	green	yellow
blue, violet	violet, lilac	blue, violet
white	white	white
red	orange	red
white	violet, blue	white

Ruempler suggested the above mixed colour disposition for a narrow, box-edged border which could be viewed from both sides. The typical width was 1.60 metres.

(Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Gartenblumen*, 1876, p. 182)

schemes, where the effect of the bed-pattern was really important. Herbaceous perennials used in mingled displays were less subjected to strict colour rules.⁷⁷

4.4.6. Historical Revivalism

As in Britain, German supporters of herbaceous perennials felt that they had been pushed out of the garden in preference for the more fashionable bedding plants. An article in the *Gartenzeitung* of 1871 started by saying the efforts of retrieving lost perennials from botanic gardens and other plant collections over the past few years had proven its worthiness. This was partly due to the fact that many species which in the past had been considered as unworthy, had become in great demand for carpet bedding displays. Despite the revival of numerous forgotten plants, there were still many which had not yet been brought back into circulation, or were not yet widely known.⁷⁸

With his book *Die Stauden* (The perennials) Ruempler hoped to re-introduce into the flower gardens of his time some of the plants which had been used by his ancestors. To support his case Ruempler pointed out the advantages of perennials and their ease of propagation, in comparison to those plants which needed to be produced annually. He argued that the desire for sub-tropical plants was very one-sided, but agreed that gardening with perennials could be just as one-sided. However his intention was to show the value of perennials as part of the entire flower scenery, he did not necessarily intend the whole garden to be taken over by perennials.

⁷⁷ Hampel, W.: *Gartenbuch fuer Jedermann*, 1890, p. 210

⁷⁸ Ohlmer: *Gartenzeitung*, 1871, pp. 37-8

Just as in Britain, authors complained that it had become as hard to find the good old traditional perennials in the country as in town. Only in the old traditional gardens was it still possible to find some of the old favourites growing in the borders of mixed gardens, on either side of the paths or along vegetable beds, planted between the soft fruit bushes and dwarf fruit trees.⁷⁹

Although tendencies were changing, not everybody was in favour of using perennials. At a time when others were praising perennials, Hampel was still dismissive to a point, saying that for the decoration of a pleasure ground during the summer months perennials were of little value as most only flowered for six or eight weeks, whereas people expected flowers from spring till autumn. Further on in his book he did admit that many perennials, which had been pushed out of gardens by the so-called fashion flowers into botanic and plant collector's collections, were starting to make a comeback. He explained that their value was being recognised again by many professionals, which meant that it would not take much longer before their popularity became widely spread again.⁸⁰

Even those people who were perhaps more in favour of bedding plants were forced to admit that towards the end of the nineteenth century perennials were well back in circulation. (See also chapter 6.)

Resumé

Despite threats to their survival by the popular bedding plants, throughout the nineteenth century perennials were used in German flower gardens and pleasure grounds. Many references, as well as several illustrations, have confirmed the use of

⁷⁹ Ruempler, Theodor: *Die Stauden*, 1889, pp. 3, 15

⁸⁰ Hampel, W.: *Gartenbuch fuer Jedermann*, 1890, pp. 314, 397

perennials in beds and borders, formal ones edging paths and in flower gardens, or informal ones in pleasure grounds or edging shrubberies. German gardeners agreed with most of their British colleagues in that plants should be spaced far enough apart to allow to healthy development. However the quantities and group sizes depended very much on the desired effect and from where the scheme would be viewed. The same applied to the arrangement of colour. Within massed displays, colours had to be ordered to create a pleasant effect, but the luminosity of a colour had to be considered at all times. Plants seen from a distance or against a dark background had to be bright, whereas duller colours could be seen from close by.

Perennials were popular solitaire plants and many could also be used as foliage plants, a fashion which was developed in Germany long before it became popular in Britain.

CHAPTER 5: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLANTS DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The popularity of perennials gradually increased in the course of the nineteenth century, reaching its peak at the end of the century. During the earlier decades mainly species were used in the garden, but as perennials became more popular, more and more hybrids and cultivars came onto the market. The burgeoning popularity of perennials can be put down to a number of factors. Besides the more obvious changes in fashion, taste and life style, within the domain of plants considerable changes took place. A large influx of new plants brought in from the wild by many plant collectors, an expansion of the nursery trade, an increase in plant breeding, as well as the revival of interest in perennials towards the end of the nineteenth century all contributed to the increasing range of perennial plants available to German and British gardeners.

Not only could gardeners become more selective in the plants they used in their displays, but more importantly, the colour range available was ever expanding. Jaeger had already commented in 1858 that recent efforts by florists had considerably widened the spectrum of available colours.¹ This selection was then taken over and further expanded by nurseries.

Nurseries and Plant Hunters

The nineteenth century was a period during which plants played an increasingly important role in gardens. It was a century during which horticulture flourished. Numerous plant expeditions resulted in a vast influx of new plants and nurseries thrived. The introduction of the Wardian case in the eighteen thirties played a vital role. This closed, mobile greenhouse enabled plant collectors to bring back plants

¹ Jaeger, Hermann: *Die Verwendung der Pflanzen in der Gartenkunst*, 1858, p. 344

from far afield, without them drying out, or suffering from salt spray during long sea voyages (see illustration 85).

Prior to that it had been mostly tubers, dormant roots and seeds that would have been able to survive the long sea journeys. The second half of the sixteenth century saw the introduction of many new plants into northern Europe, mainly coming from Turkey, where gardeners had been very active selecting and developing new varieties. The widely travelled botanist Carolus Clusius, who supervised the development of the Leiden Botanic Garden in 1590, was responsible for dispersing many of the newly introduced plants across Europe.²

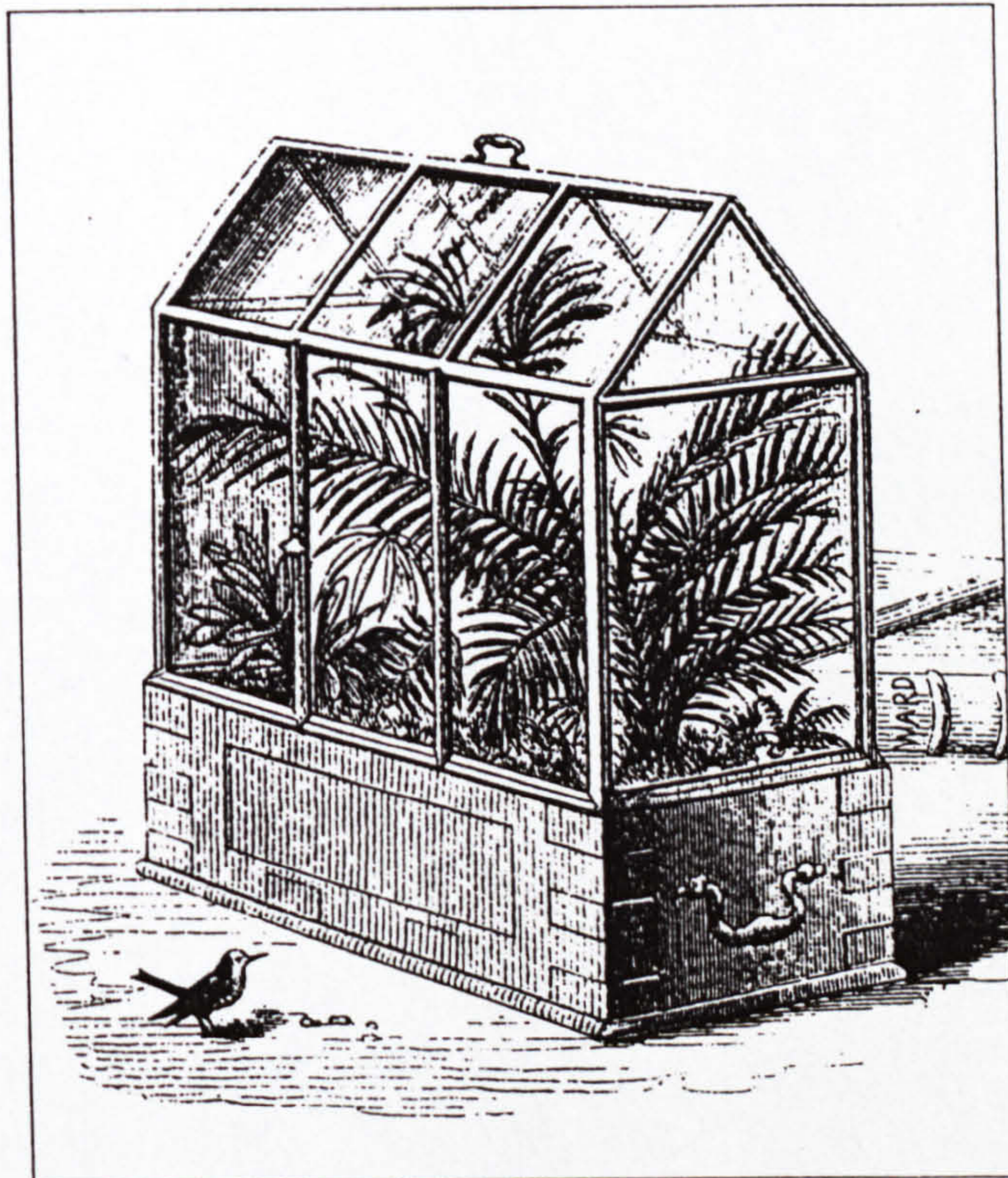
Besides studying contemporary literature, impressions of popular plant material can be gained by looking at flower paintings painted by Flemish artists like Jan I Breughel (1568-1625), Ambrosius Bosschaert (1573-1621) and Roelant Savery (1576-1639). These show a wealth of beautiful flowers known at the time. The reflection is somewhat unrealistic though, as the paintings tended to be collages of flowers which would not have been in flower at the same time. Furthermore those depicted were probably the favourite or rare ones, thus only showing a proportion of all flowers which could be found in the garden at that time (see illustration 86).

When looking at the analysis of plants listed in John Parkinson's *Paradisi in Sole, Paradisus Terrestris*, written in 1629, it is clear that the proportion of exotic bulbous plants available was much higher than any other plant type. Of the bulbs, tubers or other tuber-like roots 36 English species and 341 outlandish species were listed, nearly ten times as many as other plants. By 'English' Parkinson did not necessarily

² Wijnands, Onno: "Commercium Botanicum: The diffusion of plants in the 16th Century", *The Authentic Garden; a Symposium on Gardens*, Fat, L.Tjon Sie, & De Jong, E., editors, 1991 p. 75

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ILLUSTRATION 85: A WARDIAN CASE



The introduction of the Wardian case in the 1830s made it possible for a much wider range of plants to withstand the long sea voyages back to Europe. The result was an influx of new plants during the nineteenth century.

(Hobhouse, Penelope: *Plants in Garden History*, 1992, p. 245)

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ILLUSTRATION 86: FLOWERS IN A VASE



(Original in colour)

Seventeenth century flower paintings showed the valuable or rarer flowers, but did not necessarily illustrate all the contemporary flowers available.

(Jan de Fluwelen Breughel (1568-1625): Bloemen in een vaas, Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen)

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mean species native to this country, but also species which had been commonly used and accepted in British gardens for a long time. Outlandish species were those which had been introduced into the country relatively recently and were still considered special, due to their novelty.

The following analysis of ornamental plants listed by Parkinson was made by Peter Goodchild shows that a high proportion of plants available were perennials and bulbs³:

Plant type	English kinds	Outlandish kinds	Uncertain
Bulbs	8	63	1
Tubers	8	90	19
Roots like bulbs or tubers	20 approx.	188	40
Perennials: stringy, fibrous, tap Roots	95 approx.	84 approx.	0
Annuals, biennials, tender perennials	69 approx.	53	0
Sweet herbs	13	2	0
Succulents	0	2	0
Climbers	6	0	0
Shrubs	33	14	3
Evergreen shrubs	0	0	0
Tender evergreen shrubs	1	14	0
Trees	6	5	0

³ John Parkinson: *Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris*, 1629, Analysis made by Peter Goodchild, January 1979, courtesy of Peter Goodchild

Chapter 5: A Brief Overview of the Development of Plants During the Nineteenth Century

Johann Sigismund Elsholtz listed in *Vom Gartenbau* in 1684 a little more than 800 plants, of which 350 were intended for the herb garden, and 296 for the flower garden. These figures included woody, bulbous and herbaceous (annual, biennial and perennial) plants, though for herb and flower garden use the majority were perennial. This gives us an indication that even in the latter quarter of the seventeenth century herbs were still considered to be of greater importance than flowers. None the less, quite a number of genera listed within the herb garden section today are usually found in the flower garden rather than the herb garden, such as *Alchemilla*, *Geranium*, hellebores, lavender, lilies, poppies, peonies, saxifrages, *Thalictrum* and *Verbascum*. His listing of flowers included 130 "caryophyllacea". This term is used today to describe the family to which belong the *Dianthus* cultivars such as pinks and carnations. This is probably what was referred to in this case. Tulips were also in great demand, with a list exceeding 220 named varieties.⁴

The rate at which new plants were introduced during the seventeenth century was so high, that in his address to the readers John Rea explained he collected:

"all the rarest plants, fruits and flowers, that by any means, I could procure, either in this Nation, France or Flanders..."⁵,

and added that many plants described in Mr Parkinson's *Paradisus Terrestris* had long since been superseded and were in need of updating, although the book had been published less than fifty years earlier.

⁴ Elsholtz, Johann Sigismund: *Vom Garten-baw*, 1684, p. 42

⁵ John Rea: *Flora, seu de Florum Cultorum*, 1676, p. 8

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Andreas de la Croyx's 1707 catalogue showed a great variety of plants. It included 369 tulips, ninety-nine anemones, thirty-four ranunculus, twenty-nine white hyacinths, nine crown imperials, forty-eight narcissus, twenty-eight irises, seven day lilies, 110 picotees and carnations and eighty-five auriculas. He also referred to other flowers, but in smaller numbers, such as double delphiniums, *Campanula pyramidalis*, poppies, gladiolus and colchicums.⁶

The range of plants discussed by Hartenfels nearly forty years later, was much larger. He listed plants according to type. There were the summer flowers which were predominantly annuals, though also included some perennials used for bedding out. They added up to sixty-six genera.⁷ Under the heading tubers (which included peonies) thirty-three genera were mentioned and there were twenty-six bulbous genera.⁸ Finally, for the fibrous rooted section (these were herbaceous plants) he mentioned ninety-six different genera, including 106 named varieties of Auriculas.⁹

Peter Lauremberg added a list of perennial plants in his *Horticultura II*¹⁰, which contained a few shrubs such as rhododendrons. They added up to 243 generic plant names.¹¹

⁶ Croyx, Andreas de la: *Edles Kleinod*, 1707, pp. 56, 61, 63, 68-82

⁷ Hartenfels, Arnold Friedrich von: *Neuer Garten-Saals*, Vol. 1, 1745, p. 54

⁸ Hartenfels, Arnold Friedrich von: *Neuer Garten-Saals*, Vol. 1, 1745, pp. 107, 162

⁹ Hartenfels, Arnold Friedrich von: *Neuer Garten-Saals*, Vol. 1, 1745, pp. 216-39

¹⁰ It appears that several editions were published after the death of Peter Lauremberg (1585-1639). Publication dates found were 1632, 1652, 1682 and in this particular case the date of 1781 is quoted with a question mark.

¹¹ Lauremberg, Peter: *Horticultura*, Libris II, 1781? pp. 95-8

Chapter 5: A Brief Overview of the Development of Plants During the Nineteenth Century

Plant collectors continued their quest for new plants, travelling further and further afield. During the nineteenth century the East opened up and numerous expeditions to the Himalayas, China and later to Japan took place. Many plants familiar to us today were brought back from those regions by British as well as German plant hunters like the Hookers, Fortune and Siebold.

The influx of plants from different continents is reflected in Gorer's analysis of three nursery catalogues, spanning just over a century. A breakdown of his figures reflects plant collecting activities. Although Loddiges went on to become one of the best-stocked nurseries ever, in 1804 they still were a modest establishment, listing 994 herbaceous plants. Van Houtte, Belgian's leading nursery, which produced an English catalogue for British customers, listed 583 herbaceous plants in 1869. Forbes was one of the larger British nurseries at the beginning of this century, offering 1067 herbaceous plants in 1909.

Gorer counted the number of herbaceous plants coming from different parts of the world. The following table and analysis are based on his figures, and relate to herbaceous plants only; woody plants reflected a different picture.¹²

¹² Gorer, Richard: *The Growth of Gardens*, 1978, pp. 189-90.

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Geographical origin	Loddiges 1804		Van Houtte 1869		Forbes 1909	
	plants	%	plants	%	plants	%
Europe	687	69	303	52	567	53.1
Near East & Caucasus	50	5	56	9.6	120	11.2
India	0		17	3	55	5.1
Far East	34	3.4	33	5.6	59	5.5
Japan	0		39	6.7	51	4.8
Eastern North America	214	21.5	88	15	143	13.4
Western North America	0		21	3.6	71	6.6
Central America	0		6	1	11	1
South America	8	0.8	13	2.2	41	3.8
South Africa	1	0.1	2	0.34	23	2.1
North Africa	0		1	0.17	3	53.1
New Zealand	0		3	0.51	22	11.2
Australia	0		0		1	5.15

Analysing the above percentages it becomes clear that at any time the majority of herbaceous plants on offer originated from Europe, though it had dropped from nearly 70% at the start of the century, to just over half of the plant range by 1869. The second largest source of plants remained Eastern North America, though here too the numbers dropped from 21% to 13%. At the start of the last century, less than 1% of herbaceous plants came from the southern hemisphere; by 1869 4.3% of plants originated from Central- and South America, Africa and Australasia, and at the beginning of this century this figure had further increased to nearly 10%. The influx of North American plants remained almost constant, though as the East Coast plants lost appeal, the West Coast ones were on the increase. The only major increase (from 3.4% to 15% by

1869) could be seen in plants coming from the Far East, Japan and India, statistics which are confirmed by the interest of plant hunters in these areas. Even today, the majority of hardy herbaceous perennials grown in our gardens originated from the northern hemisphere.

Besides the ever-increasing flow of new species coming in from the wild, hybridisation played an equally vital role for our garden flora. Chance hybrids, occurring when two species cross-pollinate, were the main source of new garden-raised plants until the nineteenth century. Camerarius's discovery of the sexual reproduction of plants in 1691 helped the understanding for the need of pollination to set seed. However, Fairchild's raising of the first artificial *Dianthus* hybrid, 'Fairchild's Mule' in 1719, was an exception at the time. It was not until the early nineteenth century that Thomas Andrew Knight started to use the techniques to improve fruit and vegetables. Hybridisation remained a rather inaccurate science until Gregor Mendel's Law was published in 1866, and confirmed by further research in 1900. Plants raised through artificial hybridisation and by selecting of improved seedlings, gave a much more accurate reflection of people's tastes.¹³

Nurseries were not only keen to draw customers from far afield, and aimed at an international market, they also exchanged seeds with people across the world, thus constantly being able to offer novelties. Loddiges' nursery published its catalogues in three languages: Latin, English and German. Several of the German nurseries produced catalogues in English or German/French, incorporating prices in English currency to facilitate trade.

¹³ Chittenden., Fred: *The Royal Horticultural Society Dictionary of Gardening*, Vol. III, 1974, pp. 1598-9

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It was also not unusual for gardeners to work in nurseries abroad to gain experience. This in turn encouraged the further distribution of garden worthy plants. Thomas S. Ware's nursery in Tottenham was such an example, where famous growers like Perry worked, as well as G. Reuthe and Georg Arends, who in turn founded his well-known herbaceous nursery in 1888.¹⁴

In Germany it was W. Pfitzer from Stuttgart, who founded his nursery in 1844, who soon after 1850 started his selection work with *Delphinium* (94 new introductions over 100 years), *Penstemon* (557 introductions), *Phlox paniculata* (513 introductions) and *Kniphofia* (10 introductions). In Britain, Thomas Ware's nursery was one of the first nurseries to start selecting perennials. They had been producing a basic range of perennials since 1860, gradually increasing their stock of *Dianthus*, *Alyssum*, lavender, hollyhocks, *Delphinium*, *Lupinus*, herbs and biennials. The nursery offered an ever increasing range of delphiniums, penstemons, *Phlox decussata*, peonies, potentillas and *Primula elatior* cultivars. By 1882 the collection reached a peak with an enormous plant range, although all were not necessary good garden plants.¹⁵ As competition increased, they were forced to reduce their range, concentrating on the best forms only. Thus for example *Iris germanica* and its forms were reduced from 500 to 200 and then only 50 cultivars. Furthermore, the plant range on offer was also

¹⁴ Reuthe., G.: "Pflanzen im Garten des Herrn Ware zu Tottenham im Monat Januar in Blute", *Neubert's Deutsches Garten-Magazin*, pp. 74-5, Vol. 7, 1888; Reuthe, G.: "Die Staudenkulturen zu Tottenham-London", *Neubert's Deutsches Garten-Magazin*, pp. 238-42, Vol. 11, 1892; Jellito, L., & Schacht, W.: *Die Freiland-Schmuckstauden*, p. 146, Vol. 2, 1966; Maubach, Anja: "Life Among the Flowers", *The Garden*, pp. 100-5, Vol. 122, No. 2, 1997

¹⁵ Gardeners were asking their colleagues to offer information on which plants were actually garden worthy, as so many were in effect no better than some of the native weeds.

influenced by smog which badly affected plant development, especially around major industrial centres such as London.¹⁶

A comparison of the collection of border plants offered by Ware in 1889 and 1899 (their special selection of easy to grow perennials contained 140 entries in 1889 and 171 in 1899) reflects the changes in the nursery trade. Some genera had increased, other decreased, and although some stayed the same in number, the species or cultivars offered had changed. The genera of which an increased selection of species and cultivars was on offer by the end of the century were: *Achillea*, *Anemone*, *Aster*, *Campanula*, *Centaurea*, *Coreopsis*, *Geum*, *Gaillardia*, *Helenium*, *Helleborus*, *Inula*, *Lathyrus*, *Monarda*, *Papaver*, pinks, *Polemonium*, *Rudbeckia*, *Kniphofia* and *Veronica*. The following new genera had also been added to the selection: *Asclepias*, *Digitalis*, *Echinops*, *Gentiana*, *Geranium*, *Gypsophila*, *Heuchera*, *Liatris*, *Physalis*, *Sedum spectabile*, *Sidalcea*, *Thalictrum aquilegifolium* and *Verbascum*. The genera of which fewer species and cultivars were offered were: *Armeria*, *Hosta*, *Helianthus*, *Hemerocallis*, *Hypericum*, *Phlox*, *Penstemon*, *Ranunculus*, *Senecio*, *Statice*, *Trollius*, whereas those which had completely disappeared were: *Asphodelus*, *Dicentra*, *Erodium*, *Pyrethrum* and *Zauschneria*.¹⁷

It appears that English nurseries offered a larger proportion of perennials than their German counterparts. Seedlists were analysed to see which proportions of flowers were hardy perennials, compared to annuals, biennials, and tender perennials for greenhouses or stoves. The Kelways 1881 seed list contained 42% hardy perennials, whereas Lorenz only had 21% in their 1881 seed list. This ratio stayed more or less

¹⁶ Reuthe, G.: "Die Staudenkulturen zu Tottenham-London", *Neubert's Deutsches Garten-Magazin*, pp. 238-42, Vol. 11, 1892

¹⁷ Ware, Thomas S.: "Tottenham Collection of Border Plants", *Spring Catalogue*, 1899, p. 44; "Tottenham collection of hardy border plants", *Spring Catalogue*, 1899, p. 73

constant for Lorenz, in 1899 there were 320 species and varieties of perennials on offer, 25% of all plants. However by 1909 this range had dropped to only 109 hardy perennials, a mere fifth of their full range. This drop in variety was not reflected by other nurseries at the time. Haage had managed to increase its range six-fold over a sixty year period from 1861 to 1921 offering a range of plants exceeding 2000 entries, and Heinemann had doubled its range between 1898 and 1907 to just over 400.¹⁸

Besides the main catalogue listings, several growers would include special sections for specific genera which were very fashionable at the time. Especially towards the latter part of the nineteenth century, delphiniums, peonies and phloxes proved very popular. During the last decade Kelways, one of the leading nurseries in the country, introduced on average twelve new delphiniums on the market each year. In 1881 they offered 236 *Phlox* and 18 *Delphinium* varieties. Ten years later the range of delphiniums had increased to 149, phloxes decreased to 113, and four pages of the catalogue were dedicated to peonies, listing 536 varieties. There were other popular plants, such as 50 hollyhocks. They had been favourite garden flowers for a long time, depicted in many nineteenth century garden scenes. Parkinson and Hanmer had listed several varieties, and they even rivalled dahlias for a while. Their popularity sadly decreased after hollyhock rust became a problem in 1874. Since then breeders have lost interest in them, and they now tend to be treated as biennials.¹⁹

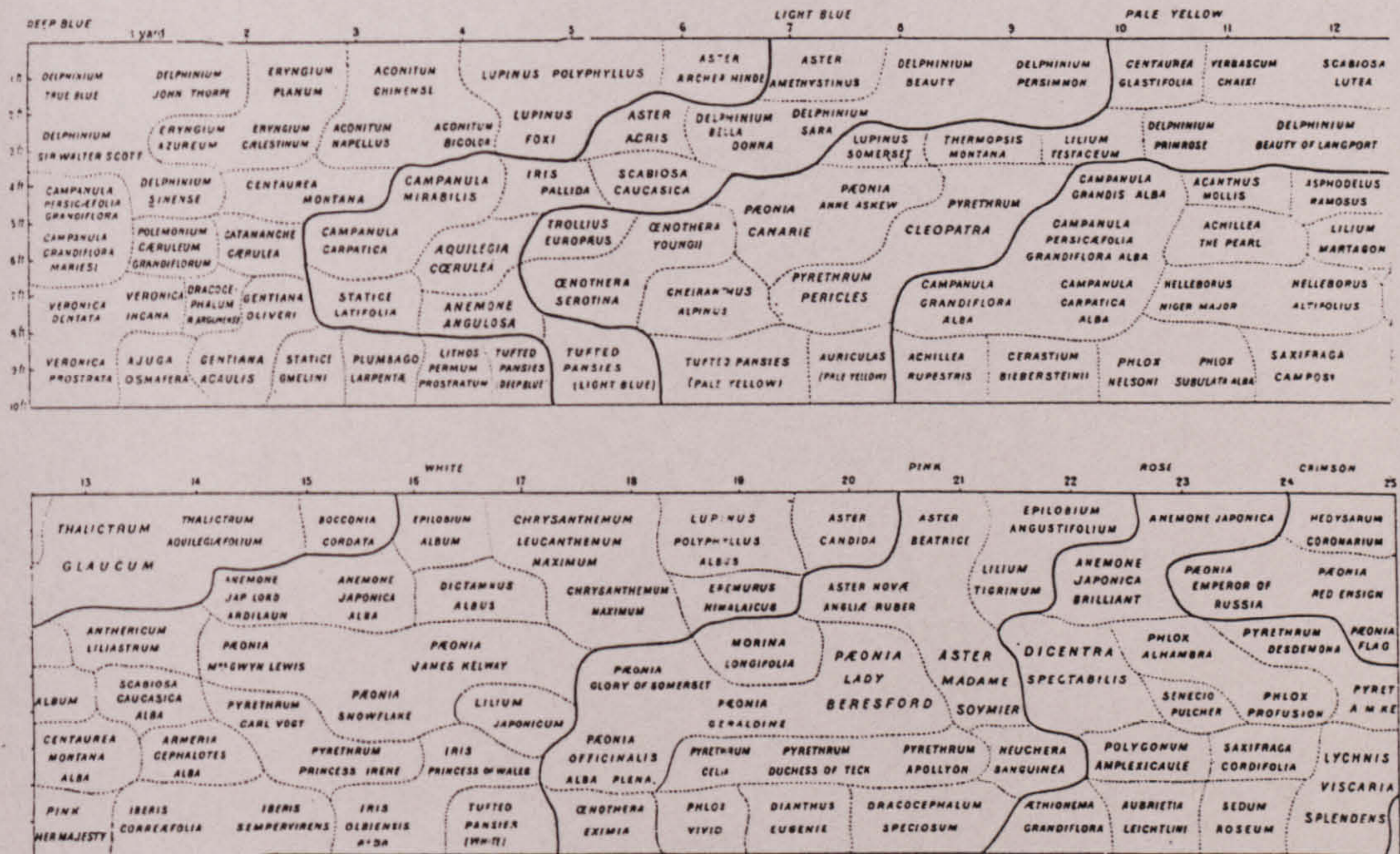
By 1899 Kelways' catalogue resembled more a book than just a catalogue. Besides further expanding its plant range, the firm also included much advice and even planting plans for a herbaceous border (see illustration 87). Robinson's influence can

¹⁸ Kelways nursery catalogue 1881; Lorenz nursery catalogues 1880, 1899, 1909; Haage nursery catalogues 1861, 1921; Heinemann nursery catalogues 1898, 1907; Metz nursery catalogues 1870, 1871.

