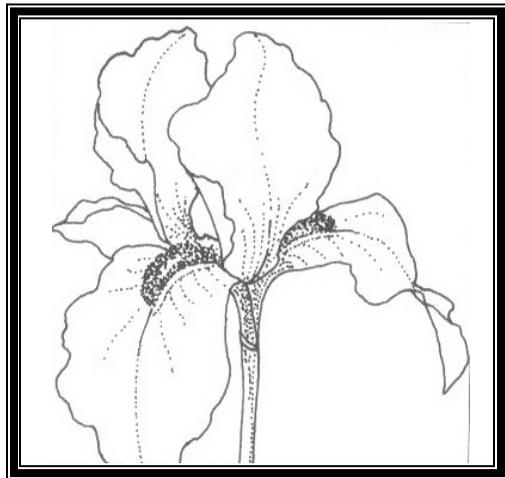


# Innisfail and District Historical Village



## Boardwalk Heritage Garden

### A Bit of Grandma's Garden at the Historical Village

Gardening is subject to fashion. Some of the plants your grandparents or great-grandparents carefully nurtured through hot summers and harsh winters can no longer be found at the local garden centre. Newer, trendier plants have replaced them. Even within a species, such as roses, new varieties or **cultivars** have been and still are being developed through breeding and research. So, while the species can still be purchased, the variety or cultivar used by early settlers may not be available.

Plants are part of our history. Perennials, in particular, are **living** remnants of our history. Brought from the 'old country' and planted here as reminders of home, pieces of plants were passed from generation to generation. Pieces or cuttings taken from a plant are **genetically identical** to the original. Seeds from plants are not as closely related to the original because of pollination. Seeds are more like children and grandchildren while plant cuttings produce identical twins. Plants taken from cuttings are part of an unbroken continuum from plants brought by early settlers.

Early settlers raised annuals as well as perennials but they didn't have the luxury of garden centres or hobby greenhouses. Most of the annuals they

grew were seeded directly into the garden in the spring, were hardy and produced abundant seeds which could be saved from year to year or they would naturally self-seed and required only thinning to maintain them in the garden. Alberta Nurseries and Seeds Ltd., located at Bowden, Alberta, started selling seeds in 1933. Before that, seeds were ordered through the mail either from eastern Canada or the United States. Seeds were also available through catalogues such as Eatons.

Some examples of early annuals found on Alberta homesteads include clarkia, nasturtiums, marigolds, and poppies (Icelandic - *Papaver nudicaule*, Opium - *Papaver somniferum*, and Oriental - *Papaver orientale*) and pansies (Johnny jump up - *Viola tricolor*). Many people grew the opium poppies for their seeds which were produced in abundance and are excellent for use in cooking.

At the Innisfail Historical Village, we want to grow and preserve the plants we saw in Grandma's garden. What are they? Where did they come from? Who has owned them and lovingly tended them over the years? If you have a plant you are willing to donate, particularly a plant with a story attached, please contact Grace or Stu Little at 227-5217.

### Boardwalk Heritage Garden

This heritage garden is located in front of the Boardwalk Building, just inside the front gate of the Innisfail Historical

Village. Grace and Stu Little deserve the credit for collecting and planting the items found in this garden. Some of the plants in this bed have a history, which is given below, while others were included because they were typical of plants grown in the early years of Alberta's settlement.

#### 1. **Monkshood** (*Aconitum napellus*)

The name 'monkshood' originated in the middle ages when the flowers reminded people of the hoods worn by monks. This old-fashioned flower has two big advantages – it can grow in the shade and deer won't eat it.

The **blue** Monkshood was originally planted by Martha and William Champ Sr. at their home in Innisfail sometime in the late 1940's. This plant has always flourished in a shady spot. The **blue and white** monkshood was brought in from the farm in 1975 by Jessie and Charlie Champ and has flourished and bloomed every year in sun and partial shade.

#### 2. **Golden Glow** (*Rudbeckia laciniata*)

This variety of the yellow coneflower has a striking double flower. Helen Mahr donated this plant to the Historical Village.

#### 3. **Spurge** (*Euphoria polychroma* now *Euphoria epithymoides*)

Originating from eastern Europe, this particular spurge was a gift from Parkland Nurseries.

4. **Sedum** (*Sedum spp.*)

Donated by Ida Cossey, one of Innisfail's active gardeners.

5. **Snow in Summer** (*Cerastium tomentosum*)

A low silver foliated groundcover that originated in Europe, this plant has masses of pretty white flowers from late spring to early summer. Again, it was popular on farmsteads because it is another plant deer will not eat.

6. **Sedum** (*Sedum spp.*)

Another sedum was donated by Ida Cossey.

7. **Chives**

This plant originated from the Beaverlodge Nursery in 1976. This Nursery was founded by John Wallace who came to Canada from England in 1935 to work at the Central Experimental Farm in Borden, Manitoba. He then worked at the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm before starting his own nursery. Wallace was inducted into the Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame for his work in finding, testing and breeding better plants for northern latitudes.

8. **Lungwort** (*Pulmonaria spp.*)

These plants were once thought to cure lung problems hence the common name

lungwort. It is also referred to as boy/girl plant because of the flowers that change colour from pink to blue. This particular plant was donated by Len Harvey, a local music teacher. He received a piece from his neighbour Marian Jensen who got it from her sister-in-law Muriel Jensen, Muriel's plant originated with Dorothy Leslie.

9. **Flashing light** (*Dianthus deltooides*)

Also known as Maiden Pinks, this type of plant originated in Europe. This specimen was donated by Virginia Ritson-Bennett.

10. **Golden elder** (*Sambucus canadensis* 'Aurea')

This plant was started from a shoot taken from Virginia Ritson-Bennett's garden. Elder's figure strongly in mythology. Some believe that an elder will never be struck by lightning and will protect your home from evil influences.

11. **Asparagus** (*Asparagus officinalis*, *Liliaceae*)

A hardy perennial vegetable that was common in many early gardens. These plants come from stock bought at Beaverlodge Nursery in 1976.

12. **Daylily** (*Hemerocallis spp*)

Leonard Fink, who taught here for many years, brought these yellow daylilies from his dad's farm, located north of

Ponoka. His grandfather originally planted them there in the early 1900's.

13. **Asiatic lily** (*Lilium spp.*)

These red lilies previously grew in the garden of Bill Birch, a retired Innisfail teacher. They originally came from Less Treeboin's acreage, located at the corner of 42 St. and 51 Ave. The acreage is now covered by new houses and is west of the kindergarten.

14. **Clustered bellflower** (*Campanula glomerata*)

This plant was obtained by Grace and Stu Little from her sister in Vermillion in approximately 1977.

15. **Peony** (*Paeonia spp.*)

Peonies are long-lived perennials that are still found at many abandoned homestead sites. These peonies came from the