¹⁹ Coats, Alice: *Flowers and their Histories*, 1968, p. 12

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ILLUSTRATION 87: KELWAYS' CATALOGUE PLANTING PLAN



Herbaceous borders had gained so much in popularity that Kelways nursery included a sample planting plan for a stretch of border in their 1901 catalogue. There was a clearly defined colour progression, which, like in Jekyll's sequence, contrasted blue with pale yellow. Plants were used in quite large masses, an effect which was heightened by the grouping together of different cultivars. Thus seven peonies formed a large drift through the white and pink areas, and asters created a large mass towards the rear of the border. Although bold when in flower, the display would have been rather dull at other times. There was no even spread of colour, so important in early nineteenth century schemes.

(Kelways Nursery Catalogue, 1901, pp. 18-19)

be clearly felt throughout the catalogue, and it reflected the increasing popularity of perennials. In 1900 the range of genera worthy of a special mention had further augmented. There were still separate listings for delphiniums, irises, peonies, phlox, picotees and pinks, but there were also many asters, campanulas, gaillardias and pyrethrums.

For the beginner, the catalogue also offered special collections of twelve to a hundred hardy herbaceous perennials, one or two plants of each. Later they went on to listing genera for specific positions, like sunny or shady borders, wild gardens or wall gardens.²⁰

German nursery lists reflect a similar increase in interest in perennials. Haage had 338 perennials on offer in 1861, with separate lists for peonies (115), and phlox (57). Metz from Berlin had no separate listing for perennials in 1867, but by 1871 he did, including a list of forty peonies. Judging by Lorenz's catalogue, delphiniums were not as popular in Germany as they were in Britain by the end of the nineteenth century. He only listed twenty varieties, which seems somewhat meagre compared with the average of twelve new varieties Kelways added to its list annually.²¹

Author's Plant Lists

Although the changes in demand are reflected in the trade catalogues, in reality they only show the evolving trends from the last part of the nineteenth century onwards. They highlight the changes in interest for different genera, and the introduction of an ever increasing range of cultivars, as perennials gained in popularity during this

²⁰ Kelways nursery catalogues, 1881, 1891, 1897, 1899, 1900, 1926

²¹ Haage Nursery List: 1861, Metz Nursery Lists: 1867, 1871; Lorenz Nursery List: 1899

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period. In the earlier part of the nineteenth century the nursery trade was still in its development stage, with fewer traders, and not so many regular catalogues, making it more difficult to reach conclusions based on statistics derived from them.

In the absence of this information, it is worth gaining more background from the plant lists published by various garden authors, who recommended suitable plants to their readers. Although these lists show the range of plants that would have been available to gardeners, they give a less accurate image than the nursery catalogues do, as they were biased by personal choice and preferences, which do not necessarily reflect contemporary fashions. In Appendices 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 lists have been reproduced from three British and three German authors, from the early, middle and latter part of the nineteenth century. Appendix 4 was published by Charles M'Intosh in 1838, and is by far the largest list, with 700 entries for border perennials. Shirley Hibberd's 1871 list of hardy herbaceous plants contained 354 plants. For Germany Eduard Schmidlin's 1843 list of plants for any garden, even with an average soil, added up to 359 entries, Jaeger's 1864 list contained 324 perennials and Hampel mentioned a selection of the finest perennials totalling 156 plants.²²

Although M'Intosh's list was by far the most extensive, it contained many plants of the same species, listed under different synonyms by current nomenclature standards. Most names have been corrected according to current nomenclature, not all names were traced, particularly of the earlier lists, and of some of the early cultivar names which have now sadly disappeared from our gardens.

²² M'Intosh, Charles: *The Flower Garden*, 1838, p. 319; Thomson, David: *Handy Book of the Flower Garden*, 1868, p. 159; Hibberd, James, Shirley: *The Amateur's Flower Garden*, 1871, p. 103; Schmidlin, Eduard: *Die Buergerliche Gartenkunst*, 1843, p. 126; Jaeger, Hermann: *Illustriertes Allgemeines Gartenbuch*, 1864, p. 452; Hampel, W.: *Gartenbuch fuer Jedermann*, 1890, p. 398

Analysis of the lists reflects certain trends in the rise and fall of plant popularity. Notable is the absence of plants like *Alchemilla mollis*, a recent introduction in garden plant terms, and with the exception of one, *Euphorbia* species do not feature. Whereas today British gardeners are rediscovering late summer compositae, much used by continental gardeners, it appears that their value was already much appreciated in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, listing *Coreopsis*, *Echinacea*, *Helenium*, *Helianthus*, *Rudbeckia* and *Solidago* species, whilst their German counterparts hardly mentioned them. A similar occurrence is notable in *Acanthus mollis* and *A. spinosus* which only receive a mention on the early German and British lists, then never again, as did *Centaurea* and *Scabiosa*. Much valued as a foliage plant today, *Artemisia* was only present on M'Intosh's list. Forty of the sixty four *Aster* species only occurred on the two earliest lists, and despite the numbers, only four were mentioned on four lists or more: *A. amellus*, *A. elegans* (syn. *A. spectabilis*), *A. ericoides* and *A. novae-angliae*. The genus *Dianthus* appears to have undergone a similar fate, with twenty entries in the early lists, but only five genera receiving another mention later on.

Certain genera saw a decline in popularity, such as *Monarda* and *Achillea*. All lists contained them, but with the exception of *A. ptarmica* and its double form, which were widely popular, there is a notable decline towards the end of the century. *Aquilegia alpina* and *A. canadensis* remained popular throughout, but the most of the remaining ten species only received attention in the early British and German lists. A similar phenomenon is noticeable with *Potentilla* and *Phlox* most of which were published only in the first list of both countries.

Penstemons on the other hand increased in popularity towards to latter part of the nineteenth century in both countries. *Penstemon digitalis* and *P. hirsutus* were particularly favoured in Germany. The latter and *P. campanulatus* were the only two to occur in both countries, out of a total of twenty-five plants. *Sedum* saw a similar

increase in popularity, with only seven in the early and middle German and British lists, as opposed to sixteen in the last lists.

Some plants appear to have been more popular in Germany than in Britain, such as *Aconitum*. Thirteen were listed by the former, but only seven by the latter, with *A. napellus* the most popular one. *Cheiranthus* and *Erysimum* species on the other hand were not mentioned in Germany, though this was probably due to hardiness problems.

Only two *Corydalis* were listed by the Germans, whereas eight were by the British. *Gentiana* species were popular throughout the period in the United Kingdom, but received less attention in Germany. As little as one *Heuchera* and two *Tiarella* species were listed in British lists, none in Germany. The genus *Meconopsis* only came in at the end of the century, in Britain only.

Whilst *Anemone* species enjoyed an increase in popularity on this side of the channel, there appears to have been an equally distinct decrease on the other side. The three most recurring species being *A. appenina*, *A. coronaria* and *A. hupehensis* var. *japonica*. Whilst *Veronica* was less in favour in the middle of nineteenth century Britain, in Germany it was exactly the opposite.

Even though some genera gained or lost popularity, others remained very constant such as *Campanula*, with more than thirty different species subspecies and varieties listed. *C. persicifolia* and all its different forms being the most popular one. *Digitalis* appeared throughout. The same could be said from *Delphinium*, with twelve entries from each country although upon closer analysis, their popularity in Britain dropped in the middle of the century, whereas in Germany it peaked at that time. Irises were very popular, especially in Germany, but although nearly forty different ones were listed, only *I. germanica* and *I. pumila* were referred to by four of the six lists.

Similarly with the lilies, only *L. chalcedonicum* and *L. longiflorum* out of more than thirty lilies were commonly mentioned.

Although this analysis shows no sign of a constant increase of availability of genera across the board, certain trends are reflected in the development of cultivars discussed below.

Plant Breeding and the Revival of Perennials

Much of the initial breeding and selecting of new cultivars had been carried out by gardeners, professional and amateur, and florists, as we can see from Mary Russell Mitford's diaries. She used to raise her own seedling new hybrid plants such as dahlias, and sold the best ones to nurseries. She would never grow a variety older than three years, though she regretted sometimes throwing out good plants for the sake of novelties, but said "it is what must be done, to keep up with the collections round".²³ However if we listen to Joshua Major's complaint, then this desire to keep up with the latest in plant fashions was reserved for the amateur or the older professional gardener. He feared that young gardeners did not learn enough about new plants, and as a result the same old plants were used along shrubbery edges and even in the kitchen borders year after year.²⁴ (See above for more details on hybridisation.)

The results of breeding efforts were sometimes so successful that nurseries only offered a range of varieties without the original species. Consequently a number of true species have disappeared from our plant range, and it has become impossible to tell the actual parentage of some plants. The following plants are some of those of

²³ Mitford, Mary Russell: *My Garden*, 1990, edited by Robin Marsack, c.1840, p. 120

²⁴ Major, Joshua: *The Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, 1852, p. 29

which parentage has become rather uncertain or has been lost: *Aquilegia*, *Astilbe*, *Delphinium*, *Gladiolus*, *Hemerocallis*, *Lupinus*, *Mimulus*, *Montbretia*, *Nymphaea*, *Penstemon*, *Phlox* and *Schizanthus*.²⁵

The popularity of plants did not necessarily go hand in hand with their introduction into the country. Some had been around for centuries, but had to wait until the end of the last century before their value as garden plants was recognised, as part of the revival of perennials.

One example of this is the genus *Aster*, which consists of more than 600 species, more than half of which originate from north America. *A. amellus*, being of European origin, was available before 1596, whereas *A. novi-belgii* was introduced in 1710 and *A. laevis* in 1753. These, and *A. dumosus* (1753), are the parents of about two thirds of today's crosses, and although *A. novae-angliae* was also introduced in 1710, it does not hybridise as freely as the others, and was not extensively used until this century. It was not until improved form became available that they became desirable garden plants. Ballard and Amos Perry were responsible for many of the English cultivars, whereas Goos & Koenemann and Arends produced many of the continental ones.²⁶ Many nineteenth century gardeners regarded asters as garden rogues. Their freely-spreading root system was probably to blame. Loudon had described them in 1829 as not very ornamental, though conceded that they provided flower at a time when little else did; Sutherland had said that if they were at all grown, then it was usually in a forgotten corner. However, Robinson was much impressed with them and devoted several pages to the subject in his diary of Gravetye. He planted them in amongst the rhododendrons where they could grow naturally without staking. It was not until late

²⁵ Gorer, Richard: *The Development of Garden Flowers*, 1970, p. 174

²⁶ Gorer, Richard: *The Growth of gardens*, 1979; Gorer, Richard: *The Development of Garden Flowers*, 1970

in the nineteenth century that the range of asters available was on the increase. The preceding analysis of plant lists reflects the lack of interest in this genus during the century.

Phlox paniculata was introduced into Europe in the earlier part of the eighteenth century, but it was not until the middle of the last century that the range started to expand. In Britain Symons-Jeune played an important role in the development of *Phlox* cultivars, as well as John Downie of Edinburgh who started selecting new plants in 1850, and Low of Clapton made several of the French cultivars available for the English market in 1856. In Germany it was W. Pfitzer who started with his selection programme in 1867, producing about 25 new cultivars each year, an increase not clear from the above plant lists.

Although some delphinium hybrids had been raised in the early part of the nineteenth century, until the middle of the century only species were grown in most gardens. It was not until the latter part of the century that plant breeders paid them much attention. James Kelway started hybridising delphiniums in 1859. In 1881 Kelways listed 16 varieties, in 1882 this number had already increased to 44, and in 1889 they offered 137 of their own introductions. By 1899 the Royal Horticultural Society had awarded 32 Awards of Merit to delphiniums, 28 of which were Kelways introductions. The Belladonna hybrids were introduced around 1880, though their parentage is unknown.²⁷ This pattern is clearly reflected in the analysis of the plant lists.

²⁷ Jelitto, Leo and Schacht, Wilhelm: *Die Freiland-Schmuckstauden*, 1868, Vol. 2, pp. 14-5, 113-8, 22-8; Coats, Alice: *Flowers and their Histories* 1968, p. 30; Heinemann nursery catalogue, 1898, 1907; Haage nursery catalogue, 1861, 1921; Robinson, William: *Gravetye Manor*, 1885-1911

Ornamental Grasses

German gardeners were well at ease with grasses. Nursery catalogues dedicated separate lists to them, though they were probably mainly used for bedding out or foliage displays, judging by the high proportion of annual or tender species. In 1870 Metz offered over 100 grasses (compared to 382 perennials), Lorenz offered about 85 grasses in 1899, but only 320 perennials.

British gardeners were aware of the value of grasses, particularly for bedding displays, but seemed to make less of an issue of them. M'Intosh had written that although *Gramineae* were an interesting family of plants, they belonged more in a botanical display than in an ornamental garden. He considered them relevant in connection with their importance in the human food chain. Because of this he suggested planting them in a garden in pots or patches nine inches square, divided by brick work, stone or slate to prevent the roots from spreading. He also advised cutting down the grasses as soon as the seeds started ripening, to prevent them from seeding.²⁸ He obviously had little confidence in them, and unlike Robinson 35 years later, did not value them for their aesthetic contribution of texture, shape and movement, to the garden scene.

Not all were so ignorant about the garden values of grasses. Robinson listed sixty-seven different grasses in *Hardy Flowers*, under the heading "Mixed borders, groups and beds of the finer perennials may be much improved by being varied with tufts of the finer ornamental grasses."²⁹ *Gardening Illustrated* also tried to rectify some of the misunderstandings on grasses. Amongst other it listed *Agrostis pulchella* (syn.

²⁸ M'Intosh, Charles: *The Book of the Garden*, 1853, p. 670

²⁹ Robinson, William: *Hardy Flowers*, 1888, pp. 303-4

Sporobolus pulchellus), *Briza gracilis* (syn. *B. minor*), *B. geniculata* (syn. *Eragrostis obtusa*), *Stipa elegantissima* and *S. pennata* as good grasses.³⁰

Resumé

Within the confines of this thesis, it is impossible to give a complete overview of the development of plants in British and German gardens during a century which saw so much activity and expansion in the field of plant introductions. A few of the main issues have been highlighted, such as the role of plant collectors, nurseries as well as private gardeners in the increase in plants. For most genera of hardy herbaceous perennials it was not until the last quarter of the nineteenth century that a considerable increase in their cultivar and variety numbers can be noted. Prior to that the range of perennials available was mainly restricted to a limited number of species, with few cultivars. At the turn of the century gardeners not only had a good selection of plants to choose from, nurseries had learned to be more selective with the assortment on offer, weeding out the inferior garden plants, in favour of the better forms.

³⁰ W., E.: "Hardy Grasses", *Gardening Illustrated*, Vol. 1, 1880, pp. 705-7; Anon.: "Ornamental Grasses", *Gardening Illustrated*, Vol. 1, 1880, pp. 730-3

CHAPTER 6: HERBACEOUS PERENNIAL PLANT USE FROM THE TURN OF THE CENTURY: THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

Towards the end of the nineteenth century several new leading figures started to emerge in the gardening world. Their influence was to reach far beyond the boundaries of their own countries. The two most noteworthy for Britain were William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll. Their enthusiasm helped to further promote herbaceous gardening at a time when it was enjoying a revival, and brought it into the twentieth century. Their opinions, ideas and planting styles made them famous in the earlier part of this century in England and abroad, and are currently popular again. Gertrude Jekyll in particular made a lasting impression on twentieth century herbaceous planting design. As her influence is still so strongly seen in today's gardens, her work in relationship to herbaceous border design has been discussed.

In Germany the person who made a huge contribution to gardening with perennials was Karl Foerster. Many of his innumerable plant introductions are still famous today, and the German book market has never been without a Foerster book for very long.

Although these three figureheads are by no means the only ones to have had an influence on herbaceous planting design, they reached the largest audience by publishing their opinions in books and articles. Not everybody necessarily agreed with these ideas, but nonetheless it opened them up for discussion and consideration. Their opinions were certainly not the only ones, there are a number of contemporary gardeners and designers such as Norah Lindsey and Friedrich Wilhelm Wiepking (see also introduction), which may have had different approaches and ideas. Access to their ideas on planting design would not only have been limited to those who could afford their services, it was also restricted to those few who has access to transport

facilities to visit the gardens. Garden visiting was not yet the popular pass-time it has become nowadays.

In view of the absence of biographical discussions on Foerster in English, a more elaborate section on his work has been included below. A detailed chronology of his life can be found in Appendix 11, and a full list of his publications in Appendix 12. A chronology of Jekyll's life can be seen in Appendix 14. A list of publications on the life and work of Gertrude Jekyll and William Robinson can be found in the introduction (see chapter 2).

6.1. Gertrude Jekyll's Herbaceous Border Designs

During the latter quarter of the nineteenth century, some major changes occurred in the concept of herbaceous border designs, in the sense that people became increasingly aware of the significance of planting according to a specific colour scheme and of the importance of foliage colour, form and texture to ensure a successful design (see chapters 3.4.4 and 3.4.5). Gertrude Jekyll played a vital role in promoting these design elements through her articles and later her books. The roles of colour, texture and foliage are still recognised today, and it is only since the early 1990s that any significant changes in herbaceous planting design have started to occur with new trends in colour associations, and more importantly the introduction of a more naturalistic planting design inspired by Dutch and German planting ideas. In view of Gertrude Jekyll's role in shaping twentieth century approach to herbaceous border design, her thoughts and theories on the subject have been analysed and discussed below.¹

¹ Further information on other aspects of her life and work can be found in the books listed in Chapter 2, as well as her own extensive work.

Two sources of information are available to analyse Gertrude Jekyll's ideas on border design and planting. Firstly there are her garden and planting plans, drawn up in great detail, showing what was to be planted, how the drifts were shaped and what the plant relations were. Many of these designs were created in collaboration with the architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, with whom she created a firm friendship and working partnership. The planting plans also reveal the predominant colour patterns and themes for the borders in question, and highlight the relevance of foliage plants in her designs. The second source of information is her writing. She was a prolific author with several regular gardening columns in major papers and magazines, such as the *Guardian* and *Country Life*. She made extensive use of her own garden for these articles as well as her books, in that she would usually describe its areas rather than referring to others of which she would have had less knowledge. Especially the main flower border was frequently described, to help illustrate the colour progression she advocated, and explain the role that foliage plants played. Her books and articles offer a useful complement to the plans, as they give more of an insight into her gardening techniques and practices, and give an explanation why certain plants are used more frequently than others. As she was a keen photographer, numerous photographs of her garden survive to further illustrate her points.

Munstead Wood

Having previously gardened in several other gardens of her parental homes, the purchase in 1883 of the piece of land on which she was to create her very own garden and build her own house designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, was quite a significant step. The garden became her trial and observation grounds, providing a rich source of material to write about, and information on plants which in turn could be applied in clients' gardens.

The garden at Munstead Wood (see illustration 88) had been divided into several areas with distinctive themes and characters providing colour and interest throughout the year. In most of these areas herbaceous perennials featured prominently, but as each area was planted to create a specific character and would be at its peak at different times of year, there appears to have been little repetition in the garden.

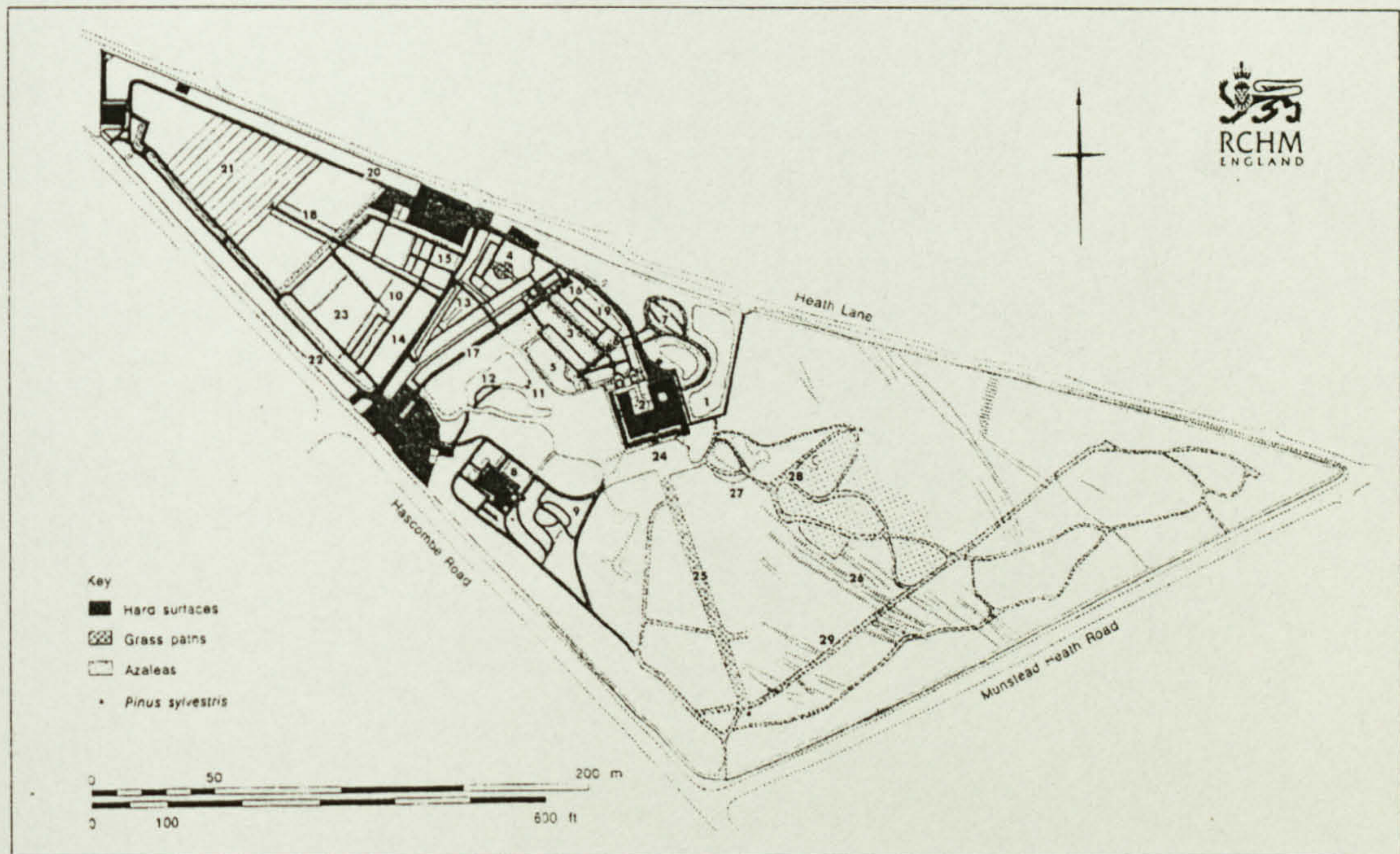
Only in the vicinity of regularly frequented areas such as the paths near the hut, would she endeavour to provide long-lasting interest. Early spring colour was provided by a bank of early bulbs, which later in the season was covered by fern fronds. The wood was a great source of variety in the early season, as was the spring garden. The hidden garden helped to bridge the gap between spring and summer with tree peonies, briar roses, *Phlox divaricata*, *Iris cengialti*, London pride, St. Bruno's lily and many more plants happily growing in this enclosed space, which Jekyll knew would become increasingly shady as time went on due to the expanding size of the surrounding trees and shrubs. The June garden surrounding the hut, Jekyll's first abode at Munstead Wood while the house was being built, provided a great show with peonies, roses, irises, tree lupins, foxgloves and geraniums. The iris and lupin borders too were very colourful at this time of year. In later years a July border was added, but initially this period was taken care of by the main flower border. (See below for a detailed description.)²

Gertrude Jekyll was of the opinion that bedding plants had been wrongly used in the regimented schemes of high Victorian gardens. She dedicated a small, sheltered area of her garden to them, but instead of planting them in the regimented ways people had been used to, she planted in her usual drifts, with a central, raised area for bold

² Jekyll, Gertrude: *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*, 1908, p. 32-3, 67, 86, 90-1, 101, 108-9,

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ILLUSTRATION 88: A PLAN OF MUNSTEAD WOOD IN JEKYLL'S DAY



The above survey drawing shows the garden features which existed in Jekyll's days. 1. Entrance and house; 2. North court and tank garden; 3. Nut walk; 4. Spring garden; 5. Shrub walk; 6. Cenotaph; 7. Primrose garden; 8. Hut; 9. Hidden garden; 10. Iris and lupin borders; 11. Yew cat; 12. Rock garden; 13. Annual garden; 14. July border; 15. Grey garden; 16. Pergola; 17. Main flower border; 18. Autumn border; 19. Michaelmas borders; 20-3. Kitchen and working gardens; 24. South terrace; 25. Main wood walk; 26. Daffodil river; 27. Fern and lily walks; 28. Azalea clearing; 29. Heath garden.

(Royal Commission for Historical Monuments for England, Survey plan of Munstead Wood (1991), illustrated in: Wood, Martin: "Gertrude Jekyll's Munstead Wood", p. 85, 1995, *Gertrude Jekyll*, edited by Tooley, Michael & Arnander, Primrose)

architectural plants such as yuccas and *Euphorbia characias* ssp. *wulfenii*. Cannas also featured prominently with their large, banana-like leaves. Many visitors to Munstead Wood expressed surprise to see her use calceolarias, zonal pelargoniums and the like, expecting more subtle perennials and annuals in her garden. It was part of the garden which created a great display of colour from July to the end of September.³ Jekyll strongly relied on the colour effects created by many of the tender bedded-out plants for late-summer and autumn. Cannas, gladiolus, dahlias, zinnias and marigolds were some of the plants she used in large numbers in specific colours to match her permanent colour schemes.⁴ Even though Jekyll's clients may have demanded these plants as they provided colour when people returned to their country seats after the London season, it is unlikely that Jekyll would have planted them in her garden purely for that reason, as it was not normally visited by her clients.

For autumn there was also a Michaelmas daisy border, which was exclusively planted for September show. Backed by hornbeam hedges, it ran down the middle of the kitchen garden. Typically for Jekyll, this border did not consist of a monoculture of asters, it also contained a variety of other September-flowering perennials and bedded out plants such as tall snapdragons and dahlias to accompany them adding not only other complementing colours, but also different shapes and textures to relieve the monotony. The whites, lilacs, purples, and pale pinks were set off with generous amounts of silver foliage of *Artemisia stelleriana*, white pinks, *Stachys olympica* (syn. *S. byzantina*), lyme grass (syn. *Miscanthus sinensis*), *Phlomis fruticosa* and even silver-leaved willow. These silver leaves created a continuous front edge, running occasionally down to the rear of the border. A few clumps of pale yellow and yellowish white broke the colours. The use of yellow and pale pink, made this border

³ Jekyll, Gertrude: *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*, 1936, pp.178-86

⁴ Jekyll, Gertrude: *Wood and Garden*, 1914, pp. 108

of early Michaelmas daisies different from another border planted with late flowering asters.⁵

Munstead Wood's Main Flower Border

The main flower border came into its own from the second week of August onwards. It was a mixed border in the present day sense as it contained perennials, annuals, bedded out plants and a few shrubs such as a golden privet which added a cheerful note to the border throughout the year, and provided a good foliage contrast to a neighbouring clump of the Japanese striped grass *Eulalia*. (See illustration 89 for the planting plan.)

The border was approximately 200 feet long (60 metres) and 14 feet (4.20 metres) wide, backed by an 11 feet (3.30m) tall sandstone wall which was covered mostly with evergreen climbers. The climbers were grown in a three feet (0.90 metres) wide border with a small path in front to allow easy access to the climbers and the plants at the rear of the border. Most plants were used in large drifts, with the exception of a few bolder key-points. It was important in such a large border to plant in generous masses, as it was seen from a large distance across the lawn.⁶

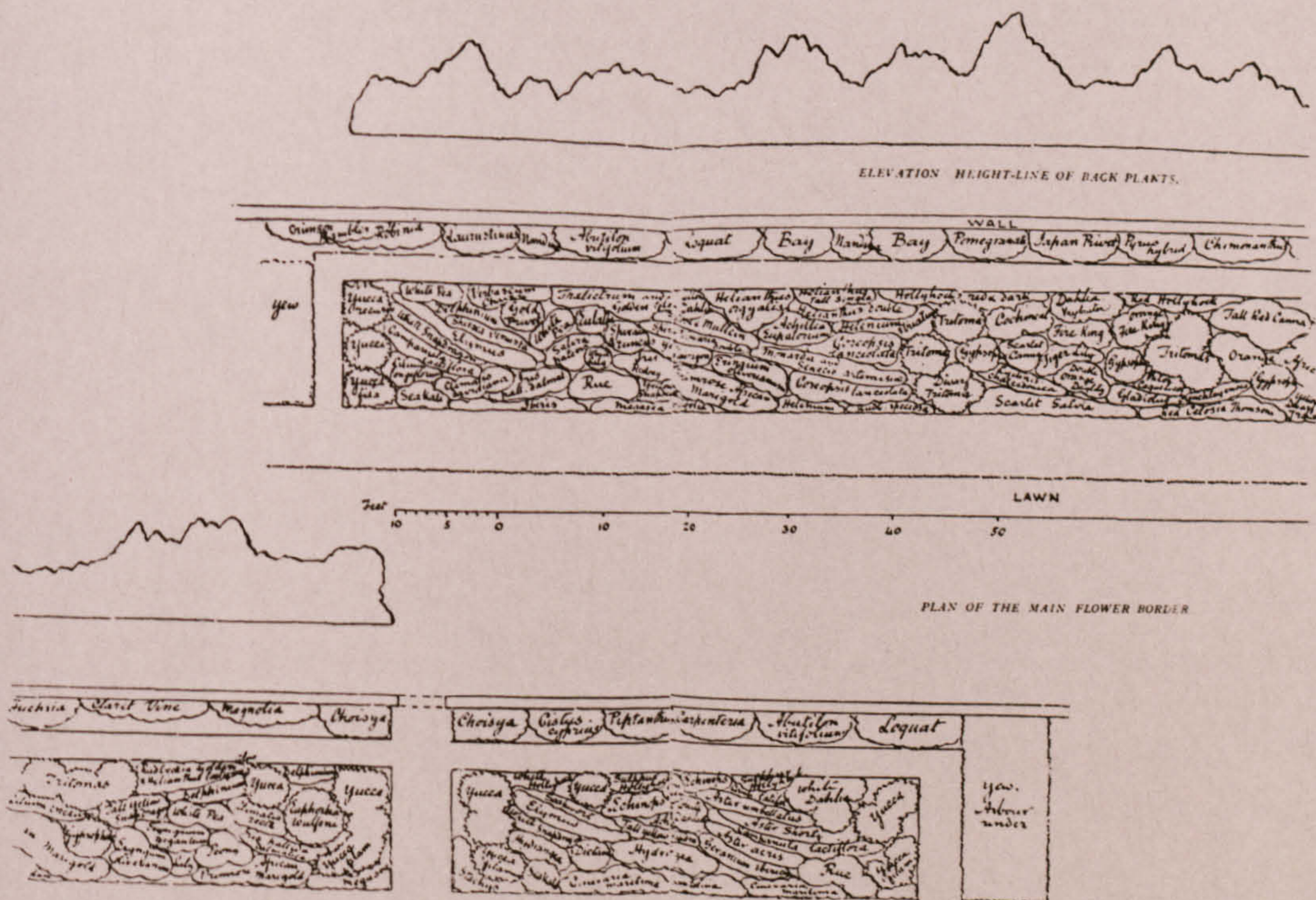
Although the border was planned to flower in late summer, a few plants would provide the occasional patch of interest at other times of year, when more was happening elsewhere in the garden. *Iris pallida dalmatica* (syn. *I. pallida* ssp. *pallida*), *Geranium ibericum platyphyllum*, *Dictamnus fraxinella* (syn. *D. albus* var.

⁵ Jekyll, Gertrude: *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*, 1936, pp. 198-9

⁶ Jekyll, Gertrude: *Wood and Garden*, 1914, p. 109

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ILLUSTRATION 89: PLAN OF THE MAIN FLOWER BORDER AT MUNSTEAD WOOD



The main flower border at Munstead Wood was often used by Jekyll to illustrate examples on colour associations. It shows her typical drift planting, and the large clumps of yuccas and other grey foliage plants marking the corners. In between the colours graded from the cool blue, white and pale yellow colours through to the hot reds in the centre.

(Jekyll, Gertrude: *Colour in the Flower Garden*, 1936, pp. 134-5)

purpureus), meadowsweet, foxgloves, Canterbury bells, *Iberis sempervirens*, *Papaver orientale*, delphiniums and *Lilium croceum* provided colour during the early season whilst the architectural forms of yuccas and *Euphorbia characias* ssp. *wulfenii* were prominent throughout the year. The shrubs and climbers against the back wall too extended the flowering season, and reflected the colours of the plants in front of them. When the plants had finished flowering they were cut back to a certain height, and were then used to support climbing plants such as everlasting peas which were planted behind. Not everything was cut back at the end of the flowering period. The cloud-like masses of *Gypsophila paniculata*, planted near the front of the border, turned brown after flowering, and were partly used to support nasturtiums, but the brown was also considered as a good complement to some nearby rich red coloured flowers.⁷

During May and early June half hardy annuals and bedding plants were added in patches to the border which would provide extra colour during the late summer months. For example she planted young hollyhocks in spring so they could flower in August and September, as opposed to planting them in autumn, as these would have flowered earlier. She also used to have reserve plants, which she plunged into the border when in flower to fill any gaps in the flower pattern. If the roots of an existing plant got in the way, Jekyll did not hesitate to dig it out, as long as it was a plant of which she had sufficient spares available, and she knew it would flower the first season after transplanting. Hydrangeas and *Lilium longiflorum* were some of her favourite gap-fillers, though all reserve plants had to fit in with the existing colour schemes.

With the gaps left by the early colour providers filled with bedding plants, annuals or plants from the reserve garden and the short flowering period, the main flower border

⁷ Jekyll, Gertrude: *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*, 1936, p. 188

was a continuing blaze of colour from one end to the other, and where no flower filled the space, some matching foliage carried through the theme of the section.

Long, narrow drifts at the front of the border provided some useful foliage contrasts. The finely leaved silver-white *Cineraria maritima* (syn. *Senecio cineraria*), woolly silver *Stachys* and long drifts of the bold bergenias provided some good low contrasts for the plants immediately behind. At the extreme ends imposing clumps of yuccas, including *Y. filamentosa* and *Y. recurvata* provided great exclamation marks, anchoring the border. Large clumps of *Kniphofia* and cannas provided drama in the middle of the border, in the orange and scarlet section, whilst the long-lasting *Euphorbia characias* ssp. *wulfenii* was incorporated in the calming, blue-grey sections, next to the yuccas. Irises, gladiolus and the grass *Elymus* added strong vertical lines, whereas *Crambe maritima* and *Ruta graveolens* would have added further attractive foliage forms and colours. Frequent specimens of *Gypsophila paniculata* were added to cover over gaps left by early flowers such as Oriental poppies, but they were equally valued for the soft greyish texture whilst in flower, followed by the soft brown mound left when finished, which in turn was used as a support for other plants.

In between these foliage plants the flower colours were graded. Each section was designed to make a picture in itself, yet they were so placed as to be part of a complimentary whole. Jekyll explained that once the eye was saturated with the greys and blues at the start of the border, it avidly progressed to the soft yellow tones, moving on to stronger yellows, oranges and scarlet reds. At this point the eye would again be saturated, this time with strong colours, and being in need of a more soothing, calm colour would readily move on to purple and grey tones again.⁸ Judging by the frequency Jekyll referred to it, this colour progression appears to have been one

⁸ Jekyll, Gertrude: *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*, 1936, p. 130

of her most favourite ones, and was soon taken up by other gardeners, as could be seen at Broughton Castle, where Lady Algernon Gordon-Lennox had adopted a similar scheme.⁹

Use of Foliage in Herbaceous Borders

Plants with interesting foliage played an important role in Gertrude Jekyll's designs. In the absence of flowers, it was good to have attractive foliage to look at. Bold foliage was also used to add scale, making use, for example, of the handsome *Veratrum nigrum* and the bulky, feathery *Myrrhis odorata* to add some attractive volume to the spring garden, as the spring flowers were all so low in stature. She considered architectural plants such as *Euphorbia characias* ssp. *wulfenii* as very useful foliage plants, either for borders or in amongst shrubs and made similar extensive use of yuccas, in her herbaceous borders and elsewhere.¹⁰

Jekyll was very fond of using grey and glaucous foliage to soften schemes and complement the cooler flower colours such as pinks, purples, blues and white. Two large masses of grey foliage plants marked the extreme ends and intersections of the main flower border. She also liked to use a little grey foliage to add what she considered pictorial value in amongst bolder groups of flowers.¹¹

⁹ Algernon Gordon-Lennox, Lady: "Winter Schemes for Summer Colouring", pp.754-5, 786-8, Vol. 10, 1901, and pp.230-2, vol 11, 1902, *Country Life*

¹⁰ Jekyll, Gertrude: *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*, 1936, p. 64, 96

¹¹ Jekyll, Gertrude: *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*, 1936, pp. 154-76

Jekyll's use of Colour

In order to create a successful colour display, Jekyll felt people had to possess a certain artistic flair, as she thought nothing was more difficult than to produce a good flower border. Jekyll's recommendations on the use of colour rarely varied in her writings. She frequently described the colour gradation of the main border in her articles and in *Colour in the Flower Garden*. The use of soft, grey colours at the end of borders, working up to hot, red colours, matched with red foliage, in the middle, was a favourite theme. Mixing grey/silver leaves with purple, pink or lilac flowers was particularly successful, and the use of such foliage plants was strongly recommended for breaching the gaps in between flowering plants.¹²

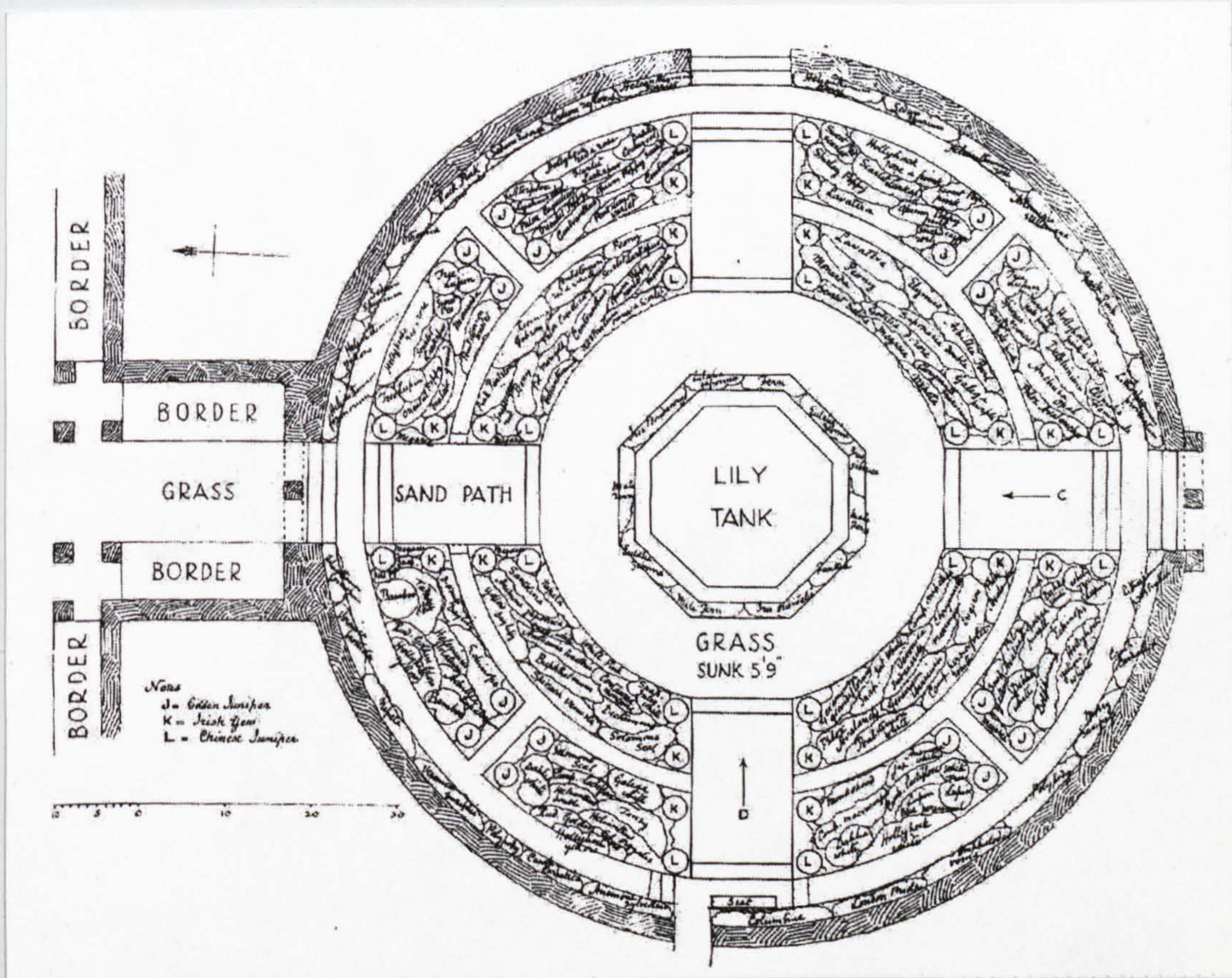
The planting plans published with a *Country Life* article on colour, showed a plan for a spring border, part of a June border and the purple, yellow and blue part of a July border. The colouring of this border was to progress in the habitual way. The plans were simply as an indication of how to arrange colour masses, rather than being there to be copied exactly.¹³ On a similar note is the planting plan for the circular flower garden at Westbrook in Godalming. (See illustrations 90 and 91.) The borders fully exposed to the midday and early afternoon sun were planted with the warm colours orange and scarlet, whereas on the facing side she placed the cooler colours. Rather than sticking to one scheme per bed, the colours flowed from one to the other, making

¹² Jekyll, Gertrude: "In the Garden: The Use of Grey Foliage with Border Plants", *Country Life*, pp. 401-2, Vol. 40, 1916; Tinsley, Irving: *Colour planning of the Garden*, 1924, introduction, pp. ix-xvii

¹³ Jekyll, Gertrude: "In the Garden: Colour in the Flower Garden - I", *Country Life*, pp. 308-9, Vol. 45, 1919

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ILLUSTRATION 90: PLANTING PLAN FOR CIRCULAR FLOWER GARDEN



Jekyll's planting plan for the circular flower garden at Westbrook Park reflects her colour theories she also applied to her long borders: The areas exposed to the midday and afternoon sun were planted with hot colours, the others with cool colours. The colours graded smoothly, and were not interrupted by the path intersections.

Jekyll, Gertrude & Weaver, Laurence: *Gardens for Small Country Houses*, n.d., pp. 27-35)

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ILLUSTRATION 91: PHOTOGRAPH OF THE WESTBROOK FLOWER GARDEN



The photograph shows the circular flower garden, illustrated on the preceding page. Despite the geometry of the design, the planting, especially the grasses around the pool, made the garden very informal. In the back ground, left and right of the path it is possible to see some of the taller perennials silhouetted against the hedge.

Jekyll, Gertrude & Weaver, Laurence: *Gardens for Small Country Houses*, n.d., pp. 27-35)

the flower garden into a whole entity rather than having a circular pool surrounded by four beds of different colours.¹⁴

Although she often referred to it in her writings, Munstead Wood was not large enough for all of Jekyll's ideas. She would have liked to create a series of gardens of restricted colour such as a green garden, a blue one and a golden one, but had to content herself with having just a short length of double borders for a grey garden, and worked out most of her other colour schemes joined together in her flower border. Judging by Jekyll's comments, a successful monochrome garden display must have been quite rare. People often took a colour theme too literally, and even when a scheme was crying out for a touch of another colour to liven it up, they would religiously stick to their set theme.¹⁵ To help illustrate her point, Jekyll included in *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden* some hypothetical plans, consisting of a series of long, double borders divided into different colour sections, each backed by a matching hedge. (See illustrations 92, 93 and 94.)

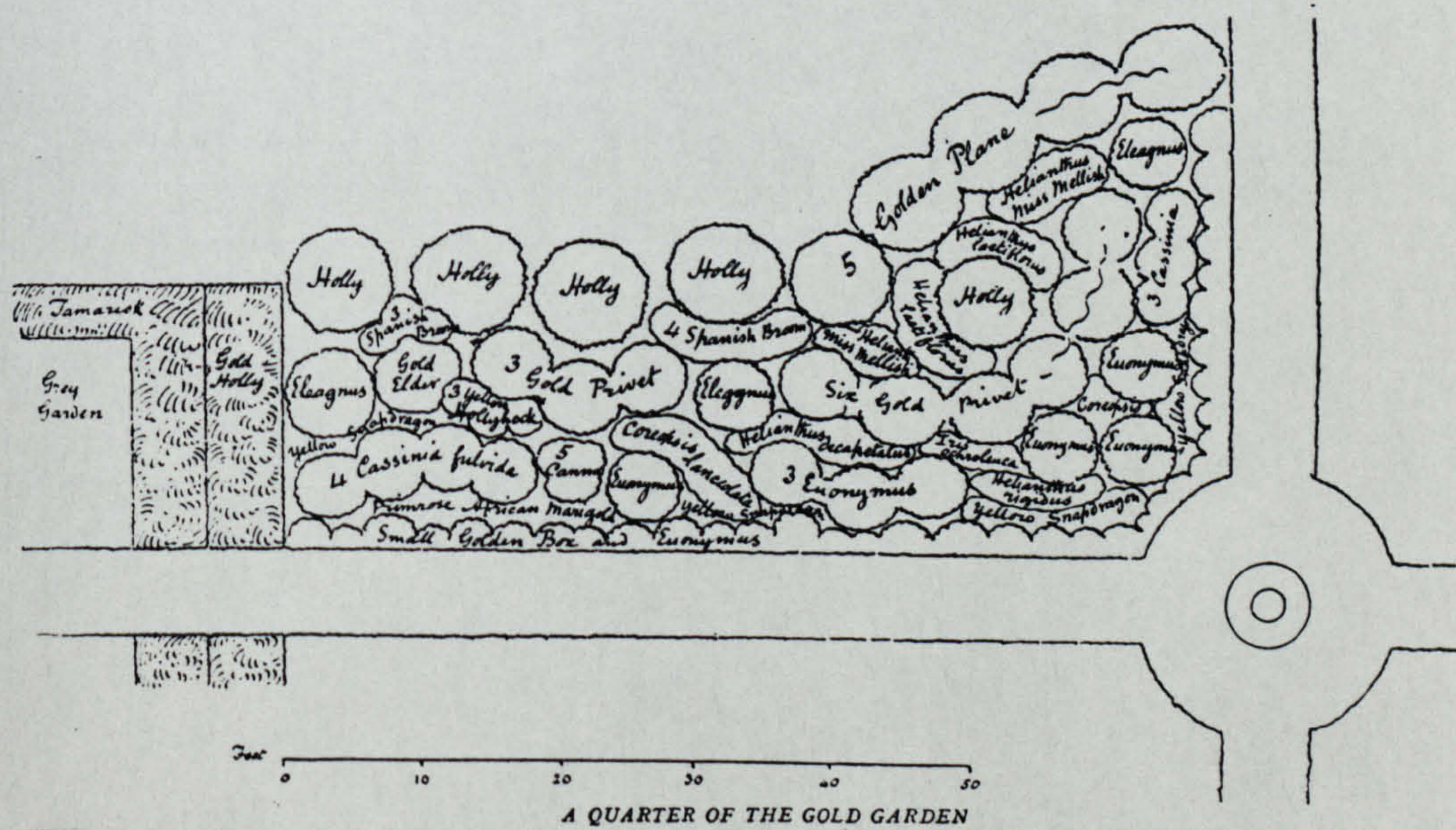
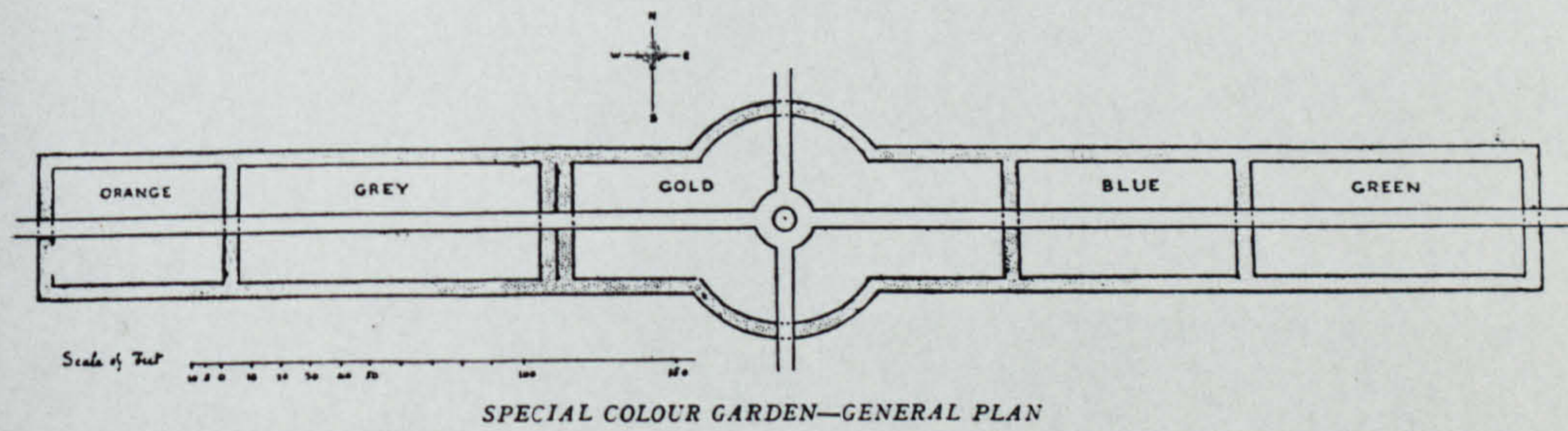
From west to east the colours were orange, grey, gold, blue and green. The golden garden (illustration 92) consisted of a large number of yellow foliage shrubs such as golden box and *Euonymus* sp. in the fore ground, and hollies, golden plane and golden privet in the back ground. In between were paler yellow flowers such as African marigolds, snapdragons, *Coreopsis lanceolata*, *Helianthus* 'Miss Mellish' and cannas. The warmer yellows and orange colours were reserved for the orange garden, where the rich yellow *Rudbeckia* sp. found a home with several of their related compositae, alongside orange *Kniphofia* sp. and dahlias (see illustration 41, chapter 3.4).

¹⁴ Jekyll, Gertrude, Weaver, Laurence: *Gardens for Small Country Houses*, pp. 27-35, n.d., Country Life

¹⁵ Jekyll, Gertrude: "The Grey Border for late Summer", *Country Life*, pp. 776-7, Vol. 52, 1922; Jekyll, Gertrude: "In the Garden: Colour in the Flower Garden - II", *Country Life*, pp. 348-9, Vol. 45, 1919

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ILLUSTRATION 92: PLAN AND DETAIL OF THE SPECIAL COLOUR GARDEN



The upper master plan showed how Jekyll would have divided a border dedicated to very specific colour themes. She did not have the space to carry this out at Munstead Wood. Below is a section of the detailed planting plan for the golden section, showing the shrubby background and yellow variegated leaved plants she planted in association with yellow flowers.

(Jekyll, Gertrude: *Colour in the Flower Garden*, 1936, pp. 226-7)

The grey section was planted with many of her favourite grey-leaved plants such as *Nepeta*, *Stachys* and cotton lavender at the front, with the silvery leaved grass *Elymus*, yuccas, lavenders and *Echinops* further back. Besides the blues of the catmint and lavenders there were also ageratums. White was added with white flowering pinks, *Achillea* 'The Pearl', *Gypsophila*, *Lilium candidum* and *Lilium longiflorum* (both lilies reoccurred in the grey and green sections), whereas a hint of pink came in at the rear of the border with hollyhocks and soapwort. (See illustration 93.)

In the blue border (illustration 94) there were drifts of delphiniums, *Lithospermum prostratum*, phacelia and *Salvia patens* with *Anchusa* sp. dotted about. She also added bold, glaucous leaves of *Hosta sieboldii* and *Ruta graveolens*. To liven up the border there was a generous sprinkling of white snapdragons, lupins, foxgloves and *Clematis recta* as well as a hint of smoky yellow with the rue and *Thalictrum flavum*. Four large clumps of maize would also have added a fresh touch with their yellowish tassels and pale green foliage.

The green garden (illustration 94) contained many attractive foliage plants such as *Acanthus*, ferns, grasses, *Veratrum*, hostas as well as aucubas. White was added with the lilies and *Myrrhis odorata*, tulips and snapdragons. More hints of colour came from *Epimedium pinnatum*, *Helleborus olympicus*, *Iris foetidissima*, and *Aruncus*.¹⁶

For more details on Gertrude Jekyll's contribution to the use of colour in herbaceous planting scheme, see chapter 3.4.5.

¹⁶ Jekyll, Gertrude: *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*, 1936, pp. 222-31

Labour Demands

Unlike Karl Foerster, who was conscious of trying to offer a design service to the masses by offering cheap designs, it is clear from Jekyll's gardening practices that she was more preoccupied with creating a good effect, rather than a design which would be easy, and consequently cheap to maintain. She had help in the garden and space for a reserve garden, and consequently her advice was based on what one could do as a garden owner with generous means.

A full flower display could only be expected with the help of pot-grown plants, plunged to fill gaps in the border. For the best effect a border should be devoted to only a few weeks of the year, having other areas of the garden flowering at different times. Even a border planned to flower from July to September could only be successful if a few pot plants were added. A reserve garden was considered indispensable, especially in the larger garden. But even at her mother's relatively modest home in Munstead, she had a generous reserve garden for the provision of spare plants and cut flowers as can be seen in illustration 95.¹⁷

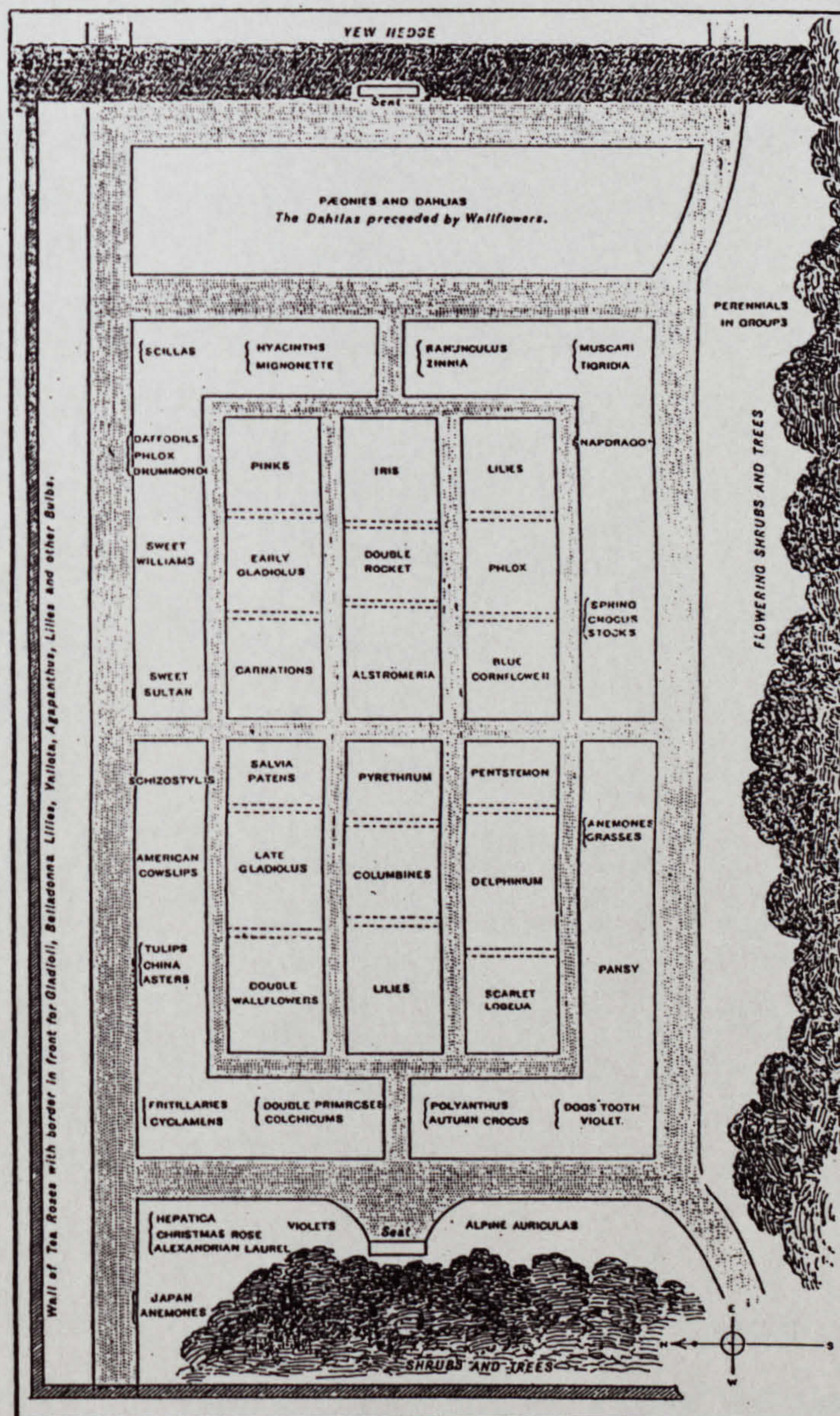
Besides her recommendations to stake plants carefully with twigs, she was also a great believer in training plants to cover over bare patches in a border, a successful method, albeit a very time consuming one.¹⁸ Plants growing next to bare patches left by earlier flowering plants, and others which grew taller than wanted, were pulled down to cover over the area, reducing their height at the same time. Jekyll also exploited this practice to encourage plants with relatively few flowers to produce a far superior

¹⁷ Goldring, William: "Munstead, Godalming", *The Garden*, Vol xxii-2, pp. 191-2, 1882

¹⁸ Jekyll, Gertrude: "In the Garden: The Hardy Flower Border", pp. 514-5, Vol. 31, 1912, *Country Life*

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ILLUSTRATION 95: RESERVE GARDEN AT MUNSTEAD

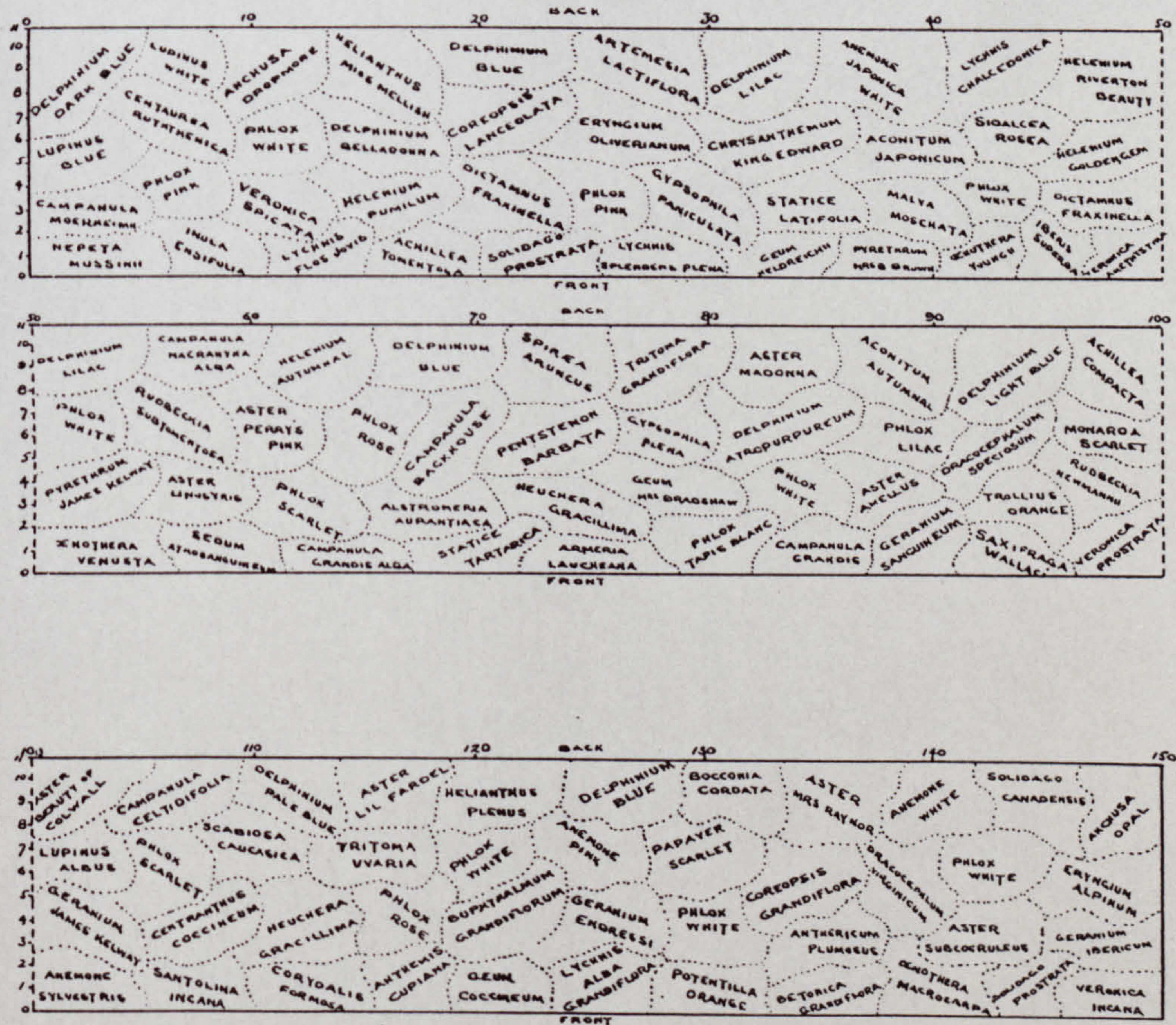


Jekyll's gardening ideas were not for the poor; this reserve garden was the one at Munstead, her mother's garden, which was a fairly modest garden. The reserve garden was used for supplying cut flowers, growing on new stock, but also for growing plants which could be plunged in the borders to fill gaps left by earlier flowering plants.

(Goldring, William: "Munstead, Godalming", *The Garden*, p. 191-2, vol xxii-2, 1882)

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ILLUSTRATION 96: BACKHOUSE PLANTING PLAN



The Backhouse nurseries published this plan, entitled the "Backhouse Permanent Flower Garden". Although not as linear any more as nineteenth century planting had been, groups were still spread rather evenly. Like earlier borders, such as Loudon's, colour were mixed. The plan had a scale, and full plant names, and is one which customers could use as a basis for their own planting.

(Backhouse Nursery, *Alpine and Herbaceous Catalogue*, 1913, pp. 4-5)

display, as many more flowering buds would sprout from all the horizontally trained leaf axils.¹⁹

The Changes in Planting Patterns

Jekyll was obliged to prepare detailed planting plans for her customers, as she did not visit them. Although she was the first designer to do so, some other contemporary plans survive. A comparison of these plans reflect the changes in planting design which took place towards the end of the nineteenth century. David Thomson's panel border plan for bedding plants and perennials published in 1868 (see illustration 51, chapter 3.4) indicated the individual positions of the feature plants. For the other plants he simply listed the names for each row, giving no indication of planting distance. Kelway's 1901 catalogue (illustration 87, chapter 5) shows some influence of Jekyll's planting plans. The plans were very detailed, with a scale, and plants, with proper cultivar names, were marked in fairly irregular clumps. The Backhouse catalogue of 1913 published a plan of the Backhouse permanent flower garden (See illustration 96). Although an attempt was made to move away from the nineteenth century linear planting in clumps, they are still evident in the planting plan. This too has a scale, and gives all plant names in full. Jekyll's drift planting as such is not evident in either of these plans.

6.2. Karl Foerster's Achievements

Although Karl Foerster was not a garden or landscape architect, he did nevertheless strongly influence planting design in Germany. In the course of his long career,

¹⁹ Jekyll, Gertrude: *Wood and Garden*, 1914, p. 284

several phases can be identified, during which he influenced his surroundings in distinctive ways.

Right from the beginning, Foerster moved away from tradition by only planting hardy plants. He did not share the nineteenth century taste for annual and tender bedding plants. His borders were designed either to give interest at a particular season, or 'all year round', which in reality meant from early spring to late autumn, and took into account the harsh continental climate of the area. Later he started to use grasses and ferns more widely, providing all year round interest.

His early planting schemes, in particular those carried out in his first nursery in Berlin-Westend, were most probably all his own work but were still influenced by nineteenth century fashions. This is shown for example in a photograph of a bed with herbaceous planting in his Westend garden. (See illustration 97.) Plants were used in small clumps or as single specimens, and beds were edged with a low-growing herbaceous plant, ivy or box.

Because these beds were not filled with a uniform regiment of plants all destined to flower at the same time, the overall colours were less intense, and had a much livelier effect. Abandoning the geometric patterns of planting, but spreading plants in a more naturalistic way, colours would change with the seasons.

Karl Foerster had always loved colours, and generated a wide range of cultivars in different tones and shades. He liked to plant either contrasting colours or use a pallet of different shades of one colour by using several varieties of one plant. Unlike Jekyll who approached colour schemes as an artist, Foerster had a gardeners' training, and did not produce sophisticated schemes. Their interests were reflected in their articles.

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ILLUSTRATION 97: BORDER FROM KARL FOERTSER'S BERLIN WEST-END GARDEN



Cover illustration from Foerster's first nursery catalogue of 1907, showing an edged, mixed flower border. Planting was still very reminiscent of the nineteenth century style, in small clumps.

(Foerster, Eva, Rostin, Gerhard: *Ein Garten der Erinnerung*, 1992, p. 127)

Many of Jekyll's were on aesthetic subjects such as the use of colour, whereas Foerster's were mostly on plants.

His Nursery

Karl August Foerster was born on the 9th March 1874 in Berlin. His father, Wilhelm Foerster (1832 - 1921), was director of the Royal Observatory and professor of astronomy at the Friederich-Wilhelm University of Berlin. His mother, Ina Paschen (1848 - 1908) was a keen painter, who gave Karl Foerster a good feeling for colours.

After studies at the Friedrich Wilhelm Gymnasium in Berlin, he served an apprenticeship as a gardener in Schwerin and studied horticulture near Potsdam, and then started work in several nurseries. He disliked the gardens of his youth, feeling they conflicted with the decorative elements of the 'Jugendstil'. Particularly geometric gardens, treated as an extension of the rooms and in which plants were treated in an unnatural way were terrible.

While convalescing in Switzerland in 1894-95, he discovered his real vocation. Greatly impressed by the interaction between the scenery, the flowers, the landscape and the seasons, young Foerster spent hours lying in mountain meadows dreaming. He decided to turn the garden into the magic key to nature and its seasons, by bringing wildflower themes to garden flowers.²⁰ This ambition could be traced in his new plant introductions, where he aimed at creating strong, healthy plants which reflected the characters of their natural ancestors.

²⁰ Kreuter : *Karl Foerster Staudenzuechtungen*, n.d., p. 13

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In 1903 Foerster established a modest nursery in Berlin-Westend, and soon started writing his first articles. His first catalogue was published in 1907 and in 1911 the nursery was moved to Bornim near Potsdam, where he built his house.

He was married in 1927 to Eva Hildebrandt (1902-). In the same year he expanded his business to include a garden design service with Hermann Mattern (1902-1971) and Herta Hammerbacher (1890-1985). By 1935 the nursery and design business were doing so well, that it was re-organised into three separate units: the nursery, the design office and newly added, the construction department. Mattern and Hammerbacher worked freelance and with Foerster formed a design partnership 'Foerster-Mattern-Hammerbacher' which existed until 1948.

During the last years of the Second World War, Foerster had to put a temporary halt to his plant breeding activities whilst the nursery was used for vegetable production. Fortunately, most of the important plant breeding stock was secured and maintained, though some cultivars were lost. At the end of the war the nursery was built up again, albeit slowly. Initially, vegetables were still produced, and Foerster had to deal with a much reduced workforce. His staff had dropped from 150 people to just 50, but by 1947 the nursery was almost back to normal again.

Throughout the Nazi regime of the Third Reich, Karl Foerster always tried to retain human values and defend his humanistic ideas, though he refrained from expressing his opposition publicly. He did however create quite some controversy when his book *Gluecklich durchbrochenes Schweigen* (Happily Breached Silence) was published in 1937, in which he expressed anti-nationalistic feelings. The book was soon removed from the market and never published again.

Even though the nursery was in the German Democratic Republic, it continued. After the war, the Soviet Military Administration took the nursery into protection as 'Company for Breeding and Testing of Hardy Flowering Perennials'. In 1959 it was converted into a trust, grant-aided by the government. Foerster stayed in charge until his death on 27 November 1970. Under the East German regime his nursery became nationalised.

On 22 April 1981, Foerster's house and surrounding garden were declared *Denkmal* (Historic Monument) by the town council of Potsdam, preserving it for the future. For more information and illustrations of the garden see the case study in chapter 7.3.²¹

The Plantsman

As a plant breeder, Karl Foerster was highly regarded, not only for the sheer number of new cultivars he produced, but even more so for their quality. His new introductions included many of his own hybrids, but he was also responsible for bringing into cultivation a number of plants which had never before been available in Germany. These were cultivars originating from other countries, species introduced from the wild and plants found growing in botanic collections, which proved to be of garden merit. (For a list of his plant introductions see appendix 10.)

Foerster had a precise idea of what herbaceous plants should be like. Most of all he followed his ideas about low-labour gardening. He explained in "Blumengaerten fuer intelligente Faule" (Flower Gardens for Intelligent Lazy People) of 1928, that besides modern technology and the garden layout, the actual plants themselves made an

21

Herling : *Rekonstruktion der Gartenanlagen der Karl-Foerster-Gedenkstaette*; 1983, p. 7

important contribution to reducing labour-input. The following is a list of what helped to reduce labour demand in the garden:

- The use of hardy and strong herbaceous plants, cancels the need for plant support or winter protection;
- By avoiding the use of highly ornamental, strongly hybridised herbaceous plants which suffer from dense planting, more groundcover plants could be used, covering the soil surface, reducing weeds and the risk of soil drying out;
- Instead of struggling with lawns in dry or shady areas, plants which enjoy those conditions could be used;
- Shrub pruning, especially to keep shrub masses under control, was scrapped, favouring freestanding individual shrubs allowed to develop of their own accord.²²

When selecting new hybrids, his aim was to breed out any physiological characteristics or weaknesses that would create extra work. He eliminated weak growth habits and particular disease problems.

The following is a list of characteristics required of a new plant before it would be considered fit for launching on the market:

- Fully hardy, even in the harsh Bornim winters;
- Fully hardy inflorescence, even when opened;
- Drought and heat resistance during the long, hot summers;
- Resistance of inflorescence to heat and sunburn, even in periods of drought;
- Resistance of inflorescence to rain and storm;
- Vitality and longevity of plant : even after six or eight years, the rootstock should continue to produce healthy strong leaves and numerous normal-sized

flowers (according to Foerster this alone excluded three-fifth of all the old, much-loved available cultivars);

- Low maintenance requirements : long-term observation would reveal plants that grow neatly without much attention;
- Increase of disease resistance, resulting in stronger plants requiring less pest and disease control;
- Improved termination of flowering : to avoid inflorescence of which the first flowers start to fade un-attractively, when the last ones still have to come out.²³

In addition, Foerster had some 'black points' on his list, characteristics he would not tolerate in a plant:

- Leaving bare patches in the overall flowering clump;
- Not all plants flowering at the same time;
- Refusal to flower, despite being given the best soil conditions;
- Not hardy even after a severe winter;
- Susceptibility to rust, a disease which often only showed up after several years of healthy growth;
- Invasion of the surrounding area with creeping rootstocks or seeds.²⁴

In the course of sixty-five years of selecting plants, Foerster produced about 660 new cultivars, several of which are still available today. See appendix 10 for a comprehensive list of his introductions.

²³ Foerster, Karl : *Meine Lebensarbeit*, 1907-1946, p. 3

²⁴ Hottentraeger & Schumacher : *Vom Bluetengarten der Zukunft - Eine Hommage an Karl Foerster*; 1985, p. 68

The Author

Foerster was an active writer, producing a constant stream of books, most of which have been re-published several times, and are still popular today. Several of his plant guides have been re-edited in recent years, bringing plant information up-to-date. A comprehensive list of his publications can be found in appendix 12.

In 1911 he published his first book *Winterharte Bluetenstauden und Straeucher der Neuzeit* (Hardy Flowering Herbaceous Plants and Shrubs of Modern Times). This book contained many attractive illustrations, including seventy-eight colour photographs. Ernst Pagels, one of Foerster's last pupils, mentioned in his 1982 nursery catalogue how the book caused the collapse of old-fashioned planting styles in a revolutionary way, bringing in completely new ideas on planting. It gave the reader extensive details on herbaceous plants and shrubs, including bulbs. It contained detailed plant descriptions and instructions on how to prepare the soil, plant and grow them. There were month by month lists of what flowered, ideas on design and layout for borders, water gardens and rockeries.

His next major work was ready in 1934 : *Gaerten als Zauberschluessel* (The Garden as a Magic Key). A lyrical work in which Foerster described his seven more specifically defined seasons. The large number of new cultivars coming onto the market often extended the flowering period of a species by flowering earlier or later. Therefore he decided to add three seasons, and described these seven seasons as follows:

- Winter: from the beginning of December until the end of February;
- Early spring: from the end of February until the end of April;
- Spring: from the end of April until early June;
- Early summer: from the beginning until the end of June;
- High summer: from late June until the end of August;

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- Autumn: from the end of August until the beginning of November;
- Late autumn: from early November until early December.

1936 saw the publication of the only book which was translated into English: "*Der Steingarten der sieben Jahreszeiten*"²⁵

In 1937 Foerster wrote "*Gluecklich durchbrochenes Schweigen*" (The Successfully Pierced Silence), which described Foerster's youth as well as some of his feelings about the pre-World War II situation in Germany. The book was considered politically controversial, was soon withdrawn and never published again. It is still hard to come by today.

"Ghastly, a garden without grasses" was one of Foerster's favourite expressions. During the nineteenth century, only a few grasses were known and frequently used. When Foerster started his garden he gathered them and steadily expanded his collection whenever the opportunity arose. Finally in 1957 he completed the long-prepared book *Einzug der Graeser und Farne in die Gaerten* (The Entry of Grasses and Ferns into Gardens). It was the result of many years observation and collecting of plants and information, and has become a standard reference work on the subject.

The Magazine.

Following his first two successful books, Foerster started producing a monthly magazine *Die Gartenschoenheit* in 1920, in collaboration with Camillo Schneider. It was a "Magazine with illustrations for friends and lovers of gardens and flowers, and

²⁵

Foerster, Karl: *Rock Gardens Through the Year - An Illustrated Guide for Beginners and Experts*, 7th edition, revised 1981; B. Rollich, edited by K.D. Beckett, London and Sydney 1987

for professionals". It was about plants, gardening, design, art and many other related subjects. The publisher was Oskar Kuehl, Verlag der Gartenschoenheit G.m.b.H. in Berlin-Westend. It soon became a big success, appealing to a wide gardening public far afield.

Both Foerster and Schneider were frequent contributors, usually producing several articles each month. Foerster covered a wide range of topics : articles discussing the cultivars of a particular genus (for example *Phlox*), a particular plant type (such as water plants), plants for a particular month or season, a feature in the garden (rock gardens) and sometimes an account of a garden visit. All articles were richly illustrated with drawings and photographs, occasionally in colour, many taken in his own garden.

It was not unusual for Foerster to write about a particular subject in the *Gartenschoenheit*, which at a later date he would take up again and elaborate further in one of his books. A good example of this is the series of articles he published on grasses: "Einzug der Winterharten Schmuckgraeser in die Gaerten" (The Entry of Hardy Ornamental Grasses into Gardens)²⁶ and "Graeser in sonnigen und schattige, Steingarten" (Grasses in the Sunny and Shaded Rock Garden)²⁷. The theme of grasses was not further discussed until twenty years later, in 1957 when he took up the articles again and finally published his book *Einzug der Graeser und Farne in die Gaerten*". (See above.)

²⁶ Foerster, Karl: "Einzug der Winterharten Schmuckgraeser in die Gaerten", *Die Gartenschoenheit*, 1931, part 1, p. 22; part 2, p. 54

²⁷ Foerster, Karl: "Graeser in sonnigen und schattige, Steingarten", *Die Gartenschoenheit*, 1936, p. 245

Foerster's Books Today

Besides the more lyrical works like *Garten als Zauberschluessel*; his reference books which were more aimed at professionals or very keen amateurs, have also been published again. *Lebende Gartentabellen* (Living Plant Schedules), first published in 1940 was re-published in 1994. It contains lists of plants for specific purposes, and could be considered as a precursor of Hansen and Stahl's *Die Stauden*. The books published during Foerster's lifetime, have become quite rare and valuable.

The Design Partnership and Foerster's Social Awareness

Prior to setting up the design partnership, Foerster has been asked by leading architects like Peter Behrens, Hermann Muthesius and Karl Erns Osthaus to provide plants and even planting plans.²⁸

The design partnership created on the nursery with Hermann Mattern and Herta Hammerbacher in 1928, sent out plans signed "Foerster & Co".²⁹ Foerster operated as consultant, giving advice, but the designing was left to Hermann Mattern and Herta Hammerbacher.

The three partners learnt from each other during this period. Mattern and Hammerbacher benefitting from Foerster's plant knowledge and Foerster learning more about the architectural value of plants and spatial design. It was during this period that he started to create his 'year round effect' beds, with evergreen shrubs, grasses and ferns.

²⁸ Krueger & Panning: "*Karl Foerster und Hermann Mattern*", n.d., p. 9

²⁹ Hottentraeger & Schumacher: "*Vom Bluetengarten der Zukunft, Eine Hommage and Karl Foerster*", 1985, p: 16

The potential to produce designs with many applications and colour combinations of new plants became enormous. The apparently endless creativity of the trio was not only in the horticultural field, but worked also on a cultural and social level. Their vision was to bring people into a higher level of consciousness through contact with plants. Even the 'small man' could create a paradise by using simple plants. Their idea was that from many small designed and planted plots, one large garden landscape would develop. An ideal landscape not unlike that which Lenne had thought of 100 years previously. The only way to achieve this dream, was by offering design services at a very low rate, making them available to everyone. This inevitably created friction in the world of landscape architects.³⁰ This social awareness is strongly differing Jekyll's approach discussed above.

The partnership was well and truly over by 1948, when Mattern and Hammerbacher left the nursery. There was little demand for garden design under the new socialist regime.

Foerster's Followers and the Development of Naturalistic Planting

As Foerster's career went on and as his books achieved high-level recognition, he gained an ever increasing circle of followers amongst professionals and amateurs. While Foerster was planting herbaceous beds, natural-looking rockeries and heather gardens in his own garden (see Case Study chapter 7.3), he was having discussions with his colleagues about the "wild herbaceous garden". These plantings would present an image of natural vegetation such as woods, water margins and steppe, without actually being created in a naturalistic style. These themes recurred later in the work of Professor Richard Hansen, who had worked with Foerster and was a good friend. Hansen's work had also been influenced by the plant sociologist R. Tixen and

³⁰ Krueger & Panning: *"Karl Foerster und Hermann Mattern"*, n.d., p. 11

the botanist W. Christiansen. Besides creating one of Foerster's Demonstration and Trial gardens at Weihenstephan, he did much of the pioneering work establishing the by now recognised plant habitats. In collaboration with Friederich Stahl, he wrote *Die Stauden und ihre Lebensbereiche*.³¹

A new generation of Foerster followers moved away from earlier principles of planting herbaceous plants in regularly repeated clumps along a border. Instead, depending on the plant's character and habit, they started to use them in large drifts, as ground cover, evergreen vegetation cover, bright colour accents (especially with the taller flowering herbaceous plants), in small or large clumps, as solitaire or as dominating points. Colour patches were applied with generous brush strokes, using either opposing or complimentary shades of colours. The basic colour, green, would be used as a back cloth and was applied in many shades by planting grasses, ground covers and shrubs.

Besides tall, sun-loving herbaceous plants, more and more woodland perennials were being used in garden designs. They could cope better with competition from surrounding vegetation and lower light levels, and allowed the soil surface to be covered with a dense vegetation cover, suppressing weed growth and hence reducing labour. This was a definitive move away from the nineteenth century gardens looked after by a large army of staff, and the practice of allowing generous spacing between plants.

It is not only in the design field that Foerster's ideas can still be found today. Many of Germany's plant growers and breeders worked with Foerster and were influenced

³¹ Hansen, Richard & Stahl, Friedrich: *'Die Stauden und ihre Lebensbereiche in Gaerten und Gruenanlagen*, 2nd edition, 1984, Verlag Eugen Ulmer, Stuttgart; Letter from Richard Hansen, 5.2.1996, author's collection.

by his approach. Ernst Pagels started up his own nursery after he left Foerster's, continuing his breeding tradition and bringing many fine garden plants onto the market, including his famous assortment of *Miscanthus*, and *Salvia* 'Ostfriesland'. Foerster's stringent selecting criteria were adopted by his successors. His aim to create strong, healthy plants, resistant to pests and diseases as well as adverse weather conditions, resulted in plants closer related to their natural ancestors.

Foerster's plant introductions, many of which are still currently available, lead to a labour-saving way of gardening whilst retaining a pleasing effect to the eye. He was also at the root of a school of thought which even today is flourishing in Germany and beyond.

6.3. The Leaders Abroad

Jekyll, Robinson and Foerster's reputations spread far and wide to different countries, and have lasted a long time.

America

Both Britain and Germany have left their mark on the gardening world of the United States, though at different times. The earlier part of the twentieth century saw the greater influence from Britain, whereas the latter part of the century has seen the German approach take over in the form of *The New American Garden* movement.

The British in America

In the early twentieth century Helena Ely Rutherford claimed most attractive gardening books of that period came from England. However the information they

contained was of little use to the American gardener, as the climate was so different.³² The two authors which at that time appear to have been most famous on that side of the Atlantic Ocean were William Robinson and Miss Jekyll, though each had their followers.

Mrs King, an American garden author, wrote several gardening books for the American gardening public with numerous references to Jekyll's work, though was more scathing about Robinson's contribution to horticultural knowledge. Her 1915 book *The Well Considered Garden* carried a preface written by Gertrude Jekyll. With her artistic approach to garden design she wrote in her preface: "What is needed for the doing of the best gardening is something of an artist's training[...]for gardening, in its best expression may well rank as one of the fine arts." Mrs King said Jekyll's name was "constantly appearing and reappearing in this country" and eight of her books had been issued on the American market over a nine year period. She said Jekyll was the mistress in colour combination, highly recommending her readers to read *Colour in the Flower Garden*. After the American classic Bailey's *Cyclopedia of American Horticulture*, *Colour in the Flower Garden* was the most important book for any dedicated American gardener.

Mrs King was not the only one to consider *Colour in the Flower Garden* as one of the classics. Florence Bell Robinson in her book *Planting Design* listed at the end of each chapter a number of relevant reference works, where it featured amongst other gardening classics such as Fuerst Pueckler-Muskau's *Hints on Landscape Gardening*, Repton's *The Art of Landscape Gardening*, Chevreul's *The Principles of Harmony and Contrast* and Whateley's *Observations on Modern Gardening*.³³ Mrs King

³² Rutherford, Helena Ely: *A Woman's Hardy Garden*, 1903, p. 19

³³ King, Mrs Francis: *The Well-Considered Garden*, 1915, pp. ix-x, 12, 222, 224 and Robinson, Florence Bell: *Planting Design*, 1940 .

dedicated her book *Chronicles of the Garden* to Gertrude Jekyll who "more than any other has made the planting of gardens in the English speaking countries one of the fine arts". This book as well as *Pages From a Garden Note-Book* was well-peppered with references to Jekyll's work.³⁴ However lavish she was with her admiration of Miss Jekyll, her references to Robinson were less complementary, although she had to admit that the *English Flower Garden* had its place, but his extreme ideas worked better in theory than in practice. However she had to agree with his anti-bedding stance, though personally she felt gardens needed a certain symmetry and therefore was more in favour of Reginald Blomfield's stance on the need for a formal and geometric setting for houses.³⁵

Robinson's ideas may not have been appreciated by every American gardener (not every English gardener was all that impressed either), but his obituary in the *New York Times* was full of praise, describing him as the "World's grand old man of gardening". It claimed that modern American gardening was largely based upon the school which Robinson had founded. According to Mea Allan, *The English Flower Garden* had become a gardener's bible in the States as well as in Britain.³⁶

One of Robinson's admirers in the States was Wilhelm Miller. He had visited Britain, and wrote up his experience in two books, *What England can Teach us about Gardening* (1911) and *The Charm of English Gardens* (no date). The latter basically contained the same text, the only difference was that instead of Miller's introduction, this work's preface was written by Jekyll. In his own introduction, Miller explained

³⁴ King, Mrs Francis: *Chronicles of the Garden*, 1925 and *Pages from a Garden Note-Book*, 1921, pp. 31, 61-7

³⁵ King, Mrs Francis: *The Well-Considered Garden*, 1912, pp. 60, 236

³⁶ Allan, Mea: *William Robinson 1838-1935*, 1982, pp. 229 and 140

to the American gardener that the Old World models of gardening and gardening literature would not do for America. There were strong climatic differences, but there was also the problem of the reader's knowledge. Miller seemed to assume that the average American gardener did not have the same horticultural expertise as his or her British counterpart would have had.

Miller visited many gardens on his travels through Britain, but described Gravetye as "perhaps the most beautiful". It certainly contained "the most inspiring rose garden I saw". He portrayed Robinson as the author of "that immortal book" *The English Flower Garden*.³⁷

The majority of these books were published for the American amateur gardener. On a professional level we must turn to Beatrix Farrand, one of America's most prominent garden designers, who visited England at the start of her career in June 1895. During this visit she went to Knole, where Vita Sackville-West was brought up. She was only three at the time of this visit, hardly an influential age. Farrand also visited Gertrude Jekyll, who in 1895 was still in the earlier stages of her gardening career. This was just a first visit, after that she visited in England on an annual basis for many years.³⁸

Farrand's extensive library contained many classic works of gardening literature. She would have been familiar with the books written by Evelyn, Langley, Repton, Loudon, Farrer, Blomfield, Jekyll, Robinson and Downing. Jekyll's plans and

³⁷ Miller, Wilhelm: *What England can Teach us about Gardening*, 1911, pp. 47 and 95

³⁸ Brown, Jane: *Beatrix, The Gardening life of Beatrix Jones Farrand (1872-1959)*, 1995, pp.54-5

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documents also joined her collection which is now held at Berkeley, University of California.³⁹

Beatrix Farrand admired Jekyll's work, studied it and used elements from it, but according to Diane Kostial MacGuire did not copy it. Instead she modified it to suit American requirements, making her design much bolder. She was also influenced by the gardens she had seen on her visits to Britain. For example elements of Penshurst can be found in her design. She was said to have taken a position between the formalists and the naturalists, adapting formal elements of garden design which she would have encountered in Europe, to American needs.⁴⁰

She had a good appreciation of spacial design, but her planting schemes appear to lack some of the refinement and subtleties Jekyll's plans used to have. This is probably due to the fact that her practice was considerably larger, and that she did not necessarily prepare her client's planting plans. Jekyll always did those herself.

The Germans in America : Karl Foerster

The German connections with the United States were of a different nature than the British ones. Rather than reaching the masses through literary contacts, the German influence in the United States is much more indirect and occurred at a later stage.

³⁹ Laurie, Michael: "The Reef Point Collection at the University of California", *Beatrix Jones Farrand (1872-1959) Fifty years of American Landscape Architecture*, 1982, pp. 9-20

⁴⁰ McGuire, Diane Kostial: "Beatrix Farrand's Contribution to the Art of Landscape Architecture", *Beatrix Jones Farrand (1872-1959) Fifty years of American Landscape Architecture*, pp. 29-54; McPeck, Eleanor: "Beatrix Jones Farrand, the Formative Years 1890-1920", pp. 21-28, 1982

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Although he never visited America, Karl Foerster had several regular correspondents there. Hubert Fisher, the President of the American Iris Society and Foreign Secretary of the American Hemerocallis Society wrote regularly throughout the nineteen-sixties. He sent seeds and plants on several occasions. The likelihood that the two plant enthusiasts exchanged seeds is not to be excluded, but few records survive of what Foerster sent.

Franz Lipp, a landscape architect based in Chicago wrote many letters to Foerster exchanging ideas on gardens, plants, native American flora and the American attitude to gardening. There were more letters from Jan de Graaff, an Oregon bulb farmer and Hans and Marthe Huth, who recalled a meeting in Paris on the occasion of a terrible lecture by James Hazen Hyde, they had attended.⁴¹

Besides these direct contacts with the people in the United States, in recent years a more important development occurred which indirectly relates back to Karl Foerster. In the course of the nineteen-eighties a new garden movement was developed by two landscape architects, James van Sweden and Wolfgang Oehme: The New American Garden. It is a planting style which is adapted to the boldness of the American landscape, involving huge areas of perennials and grasses. In their designs they make use of the rich resource of native perennials. Oehme did an apprenticeship at the Bitterfeld Horticultural School after World War II, during which period the landscape architect Hans Joachim Bauer introduced him to Foerster's ideas.

Oehme and van Sweden describe their work as a " 'melting pot' of international plants and ideas, producing an alloy of naturalism and free spirit." They let themselves be

⁴¹ Karl Foerster Archive, Bornim: Fisher Robert: 15.2.1964, 10.12.1966, 11.11.1967, 7.2.1969, 26.2.1969, 24.11.1969; de Graaff, Jan: 16.6.1964; Huth, Hans and Marthe; Lipp, Franz: 17.12.1973

inspired by the East and the West, by the historic and the contemporary, and especially by the work of designers like Jens Jensen and Karl Foerster. They consider the use of grasses in a naturalistic design with all-year round interest absolutely vital. Foerster's ideas on the subject, expressed in his book *Einzug der Graeser und Farne in die Gaerten* (first published in 1957), served as an important design lesson to them.⁴²

European Connections: The Netherlands

Besides contacts between England and Germany on the one hand and America on the other, there is evidence of contacts across the borders within Europe, such as in The Netherlands. Th. Hoog, one of the leading bulb specialists, and the Ruys family, who ran one of The Netherlands's most important perennial nurseries, the Royal Moerheim Nurseries, were in close contact with Karl Foerster. He particularly influenced Mien Ruys, who became one of the principal twentieth century designers of The Netherlands.

England

Karl Foerster seems to have had several contacts in this country. When following up leads found in the archives, some more information came to light, but unfortunately documents have gone missing, people's memories have faded, or those who would have known, are no longer with us.

In early 1964, Foerster exchanged catalogues with Blackmore and Langdon, the delphinium specialists, from whom he had received delphiniums.⁴³ In November 1964

⁴² Oehme, Wolfgang, van Sweden, James and Rademacher Frey, Susan: *Bold Romantic Gardens*, 1991, pp. 27-35, 39-40

⁴³ Foerster, Karl : *Letter to Blackmore and Langdon*, 8.2.1964

Reginald Perry, replied to an earlier request from Foerster for *Chrysanthemum* 'Duchess of Edinburgh'. Perry referred to a visit to Berlin 10 years before, on which occasion he had seen Foerster. January 1965 saw a reply to Perry's letter, including a list of Foerster's introductions, from which Perry was free to choose any plants he was interested in. Foerster added that he last visited Perry's nursery in 1912. The visit was still vividly in his mind, but Foerster added that Perry himself was not yet born at that time, or only just in this world.⁴⁴

From the correspondence it is clear that Foerster had another contact in England : the Ingwersen family at Birch Farm Nursery on a plot of land which used to be part of William Robinson's Gravetye Estate. Walter Ingwersen was the founder of the nursery. According to his grandson Paul, it is most likely that Walter knew Karl Foerster, although no records survive to prove this.⁴⁵ Foerster wrote in 1965 asking Will Ingwersen, Walter's eldest son, for a catalogue, and in 1970 Foerster sent him *Corydalis transylvanica*, which he had requested two years earlier. However, the letters did not suggest the two men knew each other particularly well.

Although speculative, it is possible that Foerster visited Ingwersen in 1912, when he visited Perry's Nursery. If he did, there is a strong chance he would have heard of, if not met, William Robinson, though no proof exists the two men knew of each other's existence.

⁴⁴ Perry, Reginald : *Letter to K. Foerster*, 16.11.1964; Foerster, Karl : *Letter to R. Perry*, 14.1.1965

⁴⁵ Ingwersen, Paul : *Letter*, 3.8.1992

Alan Bloom was another English contact, although, according to Alan Bloom, they never actually met.⁴⁶ Foerster's daughter, Marianne, said her father tried to make contact with Bloom in order to exchange plant material, but at the time, Bloom showed no interest.⁴⁷ Relations must have warmed over the years though, as there is a copy of Alan Bloom's book *Selected Garden Plants* in Karl Foerster's library, bearing the inscription: "With greetings, congratulations and sincere good wishes to Dr Karl Foerster from Alan Bloom - March 1969." This must have been sent on the occasion of Foerster's ninety fifth birthday.⁴⁸ (For a complete list of English books and nursery catalogues present in Karl Foerster's library in August 1992, see Appendix 13.)

At Carlile's Hardy Plants Nursery, Tommy Carlile knew Foerster. Wendy, his daughter, remembers Foerster visiting them before her father died in 1957, possibly in 1956, on a trip organised by the Internationale Stauden-Union (International Hardy Plant Union).⁴⁹ Marianne Foerster has no recollection of her father's visit.

Resumé

Both Gertrude Jekyll and Karl Foerster played a vital role in the appearance of late twentieth century gardens, even if it was in quite different ways. Jekyll left a legacy of colour schemes, Foerster one of plants, including grasses. Britain's artistic approach

⁴⁶ Bloom, Alan : *Letter*, 7.9.1992

⁴⁷ Foerster, Marianne : *Conversation* 10.4.1992

⁴⁸ Despite Alan Bloom's denial of having links with Karl Foerster, or having been influenced by German gardeners, he did visit German gardens, and certain similarities in planting design, such as the informality of planting, should not be ignored.

⁴⁹ Bowie, Wendy : *Letter*, 21.8.1992

to planting design, using colour, foliage and textures as a design tool, is a direct descendant of Jekyll's work, whereas Germany's ecological inspiration, using plants in a horticulturally sound way, is a descendant of Karl Foerster's ideas. Jekyll's designs, applying a limited but tried and tested plant selection, were attractive but labour intensive. Foerster's plants were reliable and labour-saving, regularly offering his clients new varieties, often withdrawing older, inferior ones from sale.

CHAPTER 7: CASE STUDIES

In order to help illustrate some issues raised in this research, three case studies have been included, two in Britain, one in Germany. Selecting suitable sites proved to be challenging. A conscious decision was made not to choose gardens in which Gertrude Jekyll was involved, as her work has been widely researched and documented. Post-Jekyll gardens have also been avoided, as their design may have been influenced by her. The main difficulty has been to find a suitable period garden which is well-enough documented so that it is possible to build up an image of what it looked like, how it was planted and with which plants. Prior to Jekyll's garden design by correspondence, there was no need for planting plans, as planting was usually left in the capable hands of head gardeners. Period illustrations (where available) are also to be taken with caution, as the element of artist's licence has to be taken into account. Many are also too vague to identify plants accurately and they only give a brief glimpse without telling the observer what the garden looked like during the rest of the year.

These case studies have been compiled on the basis of information found on site, in archives, books, articles, plans, paintings and photographs.

Of the two British sites, Arley Hall in Cheshire was chosen for its historical importance, having the oldest known herbaceous border in the country. It is also of interest because of its gradual evolution over a long period of time, in the hands of consecutive generations of the same family. In contrast to Arley Hall, Gravetye in Sussex, has known a rather chequered past, though it was not until William Robinson bought the estate in 1884 that it became famous for what it is known for today. He gardened at Gravetye from 1884 till his death in 1935, during which period he created the garden and planted the estate. The German site was selected for the same reason: its connection with Germany's famous nursery man and plant breeder Karl Foerster.

Whereas at Arley and Gravetye the gardens were attached to grand old houses, Foerster started from scratch, building his house and creating the garden where nothing had existed before. Both Gravetye and Foerster's garden were the experimenting grounds of two eminent gardeners and garden writers, reflecting their personal interpretation of how plants should be grown. Information from the garden was then transcribed by both men into their books and articles, opening up the debate on how to grow and plant flowers.

Although there is no evidence that Robinson and Foerster ever met, these two great gardeners had similar ideas on a number of subjects. Both were very prolific writers, and reached a wide audience with their publications. Even though they promoted planting in naturalistic ways, respecting natural habitats, they both surrounded their homes with very formal, architectural gardens, something which may seem at odds with their philosophies. However the formality of both gardens helped to create a link between the architecture of the house and the surrounding environment, and as Robinson explained, one should be surrounded by flowers when walking out of the house.

7.1. Arley Hall, Site of the Oldest Known Herbaceous Border in Britain

Unlike the other two chosen gardens who became famous for their link with figures of great horticultural standing, Arley Hall probably developed in the same way as many other gardens did: once installed, it just evolved year after year, being looked after by a succession of gardeners, who executed orders from a progression of generations of the same family. The present house, built between 1832 and 1845 by Rowland Egerton-Warburton, stands on the site of the original Hall, a moated fifteenth century building.

No famous landscape gardeners were involved in any major developments at Arley. However the landscape gardener William Emes (1730-1803), who created gardens in the style of Capability Brown, gave a quote in 1763 for the laying out of a great lawn to the south of the house, which would be divided from the gardens by a sunk fence or a haha. The 1786 estate map was probably commissioned by Emes, and shows the existing features, as well as his newly proposed sweep of trees and road. William Andrews Nesfield (1793-1881) who was renowned for designing gardens which reflected the old-time character of the accompanying house, designed a parterre, north east of the house, though this was never quite implemented as he designed it. The other famous horticulturist involved was James Bateman (1811-97). He was the brother-in-law of Rowland Eyles Egerton-Warburton, who had the largest impact on the garden as we see it today (see below). Bateman created his famous garden at Biddulph Grange in near-by Staffordshire, and advised on the planning of the yew hedges at Arley.¹

Outline History of the Garden

The garden at Arley Hall was largely created in the course of the last 250 years by successive members of the family, who added to the garden respecting the designs of earlier generations, rather than radically sweeping away existing designs. Although originally the garden at Arley was in the immediate vicinity of the house, it was expanded to the west in the course of the nineteenth century.

Some of the brick walls pre-date 1750, and the Alcove Walk was built by 1790 by the son of Sir Peter and Lady Elizabeth Warburton, who had constructed the adjoining

¹ Arley Hall Guide Book, Elizabeth Ashbrook: "The Story of a Garden, Arley 1831-1991", 1991; Arley Hall Press; Foster, Charles, "The History of the Gardens at Arley Hall, Cheshire", *Garden History*, Vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 255-71; Arley Hall Family Archives; Lord, Tony: *Best Borders*, 1994, pp. 15-27; Jellicoe, Goode: *Oxford Companion to Gardens*, 1991

walled vegetable garden. Many of the other garden features which still exist today, were laid out by Rowland Eyles Egerton-Warburton, and his wife Mary. They married in 1831, soon after which date they started to re-build the Hall. This was a very active period in the garden's history. A new western approach drive was laid out, and pleached limes were planted along its final stretch. Rowland planted seven avenues, and replaced the old drive with a terrace walk, known as the Furlong Walk, which was screened from the rest of the garden by evergreen trees and shrubs, which originally were kept trimmed. Only the trees at the far end of the terrace remain today. A short avenue of clipped holm oaks was planted in the garden, a rootery was created and a maze was installed behind the alcove. The walled kitchen garden stands on the site of the eighteenth century enclosures, but was partly extended.

In 1891 Piers Egerton-Warburton inherited the estate from his father, but his interest was mainly limited to the kitchen garden. He left us a fine series of detailed watercolour scenes of the garden. It was his wife who took greater interest in the flower garden, creating an intimate new garden known as the Flag Garden, round about 1905. After his death in 1914, the estate passed on to his son, John Egerton-Warburton, who died less than two years later. The following five years were quiet at Arley as the family took up residence first in France, and later in London. However in 1924 Frank Brown became the new head gardener, and under the supervision of his employer put the garden back to its former glory. The garden flourished in the inter-war period, as it never did again. The Fish Garden, on the site of the former bowling green, dates from this period.

During and after the war the lack of labour and finances resulted in the virtual abandonment of the garden. The hedges and holm oaks would receive the occasional trim, and the lawns were cut for hay. The borders were left to their own device, and despite the weeds and neglect, many plants survived. Until 1960 the walled garden

was run as a commercial market garden, but this was discontinued as it was not commercially viable.

In the nineteen sixties reinstatement and restoration of the garden started and it was opened to the public. The herbaceous border had been shortened by grassing over the beginning and end sections, and only one section of border, on each side of the alcove, was reinstated. The roses by the Victorian Tea Cottage were replanted and the old Children's Garden was turned into a Herb Garden. Beyond this a Scent Garden was created in the seventies.

The more important change which took place during this period of revival was the transformation of the larger kitchen garden area which was no longer needed. It was turned into a formal lawn with central pool, and generous shrub borders along the walls. The grove, situated to the north east of the house was also re-claimed and has been developed into a woodland garden, with many rhododendrons, azaleas and flowering shrubs. ²

Today the gardens at Arley Hall are listed on the English Heritage Register for Historic Parks and Gardens as a Grade II* monument.

An Eighteenth Century Walled Enclosure

Although the herbaceous borders at Arley are the main topic for this case study, there are two other areas of possible earlier interest worth investigating. On an estate plan of 1786 a walled enclosure to the north-west side of the house, is shown in greater detail than it was on the 1744 plan. (See illustration 98.) The second area concerned

² Arley Hall Guide Book, Ashbrook, Elizabeth: "The Story of a Garden, Arley 1831-1991", 1991, Arley Hall Press; Ashbrook, Lady: "A Garden in Cheshire; Arley Hall", *The Garden*, Vol. 106, part 5, 1981, pp. 183-90

was directly to the east, situated between the house and a summer house. They are two of three areas which reveal a number of irregularly-shaped beds dotted about informally. Although their function is not made clear on the map, the bricked enclosure was directly accessible from the drawing rooms of the house, while the other one embraced the summer house. In view of their prominent position, it is quite safe to assume they were both informal flower gardens, of the same kind as illustrated in Maria Elisabeth Jackson's book and those at Hartwell and Nuneham, which were contemporary with the Arley plan. (For more details and illustrations see chapter 3.2 and illustrations 13 and 14.). The third area situated to the north east of the house appears to be in the area of the grove. The appearance of the beds in this area is slightly different from those in the other two flower gardens, and they are surrounded by trees. It could be that they were open spaces, surrounded by trees. (See illustration 99.)

Flowers were definitely grown at Arley at that time, as the estate records reveal several bills for seed, including one presented to Peter Warburton by one of the most important nurseries of the area at that time, Nickson and Carr in 1789, for trees and vegetable seeds and "79 different sorts of flower seeds" as well as flower seeds of Mignonette. It is however not clear whether these flowers were herbaceous perennial or annual flower seeds; they could have been either. Arley purchased seeds and plants to the value of seventy-five pounds of Nickson between 1783 and 1791, and eighty-six sorts of herbaceous plants in 1786 from John Holbrook.³

The Arley Borders

The earliest surviving record of the herbaceous borders at Arley dates back to 1846 when a plan of the garden shows the double herbaceous border marked in a similar

³ Foster, Charles: "The History of the Gardens at Arley Hall, Cheshire", *Garden History*, Vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 255-71; Arley Hall Family Archives

way as other existing features such as hedges, indicating they were already there. (See below and illustration 100.) In the years following the production of the map the family was not in residence. However upon their return work started in great earnest in 1850. The following two decades were a period of great activity in the garden, during which many new features were created (see above). These features are not marked on this plan, which indicates that it was probably a survey drawing of existing features, upon which the later transformations were based. It is known from the estate records that the yew hedge and new kitchen garden walls which flank the borders today, were re-built in 1851-52. Although the plan shows the borders, it still shows the old hedge as a blueish-green line on one side of the border, (the same way thorn hedges were annotated elsewhere on the estate) and there is no sign of the new kitchen garden walls. If the border was planned in 1846, it is very doubtful that it would have been done without planning the hedge and wall backing it, at the same time. It is also doubtful that such a project would have been planned shortly before the family was leaving the estate for a couple of years.

The alcove walk was laid out by 1790, and it is possible that the border was laid out at the same period, or that it was introduced at some stage during the next fifty years. In any case no details survive which show us the way the border was planted until 1889, when the first set of existing water colours was painted.

The Borders in 1889

Piers Egerton-Warburton and George Samuel Elgood did a series of watercolours at Arley (see illustration 101). Some of the paintings depict people dressed in period costume, but it is not clear whether this was done in honour of a special occasion, or whether it was a reflection of the retrospective mood of the time. This series of water colours painted in 1889 show remarkable detail, making it possible to identify quite a number of flowering plants. The stone walls, backing onto the kitchen garden, were

partially clad with climbers, including clematis. The borders contained some annuals such as sun flowers, which may have been sown on the spot, or more likely would have been grown on and planted out when ready. Other plants identified were two symmetrically placed clumps of sweet peas, emphasising the buttresses which marked the side axis, a large clump of delphiniums and several clumps of phlox in various tones of pink. Cannas and hollyhocks were used to break up the line of planting at the rear of the border, whereas splashes of white lilies brought light into the borders. The paintings give quite a good impression of how the borders were arranged. Plants were planted so that they formed fairly small even-sized patches. The gladioli were in a small group of six, whereas the phlox formed a similarly-sized patch, probably only one or two plants. The front edge was planted with small patches of lower-growing flowers such as Californian poppies, and although the height increased towards the rear, it was not done in a very regular pattern. Instead some lower groups seemed to work their way into the middle of the border, whereas other taller ones came close to the edge. This, coupled with the fact that the planting groups were rather small, gave a very busy, lively effect to the borders, not unlike the way the earlier nineteenth century mingled borders would have looked.

The Borders in 1896

Ernest Arthur Rowe painted a similar view to those of Elgood and Egerton-Warburton. This time, instead of serene-looking people strolling around in period clothes, a gardener was shown at work, with a peacock strutting past in the foreground. The painting gives a very similar impression of the borders: small clumps of mixed herbaceous planting, with the addition of some annuals such as sunflowers and nasturtiums. Phloxes, double hollyhocks, gladioli, and many yellow summer compositae such as *Rudbeckia* adorn the border. Its richness in flowers would suggest that it was planted with the intention of providing colour during the summer months, whilst other areas of the garden may have offered variety at different times of year.

It is also possible that the flowering capacity was extended with the addition of annuals, where spring flowers had finished.

The Borders in 1902

The early twentieth century at Arley is represented by a number of photographic records. In 1902 Inigo Triggs included Arley Hall in his book *Formal Gardens*. It is hard to tell at what time of year the photograph was taken, as the lack of clear definition prevents the identification of plants. The outline of the flower masses projects quite an untidy image. Although the clumps still appear small, it looks as if more tall plants have come into the foreground of the border, changing the outline of the picture, creating much more of a block effect as the gentle gradation is lost. The other noticeable distinction is that small clumps of plants with sword-like foliage have been added at regular intervals near the front of the border.

The Borders in 1904

The photographs taken for the *Country Life* article which appeared in 1904 show a further change in planting: the groups appear slightly bolder in scale, and there is a definitive move away from the continuous edge of low-growing perennials along the front edge. The pictures show sufficient detail to see the regular repetition of certain taller plants along the front of the border with sword-shaped foliage plants clearly shown, enhancing the block-like effect described above.

In the same year Elgood and Jekyll published *Some English Gardens*, a book of views painted by Elgood, accompanied by text written by Jekyll, describing several country estates. Arley Hall was included in this, and the borders were described by Jekyll as being amongst the most handsome in the country. She listed the following plants in flower at the time the picture was painted (mid-July): white and orange lilies, blue

delphiniums, white sidalceas, phlox, sweet Williams, scarlet potentillas, masses of Canterbury bells and Californian columbines.⁴

The Borders in 1908

Holme published in *Gardens of England* of 1908 a photograph of the Alcove Walk, which shows insufficient detail to be able to identify any plants, but again shows the block-like outline of the planting, and what appears as very rhythmic planting (see illustration 102).

Following Lady Ashbrook's early memories of the borders at Arley Hall, she tells us that the Edwardians swept away the spottiness of nineteenth century border planting in favour of much bolder groups. She felt her mother's borders were planted with enormous groups of perennials, much larger than today's. The photographic evidence of Arley's borders does not cover the period between 1908 and the 1960's, but the 1908 photographs clearly show that the plants were still being planted in small groups. The overall outline of planting took on a more massive appearance, without the height variations seen on the 1960's picture. It is possible that Lady Ashbrook had planting of another area of the garden in mind, which is not documented, or that the planting changed shortly after these photographs were taken. The fact that she was a small girl at the time should also not be forgotten, as scale is perceived quite differently by children.⁵

⁴ Elgood, Samuel, & Jekyll, Gertrude: *Some English Gardens*, 1935, pp. 125-8

⁵ Lord, Tony: *Best Borders*, 1994, pp.15-27

Un-dated postcard photograph, post-1960 (See illustration 103.)

This photograph was probably taken round about the time that the garden was opened to the public in the nineteen sixties. It shows the only major change which occurred in the Alcove Walk: the gravel path had been replaced with grass in 1946. By this stage the planting in the border has changed quite dramatically. Planting groups had become much bolder and larger, and the plant selection had changed in favour of much taller perennials. The removal of the central path, which used to enhance the perspective view by making the border look much longer, coupled with the increase in planting scale, meant the borders appeared smaller. The regular visual breaks created by the yew buttresses are also lost, as they are virtually hidden in amongst the tall perennials, making the border look like one long continuous display.

The Borders Today (See illustration 104.)

It is clear that the planting style has undergone further changes during the last thirty years, making it even more different from the late nineteenth century style. Today's borders reflect late twentieth century taste in planting design, with bold, large groups of plants and even taller perennials at the rear of the border, which create increased height contrasts with the low plants at the front. As a result, when seen from the side, the border-outline is again as it was 100 years ago, but on a larger scale. Illustration 105 shows cross-section diagrams of how the planting in the border has evolved during the last 100 years.

Plant choice has also changed. Besides selecting taller plants, plants are also chosen for their foliage value and architectural impact such as the giant onopordums with their silver foliage. Plants such as *Papaver somniferum* are allowed to stay after flowering is over for the beauty of their seed-heads.

Although records of the development of the borders at Arley are not constant, the evidence reflects the evolution in planting design. The late nineteenth century paintings show clearly the way in which the borders were planted at that time, which corresponds with planting recommendations described by nineteenth century authors. As the twentieth century progressed, so did the borders. Plant-height and clump-size increased. First the plants at the front became taller, producing instead of the gently upwards sloping borders, block-like borders. As time went on the plants at the rear increased in size, reinstating the rising slope, but in doing so, the scale of the borders changed.

If desired, it would be quite simple to return the borders to their late-nineteenth century appearance, on condition that the hard-surfaced path was re-instated to enhance the perspective. Without it, the nineteenth century small-scale planting would probably look too busy and un-impressive.

ILLUSTRATION 98: 1744 ESTATE PLAN OF ARLEY HALL

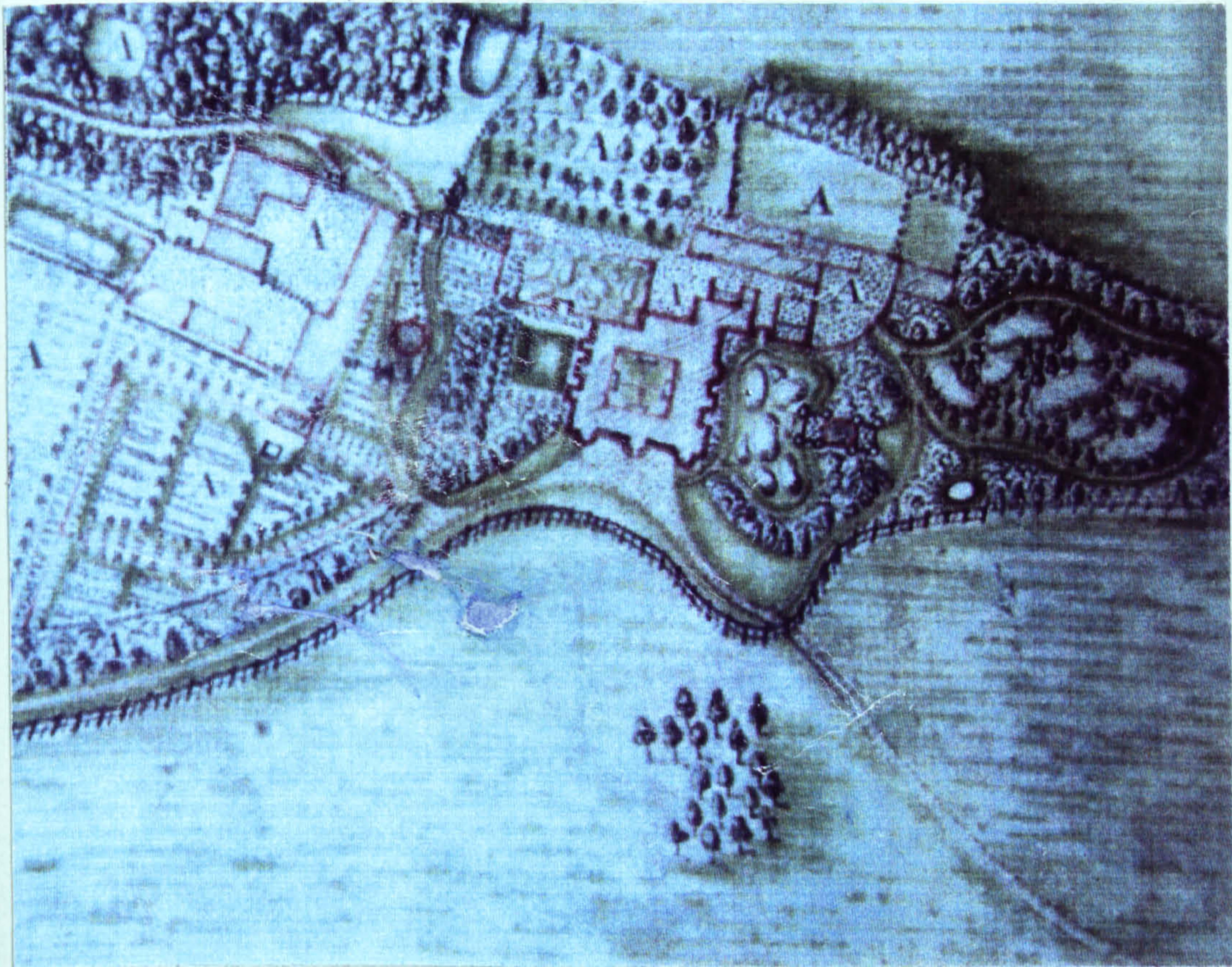


(Original in Colour)

This estate plan shows to the north-west of the house a walled enclosure which on the more detailed plan of 1786 is shown as an informal flower garden. On the east, west and south sides are moats. The kitchen garden is shown in approximately the same position as it is today.

(Arley Hall Family Archives)

ILLUSTRATION 99: 1786 ESTATE PLAN OF ARLEY HALL

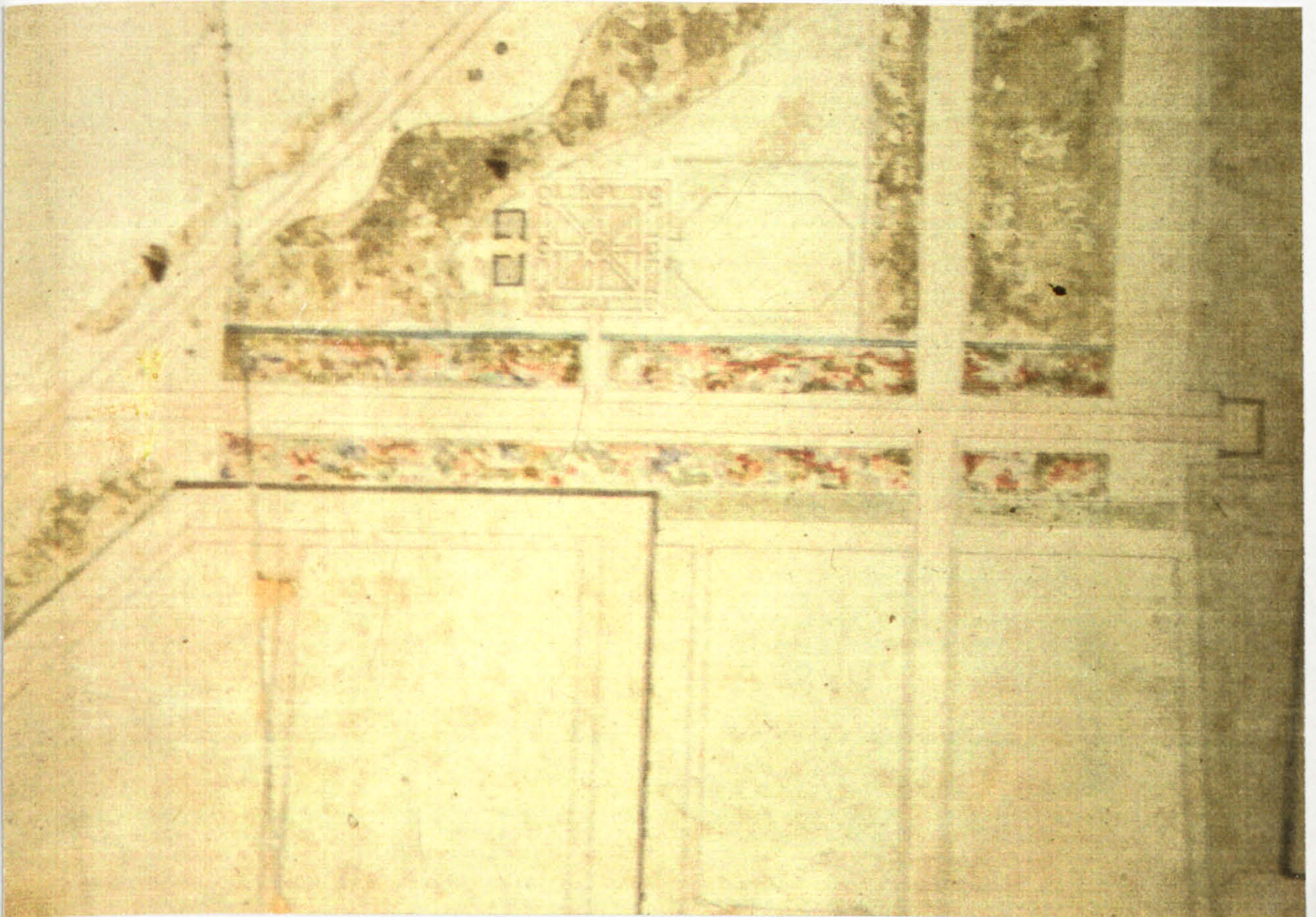


(Original in Colour)

Where previously moats were to the east and west of the house, as well as in the enclosure shown on the 1744 map to the north-west of the house, three separate gardens with informal beds are shown. It is most likely that all three were ornamental gardens, though not necessarily all the same in planting or character.

(Courtesy of Charles Foster, Arley Hall Family Archives)

ILLUSTRATION 100: DETAIL OF THE 1846 ESTATE PLAN OF ARLEY HALL

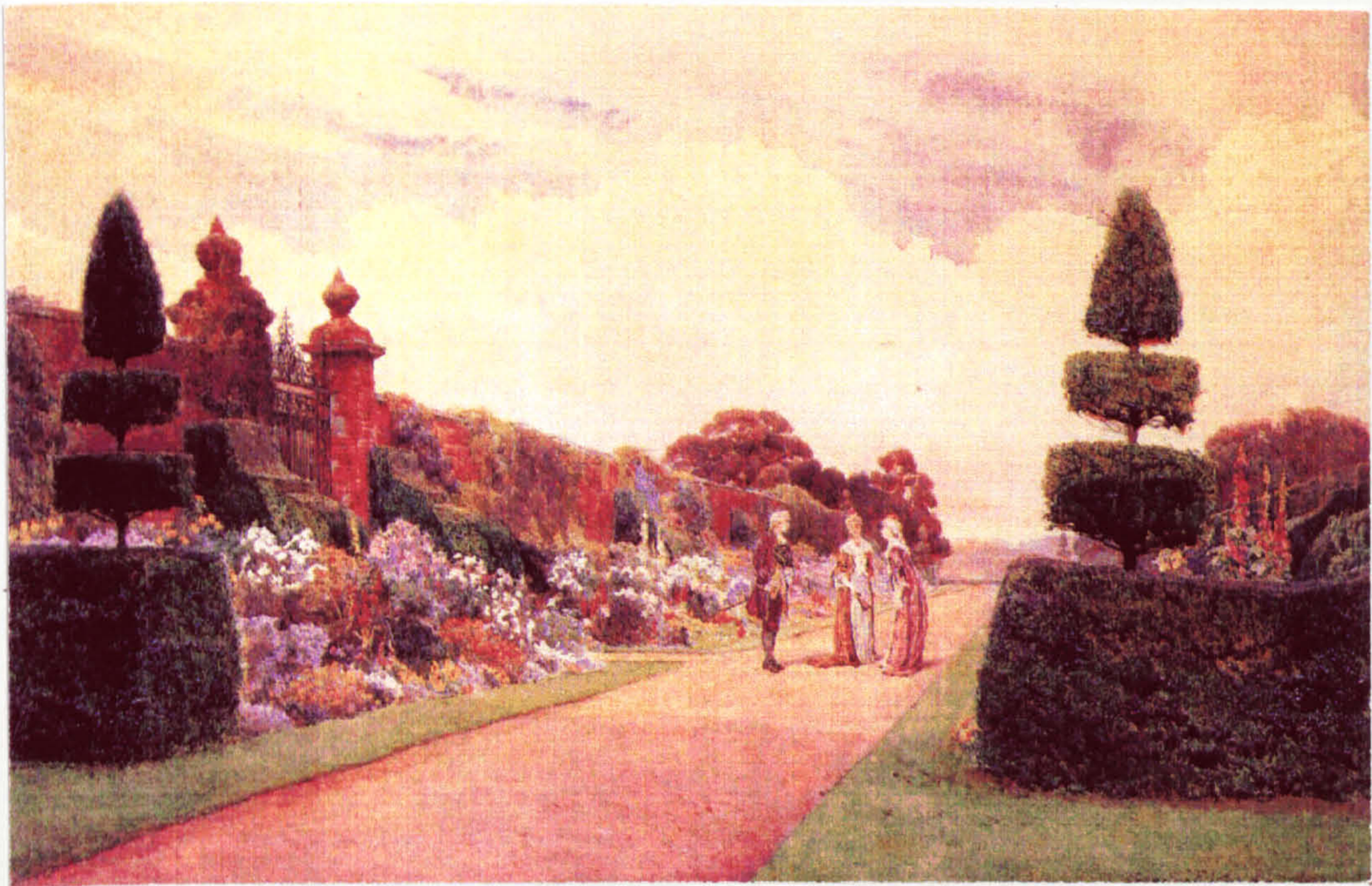


(Original in Colour)

This detail shows the herbaceous border, the earliest evidence of its existence. The alcove walk had been there since the late eighteenth century, and it is quite possible that the herbaceous border was already in place when this survey drawing was made.

(Arley Hall Family Archives)

ILLUSTRATION 101: 1889 VIEW OF THE ARLEY BORDERS BY ELGOOD

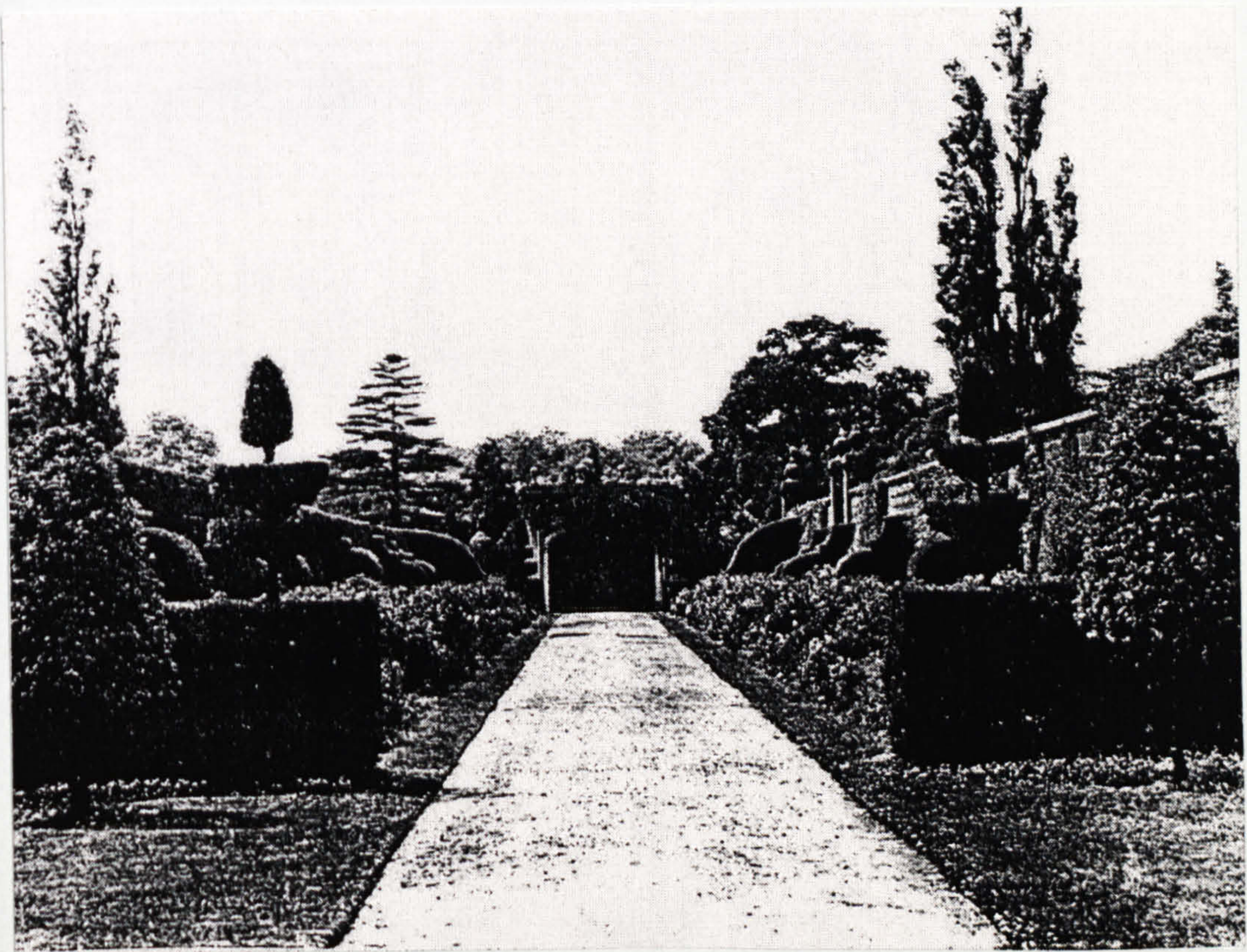


(Original in Colour)

George Samuel Elgood painted several views of the garden at Arley. This painting of the border flanking the kitchen garden wall shows the planting in detail. Plants were planted in small groups, colours mixed up together, with lower plants at the front of the border, and the height gradually increasing towards the rear.

(Hobhouse, P., Wood, C.: *Painted Gardens*, 1988, plate 56)

ILLUSTRATION 102: 1908 PHOTOGRAPH OF THE ARLEY BORDERS



This early photograph of the borders at Arley Hall shows how the planting had changed. From being low at the front, gradually increasing towards the rear, the height at the front of the border now suddenly increased, levelling of almost flat towards the back. There also appears to be a certain rhythm in the planting.

(Holme: *Gardens of England*, 1908, plate VII)

ILLUSTRATION 103: POST-1960 PHOTOGRAPH OF THE ARLEY BORDERS



This black-and-white postcard was probably produced at the time the garden was first opened to the public in the nineteen-sixties. The planting had further evolved. The photograph shows the outline in planting had returned to the way it was at the turn of the century, but this time it had become much bolder. Group-size had increased, as well as plant height. Whereas in the past the buttresses used to be quite visible at the rear of the border, by the nineteen sixties the planting height at the back camouflaged them.

(Arley Hall Estate)

ILLUSTRATION 104: 1992 PHOTOGRAPH OF THE ARLEY BORDERS

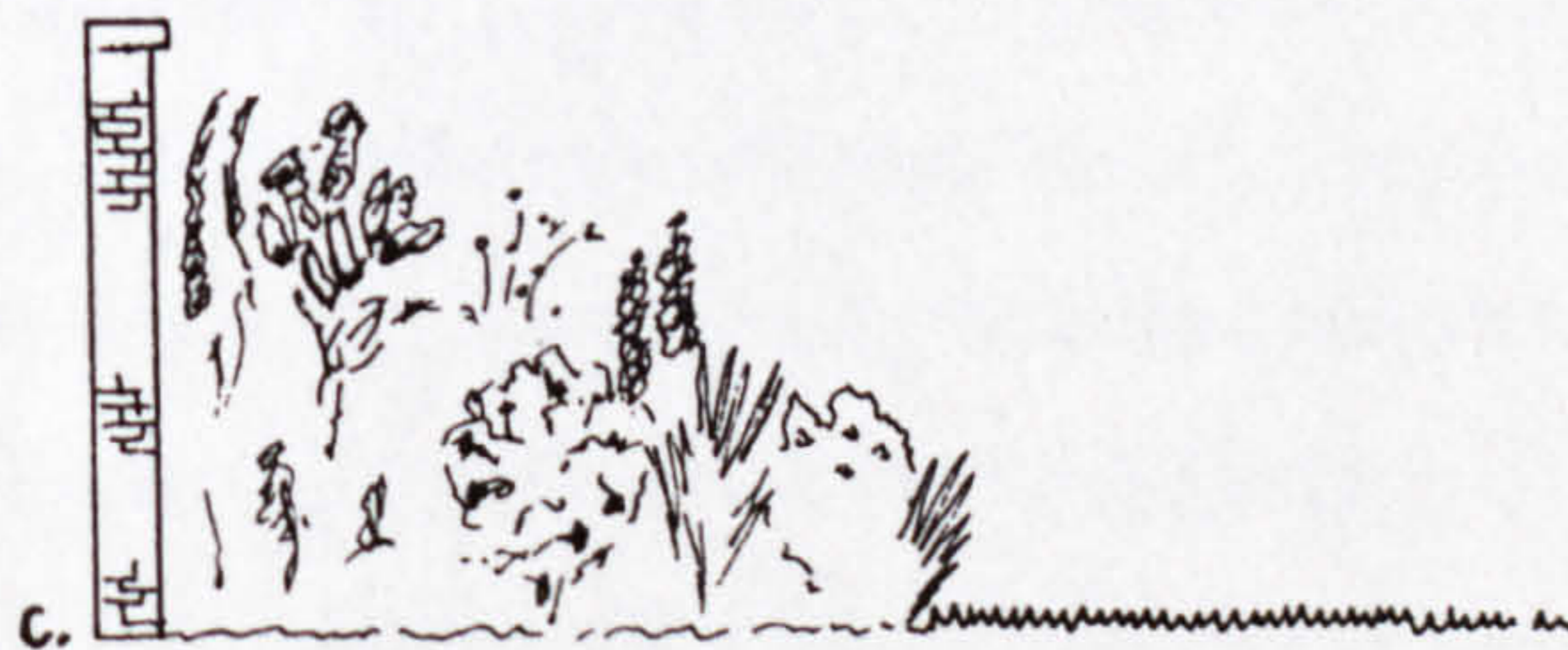


(Original in colour)

Even in early summer when the borders have not yet come into flower, it is possible to see how much bolder the planting has become. At the rear the plants are already reaching half-way up the buttresses, even though they have not yet reached flowering height. The plants used are taller, and are planted in larger groups.

(Author's Collection)

ILLUSTRATION 105: CROSS-SECTION SKETCHES SHOWING THE CHANGES IN PLANTING OF THE ARLEY BORDERS



From illustrations and photographs, these sketches show the planting evolution.

a. Late nineteenth century: Planting low at the front, gradually increasing towards the rear.

b. Early twentieth century: Planting much more block-like, the height rapidly rising at the front, and then evening out towards the rear.

c. Second half of the twentieth century: Return to the gradual increase in height towards the rear, though this time the overall plant height has increased.

7.2. Gravetye Manor, Home of William Robinson

Although Gravetye Manor was built in 1598, the house and estate had an uneventful history, and it was not until William Robinson bought the estate in 1884 that its history becomes relevant to this study. Tracing back the development of the garden is hard, as the records of Gravetye in the course of Robinson's occupation are incomplete. Some of his archives are missing, but quite a few photographs survive. There are a number of early twentieth century magazine articles by Robinson himself as well as others, which describe the garden and surrounding estate. Snippets can also be found in his books. With all these it is possible to build up a picture of the development of the garden under Robinson's care, though it is not complete. As Robinson experimented with new ideas in the garden, frequently changing schemes, it would in any case be impossible to document all the phases accurately.

One of the most valuable records was a diary of work on the estate, in the house and in the garden: *Gravetye Manor, Tree and Garden Book and Building Record*, started in 1885 and continued until 1911. On an annual basis he mainly recorded large new projects which had been undertaken, but gave little information on the regular progress made in the different garden areas. It tells us when and what was planted in the flower garden, but later photographs show some changes in the beds, which were not recorded. Although a number of photographs and paintings exist of the Formal or West Garden at Gravetye, not all are dated. With the help of those that are dated, it has been possible to roughly put a period on the others, on the basis of the surrounding woody vegetation.

Robinson acquired 1000 acres land, which enabled him to carry out his large-scale ideas on forestry planting, his naturalistic ideas on wild gardening, as well as more intimate garden design around the house (see illustration 106). His thoughts on wild gardening resulted in trials with a variety of plants in different situations. He planted

many bulbs, including numerous varieties of daffodils, snowflakes and *Anemone blanda*, in large drifts and natural colonies in grass sward and in woodlands. He experimented with perennials, putting for example patches of asters in amongst the rhododendrons near the house, where they would have provided colour at a time when the rhododendrons were not in flower, and could grow freely without staking.⁶

Robinson was very scornful of artificial additions. Clipping trees and shrubs was highly inappropriate. If a tree needed pruning to keep it in shape, it was the wrong tree for the position. Existing hedges were removed soon after he bought the house.⁷ Although he felt that terracing only suited environments like Italianate villas, some terracing was needed at Gravetye to cope with the steeply sloping land. Robinson retained many of the existing features, including the formal garden, but opened up views to and from the house, cleared wooded areas and planted up others. He carried out large-scale forestry on the land surrounding his house.⁸

In 1908 he created a mixed border in continuation of the pergola, as he felt there was no good border at Gravetye, and that it was the perfect place for choice herbaceous plants. It was nearly three feet deep, and backed by a post and rail fence and trellis for climbers.⁹ Due to the lack of surviving material, this border could not be analysed.

⁶ Robinson, William: *Gravetye Manor, Tree and Garden Book and Building Record*, started in 1885, until 1911, pp. 6, 94

⁷ Anon.: "The Gardens of Gravetye Manor, Sussex", *Architectural Review*, Vol. 35, 1914, pp. 75-7

⁸ Anon.: "A November Day at Gravetye Manor", 1916, pp. 560-1, *The Garden*; Anon.: "New Books: Home Landscapes", *Architectural Review*, Vol. 37, 1915, pp. 120-3

⁹ Robinson, William: *Gravetye Manor, Tree and Garden Book and Building Record*, started in 1885, until 1911, vol 2, p. 240

In the course of his fifty-one year stay at Gravetye, the garden did not stand still. A visitor's account of the garden illustrates how Robinson changed opinions as time went on. The visitor explained how she found the garden had gained from some formal improvements, which in the past would not have been allowed by Robinson.

"... we went again to Gravetye, Mr Robinson's beautiful garden, ... He has however altered his style of gardening in the last few years and there are soft peeps and carefully planned archways and formal vistas that he would not have tolerated when I knew him first, because at that time he was vigorously preaching his crusade against all formality. Now, near a formal old house he seems to have moderated his views, which I feel sure he is right in doing and he permits himself some of the fancies of the formal designers art. The best colour scheme he has is the mauve aubrietia that he freely encourages to grow on all his walls and also the mauve violas that are freely grown, for this colour is particularly pleasing against the grey stone walls of his house... The dark coloured trees are yews, cut back into queer shapes so as not to overshadow his formal beds of flowers that are on the terrace beneath them. One must picture that there is terrace upon terrace of beautiful shrubs and flowers mounting up at the back of the house. Altogether it far exceeds Miss Jekyll's garden in lay-out and colour..."¹⁰

The West or Formal Garden (See illustration 107.)

Although perennials were used in many parts of the garden, the West or Formal Garden was chosen as subject for this case study, as it contained many perennials is best documented of all. The West Garden is a formal space, part-enclosed by walls on

¹⁰ Wolseley, Frances Garnet Viscountess, "Notes and Pictures of Gardens and of interesting places visited from 1913 to 1924", Scrapbook held at Hove Central Library, Visit probably took place in June 1924

the south and west sides, a raised bank on the north side and the house on the east. Robinson laid it out on a simple, geometric design with large beds. Originally the beds were set in Croydon Gravel, which was later replaced by stone slabs as this was simple to maintain and allowed easy access at any time of year.¹¹ Robinson was against hedges and did not allow them in his flower garden, as they only would have resulted in his gardeners spending time on trimming hedges, time they could have spent on more important tasks. Instead he used pieces of broken York stone, of about ten inches (0.25 metres). On the subject of beds Robinson wrote:

"It is impossible to do good work in the little beds so commonly seen. Instead of cutting up a large plot of grass into a lot of small beds, it is better to make large simple beds. If the bed is to be well planted, it is absolutely essential that it should be large to enable the adoption of the grouping system and the forming of bold and picturesque masses. The shape and disposition can be best arranged on the spot and according to the ground and the taste of the owner...Plants carefully grouped in picturesque ways are far more beautiful and interesting than if set out in the common mixed way."¹²

The West Garden in the 1880's

Robinson advised his readers that when they started to plan a new flower garden they had to consider the following points before embarking on the new project: what are the favourite flowers, what is the climate like, how is the soil and which season of enjoyment does the garden have to cater for? In this case the soil was heavy, the climate cold and the seasons when colour was required were summer and autumn

¹¹ Robinson, William: "The Flower Garden at Gravetye Manor", *Country Life*, Vol. 32, 1912, pp. 409-11

¹² Robinson, William: *Gravetye Manor*, 1912, p. 20

(spring was provided for in other parts of the garden). The choice and colour of flowers had to respect the old existing house and concentrated on three favourite flowers: roses, carnations and pansies. Robinson considered tea roses as the most beautiful but neglected of roses, which were usually only found in dreadful rosaries. He started to make the West garden in March 1886, by laying out simple beds in the grass, and planting them with tea roses. He planted seventy in total, in informal groups of six to fifteen plants. Self-coloured carnations were used to prove their hardiness and added great value to the flower garden. Having lost quite a few plants to rabbits, he rabbit-proofed the garden and replanted 2000 plants in 1888. Tufted pansies were so beautiful he thought they deserved a place in amongst roses and carnations. He planted them in colonies and large groups, so the colours could run into one another.¹³

The West Garden in 1910-15

One of the earlier photographs of this garden was published in the United States by Miller in 1911.¹⁴ It is from a similar period to Beatrice Parsons' painting, entitled "The Paved Garden" and both show a large clipped shrub growing on the northern corner of the west front of the house, which is no longer shown on the *Country Life* photographs of 1912. Parsons' painting (see illustration 108) depicts the flower garden with York stone paving slabs, and rose beds generously planted with white and blue campanulas, white and pink carnations, and nemophilas. Agapanthus in large tubs were placed along the main axis near the house entrance.

¹³ Robinson, William, *Gravetye Manor, Tree and Garden Book and Building Record 1885*, pp. 20, 86-98

¹⁴ Miller, Wilhelm: *What England can Teach us about Gardening*, 1911

In the 1912 *Country Life* photographs things had changed. (See illustration 109.) The beds along the house wall were rather bare-looking, except for one small shrub and a few heliotropes. The tubs of agapanthus were replaced with trees in tubs. The bed for seedling carnations was also empty at the time the photographs were taken. Each rose bed was planted with a different rose, and different under-planting or edging. Planting in the long bed below the pergola is clearly shown on the illustration attached. It shows spacious planting of groups of roses, alternated with a group of six dieramas, underplanted with low growing flowers. The spacious planting and low ground cover gave the planting a very naturalistic feeling, not dissimilar to the type of planting which can be seen in Germany today.

Another photograph (see illustration 110), probably taken at a similar time as the *Architectural Review* pictures of 1914, shows one of the beds in front of the house in great detail. From it we can tell that not all beds were filled with roses. The one in the foreground was filled with a mixture of lilies, *Platycodon mariesii*, *Dierama*, pansies and a low ground-cover edging plant. The photograph of the West Garden published in the magazine shows the garden looking very neat and tidy. The borders along the house are filled with shrubs, climbers and lower, possibly perennials along the front. The beds opposing the house are all neatly trimmed with double rows of low edging plants.

The West Garden During the Last Years of Robinson's Life

Although most of the photographs lack definition it is possible to see how the planting became more opulent as years went on. Robinson may have changed the planting in the beds to some extent, his main theme of roses, carnations and pansies did not change, nor did the actual layout. A number of large trees which grew close to the flower garden were removed at some stage after 1914, the climbers against the house were also taken down and given a low trelliswork along which they could be guided.

The illustrations which are clear enough to show planting detail all have one thing in common: they prove how, despite the formality in layout, the planting was very informal. Each bed was planted differently, with plants of varying height. The planting was done in a very loose manner. Within the beds plants were mixed, generously spaced and underplanted; in the borders they were planted in large clumps.

Gravetye Today

After his death in 1935, Robinson left his estate to the nation in the hands of the Forestry Commission. During the second World War the garden became rather neglected due lack of labour. In 1957 Peter Herbert acquired the house and surrounding garden, turning it into an exclusive hotel.¹⁵

Since taking on the garden he adopted a policy which respects Robinson's progressive ideas. His principles in planning and planting are represented in the way the garden is managed today. Rather than turn the garden into a museum-piece with only Robinsonian plants, they continue making improvements Robinson could have made himself, and develop the plant collections with new plant introductions as Robinson would have done.¹⁶

A number of changes have had to take place. Instead of thirty gardeners there are only three today, albeit with modern machinery. The West Garden has changed in layout. Instead of the paved paths surrounding the original layout of beds, the space has been

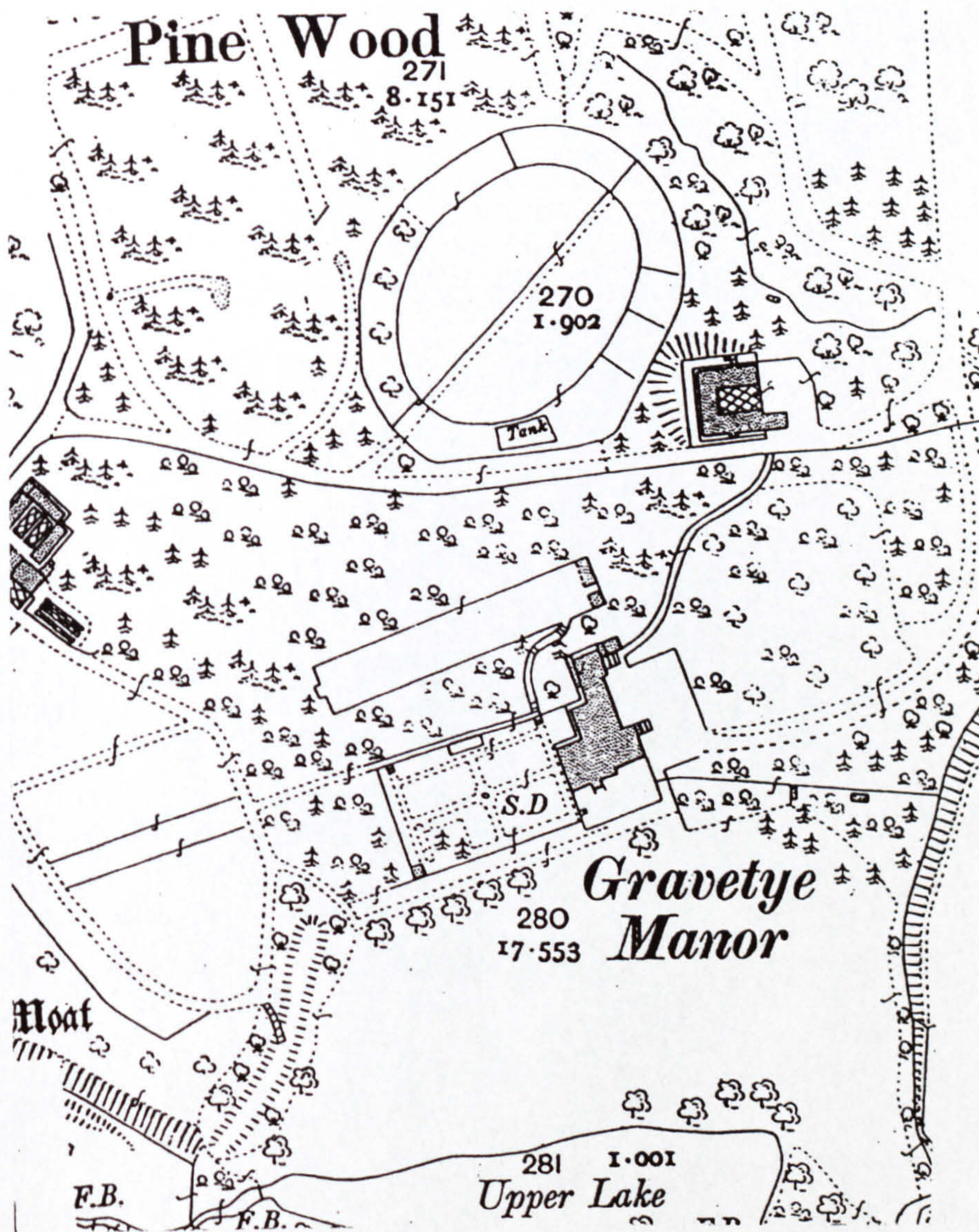
¹⁵ Harris, W. Cecil: "Gravetye Manor to the Nation", *The Times*, 1935, 4, 5 or 6 June? (Letter); Anon.: "The History of Gravetye Manor", undated leaflet from Gravetye Manor

¹⁶ Herbert, Peter: Letter, 25.3.1996, author's collection

turned into a large lawn. This is divided into four rectangles by crossing paths, with a sundial at the intersection as focal point. These paths and sundial are the only features which have been retained from the original layout. The pergola and trellis work have all gone and along the edge a number of borders provide colour during the summer months. The current layout resembles a hybrid of the two plans used by Robinson in *The English Flower Garden*. (See illustrations 111 and 112.)

Today the garden at Gravetye is listed in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens as a Grade II* site.

ILLUSTRATION 106: 1910 ORDNANCE SURVEY PLAN SHOWING GRAVETYE

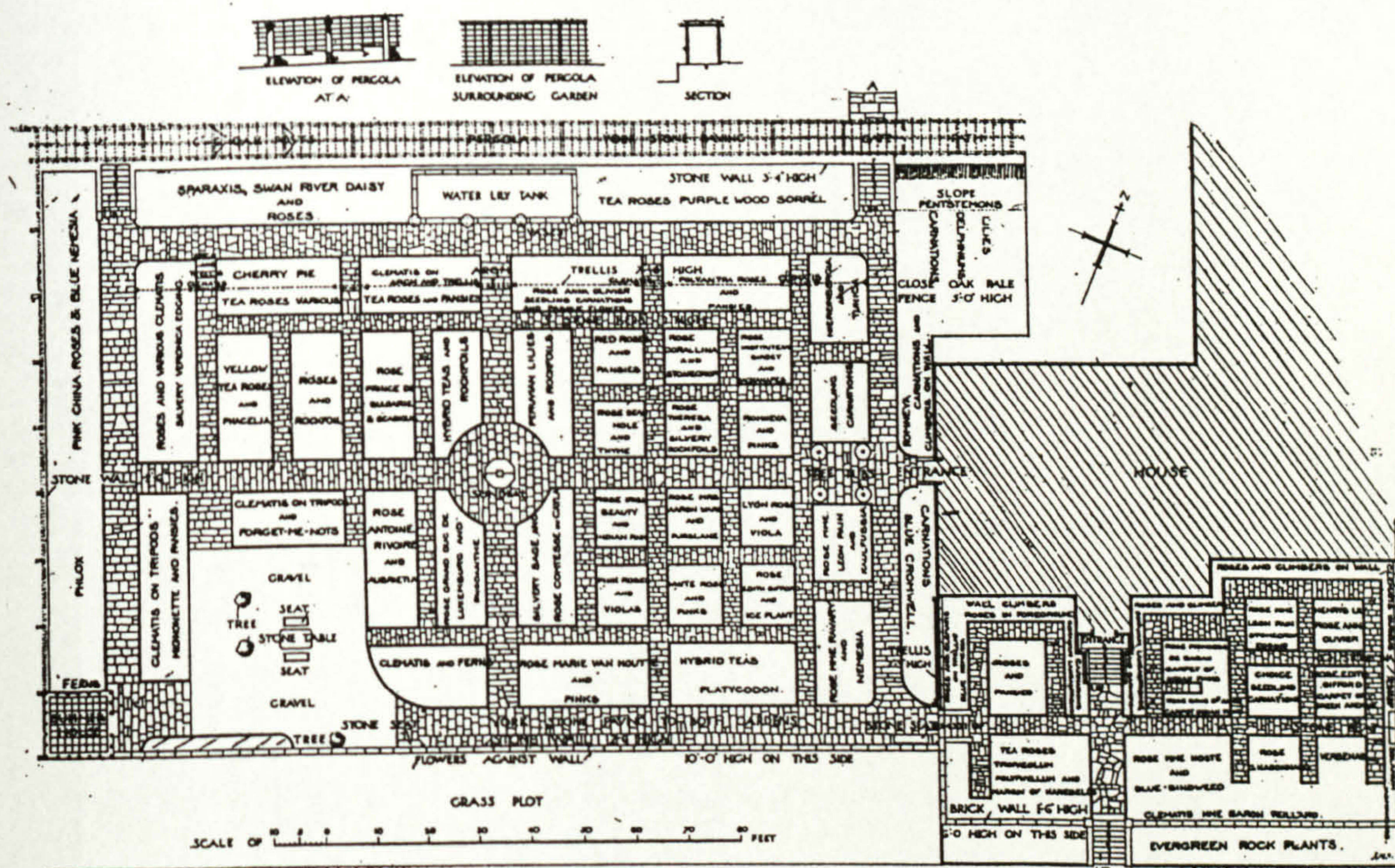


The 1910 Ordnance Survey plan of Gravetye reflects the major works Robinson carried out, creating clearances in the woods, planting new woods and designing the garden near the house.

(West Sussex Record Office, OS 25", 1 mile, XV.4 1910)

Chapter 7: Case Studies - Gravetye Manor

ILLUSTRATION 107: PLAN FOR THE WEST GARDEN OR FLOWER GARDEN AT GRAVETYE



The flower garden plan at Gravetye.

Robinson published a plan of his flower garden in *The English Flower Garden* and in *Country Life*. Although he was not in favour of producing planting plans as working drawings, he thought it was quite acceptable to draw up a plan after the planting was completed. Today it is the most detailed and accurate planting record of the area to survive, although he made frequent changes to it.

(Robinson, William, *The English Flower Garden*, 12th edition)

ILLUSTRATION 108: BEATRICE PARSONS' WEST GARDEN VIEW, 1911



(Original in colour)

Despite the rigid layout of the flower garden, the planting was very informal. Beds were filled with different roses and inter-planted with annuals and perennials such as pinks and campanulas which billowed over the edges and covered all earth.

(Hobhouse, Penelope: Plants in Garden History, 1992, p. 255)

ILLUSTRATION 109: 1912 VIEW ACROSS THE WEST GARDEN



This *Country Life* photograph shows the pattern of beds, planted with roses and other perennials and annuals, and on the bank on the left, a mixture of perennials and roses planted very loosely and informally, rising out of ground-covering plants.

(National Monuments Record, L8573-6, 1912)

ILLUSTRATION 110: APPROXIMATELY 1914 VIEW FROM THE WEST GARDEN TO THE HOUSE



Although this photograph is undated, it probably stems from about 1914 when the photographs for the *Architectural Review* were taken. It shows how the planting has evolved. There seem to be fewer roses, they seem to have been replaced by a more diverse selection of perennials and bulbs.

(West Sussex Record Office, Add, Ms, 20,184)

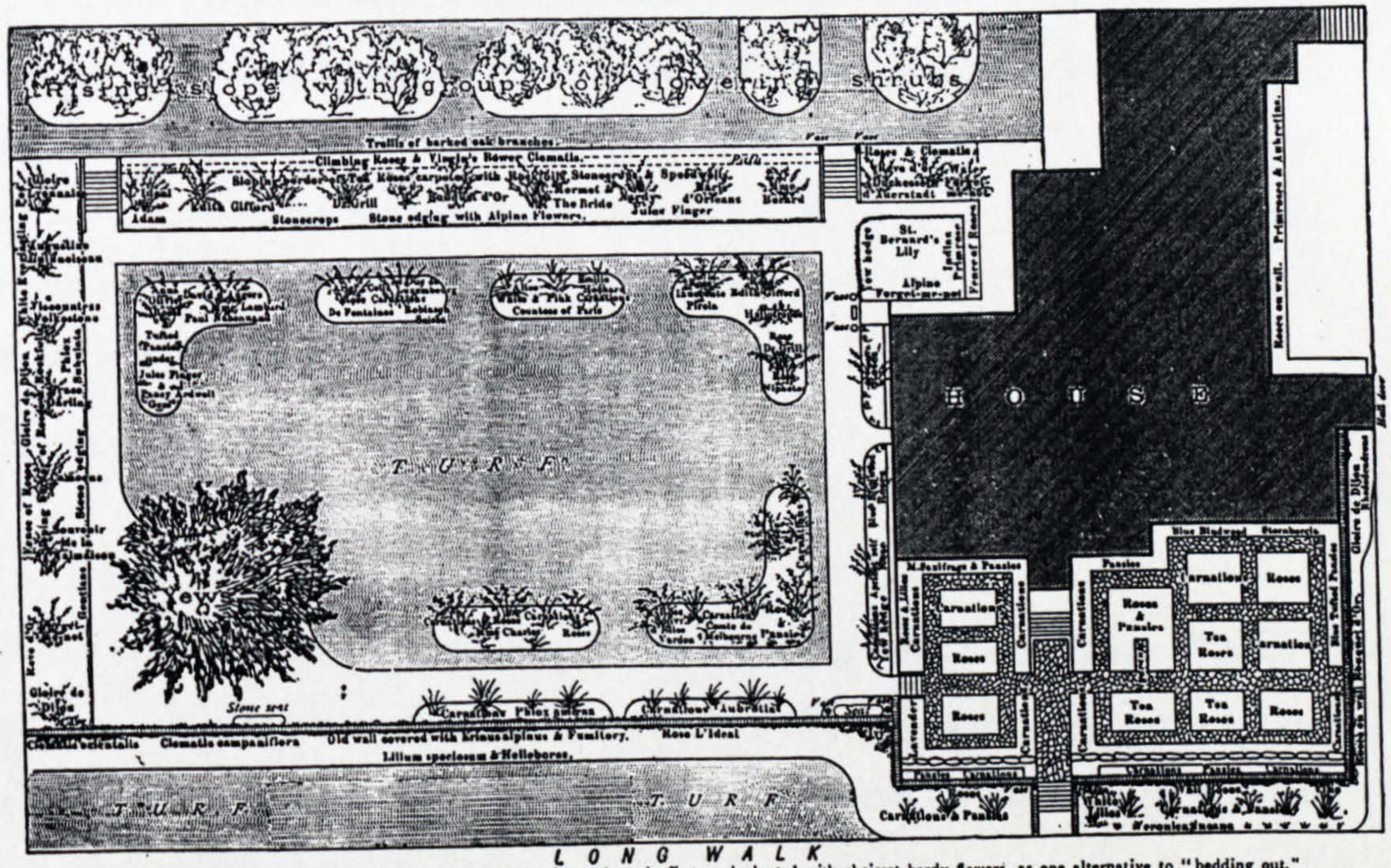
ILLUSTRATION 111: 1993 VIEW ACROSS THE WEST GARDEN



(Original in colour)

Today the west garden has undergone drastic transformations. Robinson's simple pattern of beds has gone, except for the two crossing main axis paths. The area has been turfed, and a few large beds provide flower interest. Even though the layout has been symplified, Robinson's planting filosofies are still respected.

ILLUSTRATION 112: ALTERNATIVE PLAN FOR THE WEST GARDEN



Garden of Tudor house designed to secure easy cultivation and good effect, and planted with choicest hardy flowers, as one alternative to "bedding out."

Robinson published a plan for a garden which was easy to cultivate. The plan fitted his own West Garden. Today's layout resembles more the proposals shown on this plan than Robinson's real garden.

(Robinson, William, *The English Flower Garden*, 12th edition)

7.3. Karl Foerster's Garden in Bornim-Potsdam

Karl Foerster bought a piece of land in Bornim near Potsdam, on the edges of the Sanssouci estate woods, to establish his nursery and build his house in 1910-11. After his death in 1970, his wife, Eva and later his daughter Marianne took over the responsibility of house and garden. The house and garden were declared a *Denkmal* (an historic monument) in 1981 by the town of Potsdam, preserving it for the nation. Karl Foerster's contribution to twentieth century garden development were the reason for protecting house and garden, thus recognising his work as breeder of hardy perennials, his literary achievements as well as his role in the setting up of several show- and trial gardens across the country.

The Garden

Shortly after the house was built, Karl Foerster started on the surrounding garden. His intention was to create a setting for the house, as well as provide a show garden where visitors and customers could look at plants and have an area where his new introductions could be observed.

Foerster established separate environments to display different plants and plant combinations. For this purpose the garden was subdivided into five main areas. The most important one was the *Senkgarten* or sunken garden (marked 'A' in illustration 113), a formal flower garden in front of the house, where Foerster could display his garden of the seven seasons. (For more details on this see chapter 6.) Area 'B' was the spring path or *Fruehlingsweg*. This consisted of a border along the path leading from the road to the house, parallel to the sunken garden, dedicated to all kinds of spring flowers blossoming from early spring until April. On the other side was the nature garden or *Naturgarten*. This informal area, 'E', was designated to represent Germany's three main habitats: mountain flora, heathland and beech woodland-margin. These

three habitats were created in relatively small garden spaces, and included native as well as exotic species which fitted in this environment. The area marked 'D' was specifically reserved for autumn flowers. 'E' was the rock garden. This was subdivided into areas dedicated to early spring, spring, early summer and autumn, which enabled close associations of plants which flowered at a similar time. Finally area 'F', the trial garden or *Versuchsgarten* was another formally-laid out garden behind the house, in which Foerster could display his perennials for the benefit of his customers as in a 'living' catalogue. The adjoining rock garden was put to similar use for the alpine plants. Beyond these two areas was the nursery itself.¹⁷

Today both the nature- and trial gardens have disappeared, the latter area has been turned into a small, private car parking area, and the nature garden has become a private garden area for the family, where Marianne Foerster can continue the work of her father trying out and observing new plants.

The Sunken Garden

The area of relevance to this study is the Sunken Garden, as it was the main flower garden and is the most important feature from a garden history viewpoint. In 1979 restoration was started on the Sunken Garden.

The Sunken Garden, lying immediately in front of the house, was Foerster's pride. The basic design of a rectangular formal sunken garden centred around an oval pond and was approximately 2000 metres square. It measured forty by sixty metres, and was sunk to an approximate depth of one metre. At the time it was created, the idea of a sunken garden was novel for Germany, although in Britain the Jekyll and Lutyens team had created a number of such architectural sunken spaces by then. It was

¹⁷ Karl Foerster: nursery Catalogue, 1929, p. 2

probably designed by Willy Lange (1864-1941), who had included a chapter on architectural gardens in his book *Die Gartengestaltung der Neuzeit*, featuring mostly English examples, including a photograph of the sunken garden at Hampton Court.¹⁸

Phase 1: 1912-1930

The Sunken Garden has known three main developments. The initial design created the basic structure which is still there today, based on a formal shape with a main central axis and cross axis with an oval basin where they meet. The first garden was enclosed by a fine softwood pergola on three sides, painted blue. The centre of this pergola was formed by an arch which reflected the arch of the pool. The embankments sloped steeply and were planted with groundcover plants or covered with large stone slabs. None of the paths were paved. The steps to the connecting surrounding garden areas consisted of broken rocks. No large shrubs were in the Sunken Garden. The beds made quite an intricate pattern of small rectangular shapes. The planting was architectural, surrounded by box hedging, and was symmetrical. Observed from the house, the planting on the left half of the garden reflected that of the right hand side. (See illustration 114.)

In 1929 the garden was described as follows:

"Within the pergola, covered with climbers, [Karl Foerster] has attempted to achieve ever changing images from April until October, so that the perennials and dahlias harmonise and create an interplay of colours at each particular period. Central to the garden is the waterlily pool, which is situated within an environment designated to water margin plants. Here the planting represents a water margin character from April till late summer with plants such as *Iris*, *Thalictrum*,

¹⁸ Lange, Willy, & Stahn, Otto: *Die Gartengestaltung der Neuzeit*, 1907

Trollius, *Anchusa*, tall grasses, bamboos and daylilies. The climax of the major colour effects come from climbing roses with delphiniums, low blue asters with yellow rudbeckias, orange-red dahlias, tulips and irises."

In a series of articles in *Die Gartenschoenheit* in 1925, Foerster described how the different garden areas had developed and continued to change as he gained more experience and tried things out. He felt garden planting could not be planned from a desk, but was best done on the ground. He considered that in many of the designed gardens the plants looked totally alienated and out of place, but it was important to have a very rigid structure and compartments to deal with the richness of plants he used. Originally he preferred the nature garden area (marked C on illustration 113), but as time went on he appreciated more the structured, architectural space of the sunken garden.

He had learnt from his mistakes. He thought the initial planting around the water feature was not sufficiently clumped and replaced it with prolific-flowering irises in a symmetrical planting. Years later he decided this was contradictory and changed the planting again, using lots of different colours and forms, planting asymmetrically. At the same time he added foliage contrast, neighbouring sharp vertical plants with broad-spreading plants, giving structure. Along the water edge he used groundcover planting. The whole effect was a balance between different plant sizes, shapes and colours.

Each year Foerster extended the flowering season, by bringing spring forward and extending autumn. He also would add plants to cover any slack periods in the flowering calendar to have as long a flowering season as possible. Foerster added to this article that if he could redesign the Sunken Garden, he would replace the banks

by terraces, planting delphiniums on the upper levels, mixed with tall colourful hollyhocks, something which was put into practice during the second phase.¹⁹

Phase 2: 1930-1960

The second phase happened in the thirties, when Hermann Mattern undertook several design changes in the Sunken Garden. He replaced the steep-sloped embankments with dry-walled terraces. The fine structured softwood pergola was replaced by a more robust structure, made of robinia wood. The paths, including the coping of the pool, were covered with paving of a red "Weser" sandstone. The main axis path, in front of the pool was widened, and spaces were created for planting gaps in between the stones. The intricate pattern of beds was simplified and became bolder.²⁰ (See illustrations 115 and 116.)

Phase 3: 1960

The third design phase of the garden was carried out by the local landscape architect Hermann Goertiz (1902-). The space of the Sunken Garden had changed considerably by 1960 through the increase in size of the surrounding trees and shrubs. The pergola, which had been removed during the war, was replaced by a metre-high box hedge. Due to his increasing age, Foerster had requested easier access steps, which were installed in the south-west corner of the garden. The Wesser-stone slabs were replaced by different-sized paving slabs. In 1964 Goeritz produced a new planting plan which helped to reinstate symmetry to the garden.

¹⁹ Foerster, Karl: "Kleinarbeit und Dauererfahrung", *Die Gartenschoenheit*, 1925, pp. 7, 36

²⁰ Herling, Peter: "Rekonstruktion der Gartenanlagen der Karl-Foerster-Gedenkstaette Potsdam-Bornim", *Landschaftsarchitektur*, 1983, p. 7

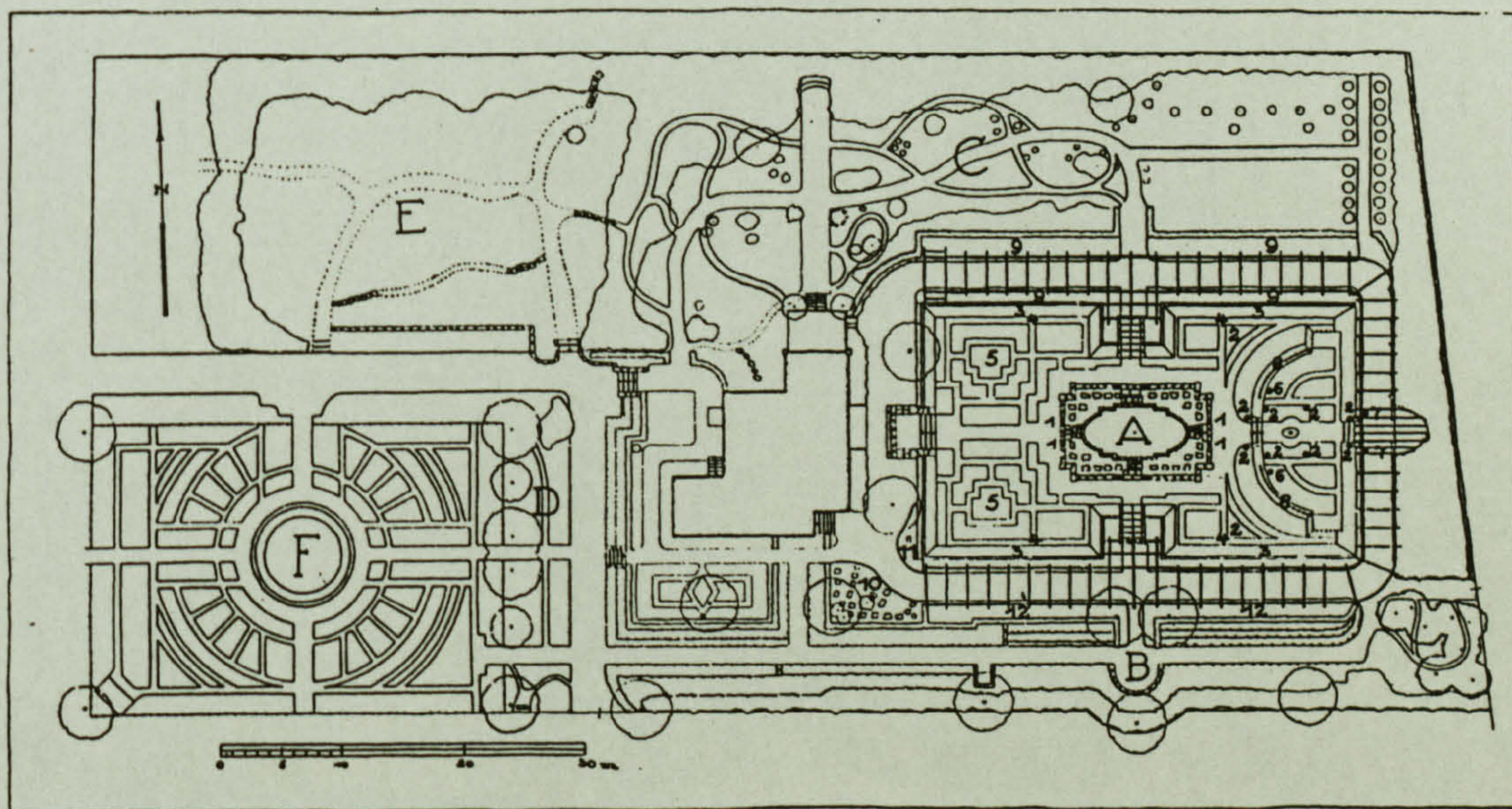
The Sunken Garden as it is Today (See illustration 117.)

In the period following 1975 the garden became very neglected and plants were smothered by perennial weeds. Consequently in 1979 a restoration programme was undertaken. The restoration consisted of a synthesis of the different development phases the garden has known. It proposed to retain the basic layout and re-instate the pergola of the Lange-design (this has not happened), but keep the terracing and bolder beds of the Mattern period. Hermann Goeritz was asked to produce a new planting plan which would help to enhance the garden's former space. Besides Foerster's old introductions, the list of plants also included new introductions, respecting his preferences for delphiniums, phloxes and heleniums. Some of the larger shrubs were removed to bring back light and sun to areas which had become too shaded for most perennials.

How the Garden has Changed

Looking down into the garden today, a totally different image is created from what is seen in the photograph of Lange's design. Then it was one large architectural space, embraced by the pergola, which created a very definitive boundary. Today it is a space divided into two areas by the large Japanese maple and bamboo by the pool. Also its boundary can no longer be defined, as it merges with the surrounding trees. The replacement of the pergola by a living belt of trees and shrubs has had a major impact on the garden both physically and aesthetically. From the point of view of creating a microclimate, the existing living shelter is far superior to either of the old pergolas, though visually it has lost definition. It also enhanced the intended formality of the space, which is now only noticeable in winter. The increase in tree-size has affected the light exposure, creating an unbalanced environment in an area which should be symmetrical. The southern half of the garden has more shade to cope with than the northern half, which means they cannot be planted symmetrically any longer.

ILLUSTRATION 113: ORIGINAL LAYOUT PLAN OF FOERSTER'S GARDEN



The above plan shows the the layout of the garden in its earlier years. It was published by Foerster in his magazine *Die Gartenschoenheit*. Only the spring path (B), sunken garden (A) and rock garden (E) survive today. The trial garden (F) and nature garden (C) no longer exist. The pattern of beds in the sunken garden has bee nsimplified and the surrounding pergola has dissapeared.

(Foerster, Karl, "Kleinarbeit und Dauererfahrung, I", *Die Gartenschoenheit*, 1925, p. 9)

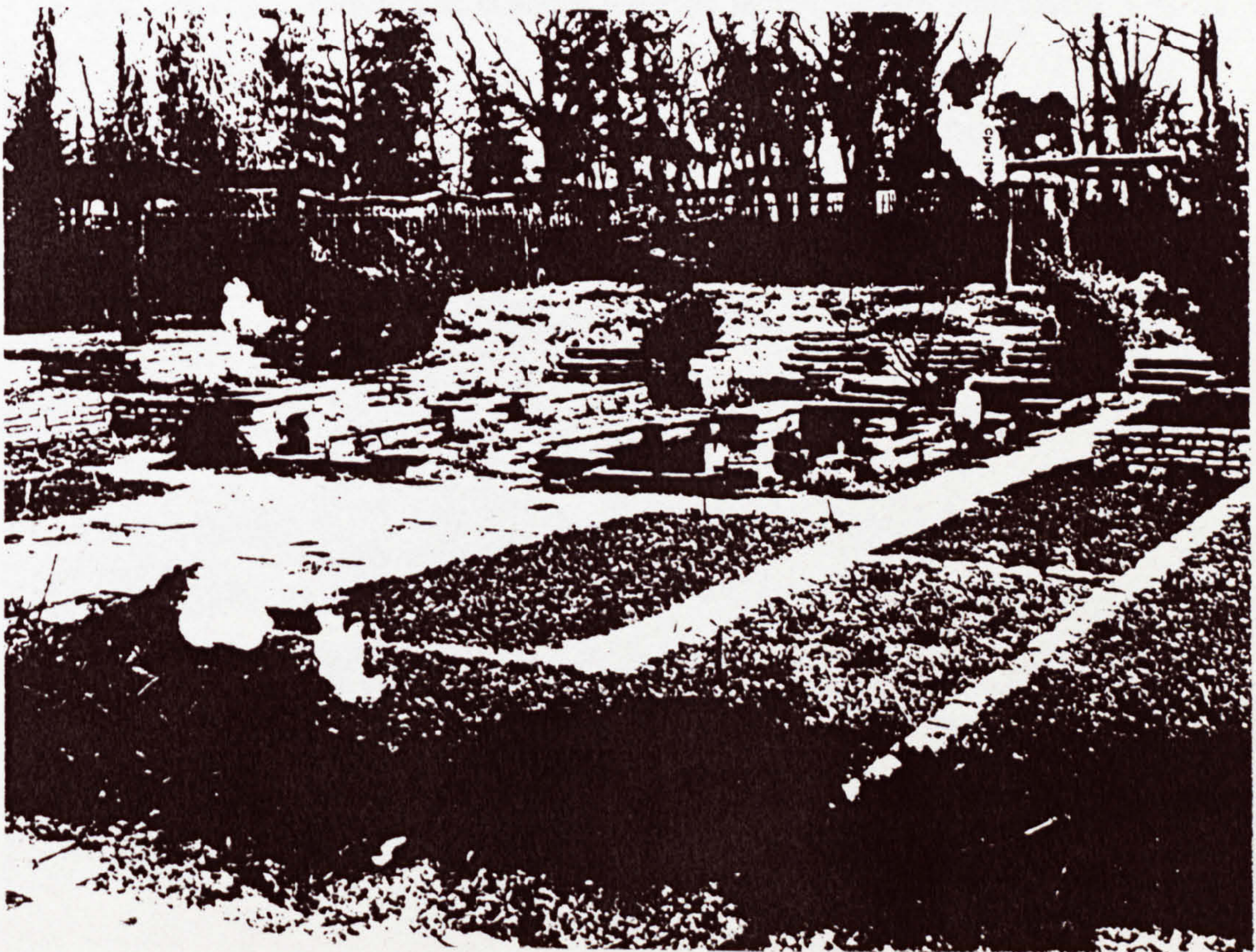
ILLUSTRATION 114: VIEW OF THE SUNKEN GARDEN DURING ITS FIRST PHASE



This undated photograph shows the sunken garden as it originally was in the period 1912-1930. This first design was probably done by Willy Lange. It shows the first, fine pergola, and more intricate pattern of beds. The beds around the sides are still sloped.

(Courtesy of Peter Herling, Potsdam Amt fuer Denkmalpflege)

ILLUSTRATION 115: VIEW OF THE SUNKEN GARDEN IN ITS SECOND PHASE



In 1930 Hermann Mattern re-designed the sunken garden for Foerster, increasing the size of beds, leaving planting spaces in the pavement, converting the banks to terraces and replacing the fine-structured pergola by a more robust one.

(Courtesy of Peter Herling, Potsdam Amt fuer Denkmalpflege)

ILLUSTRATION 116: DETAIL VIEW OF THE SUNKEN GARDEN IN ITS SECOND PHASE



Detail of the second phase, showing some planting, including *Miscanthus*, the new pergola and planting spaces in the pavement.

(Courtesy of Peter Herling, Potsdam Amt fuer Denkmalpflege)

ILLUSTRATION 117: 1994 VIEW OF THE SUNKEN GARDEN



(Original in colour)

The sunken garden was restored in 1982, after several years of virtual neglect. The restoration tried to reflect the three development phases of the garden, whilst respecting the original basic layout of phase one, the terraced banks from phase two, and the planting of phase three, for which Herman Goeritz was commissioned to redraw a planting plan. The only item which has not been reinstated is the pergola, due to the increased size of the surrounding trees.

(Author's collection)

7.4. Issues Raised by the Case Studies

Analysis of the three gardens raised a number of issues typically encountered when dealing with perennial planting schemes.

- **Planting style:** Styles have changed gradually over time, as has been highlighted in the borders at Arley. Planting has become considerably denser and bolder since the start of this century. The 1989 and 1902 views of Arley show borders planted with small clumps, of varying height. By 1908 the height differences made way for a more solid, even block of vegetation. The post World War II photograph shows large scale border planting. It is only by piecing together surviving visual records that it is possible to see the changes which have occurred. At Gravetye and Foerster's garden, they took place during the lifetime of a person, but in both instances they were people keen on exploring a wide range of options. Their gardens are likely to have changed more in a lifetime than most other gardens would have.
- **Planting scale:** With the increase in plant- and group size borders have become much bolder. The Arley borders are much taller than they used to be round the turn of this century, and at Gravetye feature plants such as *Phormium tenax* have recently added a totally new dimension to what used to be quite an intimate garden filled with detailed planting. If Lady Ashbrook's recollections are correct, then group size reached it's maximum during the Edwardian period. However, from the photographic evidence it would appear that planting scale has increased towards the latter part of this century, from the spotty, small groups seen in the beginning of the 20th century to the bold masses seen today.
- **External influences on planting:** The gradual increase in size of trees, shrubs and hedges can seriously affect a planting scheme. Not only has the planting in the Foerster garden had to be adapted in the last thirty years to cope with

- the changed environment, it has become impossible to carry out a symmetrical planting scheme as one half of the garden has become shadier than the other.
- **External changes affecting appearance:** What seem to be relatively minor changes, such as the grassing over of the gravel path at Arley in 1946 or the removal of the pergola in Foerster's garden during World War II, can have a major impact on the visual appearance of a scheme. The borders at Arley now look much shorter since the path was grassed over, and the Foerster garden has lost the feeling of being an enclosed, intimate space.
 - **Evolution of gardens with perennials:** Although the case studies analyse planting evolution over decades, all three illustrate how quickly a garden planted with perennials can change appearance. From one year to the next a scheme can look totally different because plants have died and others have increased in size. Because most gardeners tend to move perennials when they are not in the right position or have become too large, just a few changes can dramatically alter the appearance of a border from one year to the next.
 - **Changes in plant material:** The selecting and hybridising of the garden perennials we have become familiar with today, did not really start until the end of the nineteenth century. At Arley, the early borders would have been planted with many species, and only towards the turn of the century would more have been replaced by cultivars and would colour subtleties start to appear as the colour palette increased. Foerster's garden would have been planted with all the latest introductions, which would have regularly been updated. The constant introduction of new plants would have resulted in a yearly changing plant associations. The same would have been the case at Gravetye Manor, where William Robinson was experimenting with his latest ideas.
 - **Lack of evidence:** Descriptions or illustrations only project an image of a scheme at one particular moment in time. Flowers fade as others open, so that planting compositions change constantly as seasons progress. Unless a

- detailed planting plan survives, it is impossible to recreate a precise image of the complete planting of any one herbaceous flower garden. It is hard to build up a precise image of what a border or bed really looked like for a whole season, let alone over a prolonged period of time. All we have are fleeting glimpses, mere fractions in the lifetime of a garden.
- **Lack of resources:** One of the biggest impacts on the appearance of gardens in the course of the twentieth century, has been the reduction in labour since the First World War I period. Of the three gardens discussed, the problem is most obvious at Gravetye where Robinson's flower beds have been replaced by a lawn and a few large beds, although Arley Hall and Foerster's garden have to deal with the same problems. Machinery has made some gardening tasks lighter and faster, but flower-gardening still heavily relies on skilled manual labour. The Arley borders and Foerster's sunken garden are the trademark of the properties, and have therefore been maintained as well as is feasible, simplifying instead other, less important The Arley kitchen garden has been sacrificed since World War II, and Foerster's rock garden is showing serious signs of neglect.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

From the evidence found in the course of this research, it is clear that herbaceous perennials have been part of British and German gardens throughout the nineteenth century. Their role evolved, their popularity changed, but every garden style managed to accommodate some in one way or another.

A comparison between Britain and Germany shows that although the development was not always simultaneous, up until the end of the century similar changes and evolutions took place in both countries, usually within ten to fifteen years from one another. Although German landscape gardeners were very interested in the English landscape movement, and were strongly influenced by it, they did not partake in the picturesque debate which took place in Britain.

The nineteenth was a century of professional excellence and technology, making possible the cultivation of an ever increasing plant range to the highest standards. Gardeners took great pride in growing their plants to perfection and showing off their horticultural skills. This trend came to a peak with the gardenesque gardening fashion, where all plants had to be grown far enough apart so none would touch, in case neighbouring plants hampered development. It was also reflected in the lavish bedding displays.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, bedding plants displayed in large masses gained in popularity. As their reputation increased, that of perennials decreased. They were planted in mixed schemes, which, even though they were designed to flower over a long period, would only ever display a few plants in flower at a time. These mingled displays contained many different species, but only one, or a few plants of each, and were planted without regard for colour. Their effect was always rather subdued as their flowering was not simultaneous, and the rest of the

plants provided a green foil for the flowers. Bedding plants on the other hand produced a long flower display of bright colours, but at great expense. They were mostly displayed in the massed style, grouping large numbers of plants together, one or a few different sorts to a bed. Their use was much more abstract, working with panels of colour, rather than individual plants.

Despite the fact that the massed style had a large number of followers, there were some authors who were more in favour of the traditional mingling style, using perennials. In Britain it was possible to discern two schools of thought, the followers of the massed style on the one hand, and those who were more in favour of the mingled style on the other. Germany did not have such strong divisions. It was generally agreed that the formal areas near the house were best filled with bedding plants, but flower displays set within the informality of the pleasure ground were best achieved with perennials.

Although the popularity of bedding plants did little to improve the image of perennials during much of the nineteenth century, the bedding-out fashion was of long-term benefit to herbaceous planting. Throughout most of the century there had been little regard for colour or the effect of foliage texture in mingled planting displays. However, both these design elements had been a major consideration in bedding schemes. Every author published his thoughts and theories on colour for bedding plants, but towards the end of the century these theories started to involve perennial planting. In 1882 British gardening magazines were buzzing with correspondence between Jekyll and other writers about the use of colour schemes for perennials. Although it took several more years before the effect of these debates could be noticed in planting schemes. In the 1913 edition of *Colour in the Flower Garden* Jekyll announced that the repeated requests for information on colour showed that the interest for colour schemes for perennial displays was well and truly there.

Intricate colour schemes never were as popular in Germany. Although German gardeners were aware of the colour theories, the impact of colour was regarded more important than a scheme in itself. This was because many herbaceous planting schemes were set within the pleasure grounds where they were viewed from varying distances. Thus luminous colours, such as white and yellow, were placed the furthest away, or in front of dark backgrounds, whereas dull colours like reds and blues were placed in the foreground.

By the mid-nineteenth century the use of foliage plants came up for discussion, though as with colour, this applied mainly to bedding schemes. It was first developed in Germany in the mid-nineteenth century, but became equally important in British gardens soon after. Many of the perennials suitable for solitaire planting mentioned by Jaeger and Robinson were also suitable as foliage plants in bedding displays or in the pleasure ground. By the eighteen-seventies foliage plants played an important role in gardens, so much that Ruempler complained that too many gardeners toned down the colour splendour of the flowers with excessive use of foliage.

Where Perennials Were Used

The eighteen-sixties and -seventies in Britain and Germany saw the awakening of a revival of perennials. Authors of books and periodicals were talking about the re-introduction of plants from the past; old-fashioned garden flowers had been banished from gardens in favour of gaudy bedding plants. They only survived thanks to the diligence and care of cottage gardeners, or so it was claimed.

The evidence is, however, that while perennials never completely disappeared from the gardens of the more affluent, bedding plants were introduced in the gardens of the less well-to-do, albeit some years after they were introduced in the more fashionable gardens. One may have expected the gardens of the less affluent to be mixed gardens,

providing primarily for the table rather than just for pleasure, but evidence has shown that British and German authors encouraged gardeners to do exactly the opposite. Rather than struggling to grow a few vegetables, gardeners were advised to concentrate on providing a garden which could be enjoyed by the whole family, offering a place of repose for mind and body, and instead spend a little money on buying the necessary produce.

It is clear from the evidence found that perennials had - and maintained - a place in most gardens in Britain as well as in Germany. In the early part of the nineteenth century perennials and annuals provided much of the colour in gardens, but the mixed or mingled planting schemes in which they were used were often described as providing an uneven colour display and being somewhat weedy-looking, instead of giving year-round splendour. This was not helped by the fact that the range of perennials available was still relatively limited, as nurseries did not start selecting vast numbers of varieties until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, after the revived interest in these plants.

The following summary lists the various areas where perennials could be grown.

Formal Settings

Nineteenth century German and British authors agreed that a flower garden placed in the vicinity of a house was best laid out in a geometric style. Smaller gardens too seemed on the whole to be suited to a formal design. The patterns could vary from a simple arrangement of beds to intricate designs, but their planting predominantly relied on bedding plants. Perennials were also planted in borders on the periphery of such formal flower gardens, which not only enclosed the space but also made the transition from the formal house vicinity to the informality of the pleasure grounds. Geometric gardens could be removed at some distance in the pleasure ground, though

within these informal settings an informal layout was usually preferred.

Perennials had their place and function in formal gardens. Used as bedding plants, they were popular for the provision of spring flower displays, before tender bedding plants could be planted out in late spring. Some found their way into bedding displays as edging plants, for their foliage effect or for their statuesque habit. It was possible to create a geometric flower garden, in which some beds were reserved for growing perennials, planted in the mingled style. Some geometric flower gardens were entirely dedicated to perennials, such as the circular flower garden illustrated by 'C.D.' in the *Gardener's Magazine* of 1831 or M'Intosh's herbaceous plant garden. Interestingly enough, some of these practices are being applied again today, such as the use of *Cerastium tomentosum* as an edging plant in the Waddesdon Manor parterre, or Christopher Lloyd's plunging of seasonal flowering plants to fill gaps in his borders.

Informal Surroundings

Informal flower gardens, described by Loudon and M'Intosh in the early nineteenth century as "modern flower gardens", were very popular in Germany, where Jaeger also referred to them as the new style gardens.

The well-documented examples of the informal flower gardens with irregularly-shaped beds at Nuneham Courtenay and Hartwell were obviously no exceptions. Early nineteenth century plans published by Maria Elizabeth Jackson, later reprinted by Loudon in his *Encyclopaedia*, represent similar beds. Arley Hall appears to have had comparable flower gardens towards the latter part of the eighteenth century. All of these were flower gardens near the house enclosed by walls, or informally enclosed by hedges and set in the pleasure grounds.

Several authors agreed that the informality created by mingled planting schemes with

perennials suited the informal flower garden or the pleasure ground better than the formal flower garden. Flower beds could be added along paths to heighten interest, or act as a focal point near intersections or by resting areas. They were never allowed to clutter a lawn.

Judging from the frequent references, German authors more so than their British counterparts, seemed to attach great importance to the planting of flowers, particularly perennials, in the pleasure ground. Not only were there borders and beds marking the transition between the formal flower garden near the house and the informality of the park or landscape beyond, but they were also very keen on planting perennials on the edge of shrubberies. They were said to create the perfect transition between lawn and shrubs, and in fact could be described as an informal border. They would follow the outline of the shrubberies, but not evenly. Occasionally the edge would swing in or out, creating uneven planting depths. Planting in such borders was informal and in Germany's case could even be inspired by nature. Perennials could also be planted between shrubs as shade-loving cover, or, as in Loudon's picturesque villa garden, used as infill, covering the soil until the shrubs had filled the spaces in the beds.

Solitaire or specimen planting was also associated with the setting of an informal garden. A selection of perennials was suitable for planting as individuals, as well as in beds. They were intended to break up the lines of beds and enhance the informality. During the gardenesque vogue, perennials and other plants were treated like solitaires, so they could fully develop without interference from neighbouring plants. Solitaire planting became popular in its own right in the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, Kemp mentioning it as early as 1850, Jaeger in 1858. Due to their bold character, many of the plants used as solitaires were equally suitable as foliage plants.

Perennials in Kitchen Gardens

Even though kitchen gardens produce food, it was the third location where perennials were likely to be found. A small amount of space could be reserved for the growing of flowers, usually in borders of mixed perennials or perennials with soft fruit or just bedding plants. If space was plentiful, flower borders lined the main axis paths. By the end of the nineteenth century Ruempler announced that the narrow borders of flowers commonly found in kitchen gardens were a thing of the past. With the increasing popularity of herbaceous borders, in Britain too, more and more borders appeared outside the kitchen garden. This did not mean that kitchen gardens were devoid of borders, on the contrary. Flower borders remained an important feature of many kitchen gardens, from the time they became a familiar feature in the eighteenth century, until the general decline of kitchen gardens this century, as is confirmed by a late nineteenth century report praising the one at Frogmore.

How Perennials were Planted

During the second half of the nineteenth century, planting of herbaceous borders gradually changed into the style with which we are familiar today, as can be seen in the border planting at Arley Hall.

Despite this move towards a more relaxed planting style, British gardeners found it hard to transfer their allegiances from the long standing tradition of planting borders in rows. Even some of the late nineteenth century examples were still very rigid and unnatural, using small clumps of low plants at the front and tall ones at the rear. German gardeners on the other hand looked to nature for inspiration at an earlier stage. In 1858, at a time when Britain was still preoccupied with planting perennials in rows which made maintenance easier, Jaeger was already talking about observing nature, and planting accordingly.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the development of the wild garden movement. In Britain it was pioneered by William Robinson, whose book *The Wild Garden* helped to establish the trend. Some of Germany's garden writers had been influenced by Robinson's work, but others like Jaeger had come up with similar thoughts more than ten years before Robinson published his book. Jaeger was not the only one to show an interest in the way in which plants behaved in their natural environment. Germany has seen a continuous stream of gardeners, designers and garden writers who advocated planting according to nature's laws. Theodor Ruempler, 'Dendrophilus', Willy Lange, Karl Foerster and Richard Hansen are some of the people who, at different times, had similar ideas. There is a certain element of common sense to wild gardening, which without doubt appealed to many gardeners.

Whilst a succession of eminent German gardening figures turned to nature and common sense for their planting ideas, Britain went a different direction. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, together with the revival of perennials, herbaceous borders became increasingly popular features. The borders at Arley Hall were described as being one of the finest examples in the country.

Although Robinson's ideas on wild gardening were not ignored, they had strong competition. He was not the only figurehead in the gardening spotlight, and had to share the stage with Gertrude Jekyll. Whilst Robinson was promoting easy to maintain, natural-looking wild gardens, Jekyll was encouraging gardeners to create artistic schemes, with much more labour-demanding planting schemes and intricate colour themes. She moved away from the traditional planting in rows and small clumps, planting in drifts instead, and encouraged other to do so too. Her numerous articles and books, as well as the success of the gardens she created, many in collaboration with Sir Edwin Lutyens, helped to put her in the spotlight. Being an artist, she had a very different approach to planting design from that of professionally trained gardeners. She worked with a limited range of plants to achieve particular

combinations, either to create a distinctive texture or colour effect. People like Robinson or Foerster were foremost gardeners. Their initial training had been in horticulture, and consequently creating a scheme, which although attractive had to make good horticultural sense. This basic contrast in approach to planting design, one artistic, the other horticultural, lies at the root of the difference in late twentieth century design in both countries.

In Britain, people expanded on the themes of colour, texture and artistic impression, each generation interpreting the theories in its own way. The Germans on the other hand never had any one designer who reached as wide an audience as Jekyll, nor did they have a figurehead with such strong or precise views, coloured by an artistic background. Their leading figureheads were principally horticulturists, concerned with the plant's well-being.

It is difficult to compare the three case studies with each other, as each garden was created under different circumstances. Arley Hall was, and still is, a family garden, which has evolved over the generations, each making its contribution to the garden. The herbaceous borders have probably existed for more than two hundred years, but records of their appearance only cover the last 110 years. During this period it has been possible to observe a gradual evolution in their planting reflecting the tastes of changing fashions and the continually evolving plant selection.

Gravetye Manor and the Foerster garden have strong common characteristics. Both gardens were created by gardening personalities, and were used as experimenting grounds which resulted in drastic changes of appearance in the course of their lives. Both Robinson and Foerster tried out plants and associations, testing them for their garden worthiness. Consequently, with the help of surviving documents and information, we can only build up a rough image of what the gardens looked like in

their various stages of development during the lives of these two great men. Interestingly enough, although both men advocated naturalistic planting, they surrounded their houses with very formal gardens. As years went on, they both revised their opinions. A visitor to Gravetye observed how the addition of certain formal elements, which in earlier days would not have been allowed, greatly improved the garden. Foerster admitted that initially he was fondest of the nature garden, but as time went on, came to appreciate the geometry of the sunken garden most.

If today Britain and Germany have two very different approaches to planning and planting with herbaceous perennials, it appears that the origin of these distinctive trends goes back to the middle of the nineteenth century. It is at this point that Germans began to refer back to nature, and although British gardeners did so too to a lesser extent, by the end of the 1880s the relevance of an artistic approach was being instilled into them.

It also appeared in the course of this study, that the personality of the three main figures who were the pivoting points in the creation of modern-day gardening (Robinson and Jekyll in Britain and Foerster in Germany), is reflected in their work. Jekyll was a great garden designer, creating gardens as an artist. Robinson was a creative gardener turned writer, inspiring many gardeners with his articles and books. In turn they were followed by a series of other garden personalities such as Vita Sackville-West, Lawrence Johnson, Bobbie James, Norah Lindsey and Margery Fish who continued to develop gardening traditions set by their predecessors.

In Germany, however, there was no major influential garden creator after nineteenth century figures such as Fuerst Puckler, leaving it to each generation to turn to the instinctive source of inspiration and discover nature as an example. Karl Foerster furthermore differed from his British colleagues in his great social concern. He was keen on making gardens available to all classes of society and improving everyone's

living environment. In contrast to this, Britains' great gardening figures of the early twentieth century tend to be associated with the middle and upper classes of society.

The Plant Selection

At the start of the nineteenth century, the plant selection was still very limited by today's standards, and what was available, was not always as inspiring as what we know today. Few cultivars were available, except for the florists' flowers. The colour range was very restricted, so that colour schemes were even less likely to occur. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the nursery trade started to flourish throughout Europe, and that a rapid influx of novelties started to flood the market. It even reached a point in the 1980s when too many cultivars had been released by the trade, making gardeners despair at the quality of the range on offer.

The Present and Future

Gardening has changed dramatically over the last 100 years. Karl Foerster would be delighted to see it has become very accessible in the sense that a large proportion of the population has a garden to care for, even though the average size of gardens has decreased. Those caring for larger gardens which need more than an owner to maintain it, all face the same problem: financial restrictions. Head gardeners have had to cope with an ever dwindling number of staff, and although machinery has replaced a certain amount of manpower, no machine has been invented yet to perform delicate tasks such as weeding borders, staking plants and deadheading flowers. Traditional herbaceous planting is labour intensive, and consequently is often the first area of the garden to be simplified or even put to grass.

Karl Foerster's suggestions for gardens of lazy people have become useful for gardens

of people with restricted financial means. His aim to make gardening less demanding is more topical than ever.

The naturalistic planting schemes which today can be seen in many public spaces in Germany and The Netherlands are very different to what we are familiar with in Britain. Their appeal no doubt is that these schemes reintroduce flowers and colour in open spaces which once upon a time would have been adorned with elaborate bedding schemes. At the same time they deal with certain late-twentieth century demands such as reduced-labour schemes, but more importantly they also reflect a certain environmental awareness. By selecting strong varieties and species, grown in a much more open situation, and in conditions which resemble their natural environment, strong, healthy plant development is encouraged. This way, the need for pesticides can be greatly reduced, plants do not need staking or supporting, and the occasional weed will not look as alien as it does in a traditional herbaceous border.

It is doubtful however whether this type of planting will ever satisfy the demands of the private gardener. People's desire to surround themselves by beauty and neatness will probably mean that the traditional high-maintenance, well-kept borders always will appeal. In small private gardens keen gardeners can look after a modest herbaceous border. The large ones will probably be restricted to properties where there was an historic precedent, and which rely on their drama and spectacle to attract the public.

A large proportion of gardens with herbaceous planting schemes open to the British public, are based on schemes created during the first three decades of this century. Whether they have been maintained since, or whether they have been restored in more recent years, they will inevitably have changed. As we have seen at Arley, Gravetye as well as Foerster's garden, planting schemes involving herbaceous perennials are anything but static, constantly evolving and changing, intentionally or accidentally.

Even if a border is reinstated on the basis of an original planting plan, it is impossible to tell how it evolved from then on. The chances of a border having changed from the original plan within the first twelve months after planting are very high.

The National Trust carried out a very detailed survey in 1984 of all the beds and borders at Sissinghurst. In the course of one year detailed monthly photographic records were taken, and month-by-month planting plans, marking the precise position of every plant, were drawn up. This at least will give a detailed record of what the garden looked like at that particular time, which can be referred back to at a later stage. Better still is when one can have the creator's account of what he intended and tried to achieve. Foerster and Robinson have both left us some of this information, so that when the garden is restored it is possible to take the creator's or owner's aims into account.

It is more important when faced with the task of restoring or recreating a planting scheme of perennials, to catch the intended spirit behind it, rather than trying to clone the original planting, which would in any case only reflect one particular moment in the lifespan of any garden. The perfect example is the dahlia walk at Biddulph Grange, which in the course of his life James Bateman changed into an herbaceous border. Should the border undergo the same changes today?

In the absence of detailed planting records, it is important to capture the essence of the style of the period when restoring perennial planting schemes. The type of plants used, relevance of foliage effect and colour schemes are as important as the practical details of group size, shape and planting distance. Without regard for these essential elements, all re-creation of period planting schemes runs the risk of looking like a late twentieth century pastiche.

Robinson's and Foerster's low maintenance gardens will probably be the gardens of

Chapter 8: Conclusions

the future. Their low-labour, low-cost and ecological approach all fit in with today's demands. Combined with Jekyll's artistic touch, gardens will end up with the best of both worlds.

ILLUSTRATION 118: PLANTING OF THE FUTURE



(Original in colour)

The past meets the future: perennials planted in a meadow-environment in Munich's West Park. Although this is a scheme which is part of the new perennial movement, it could also serve as an illustration for William Robinson's *The Wild Garden*. It is a low-labour demanding scheme, planted in a naturalistic manner.

(Author's collection)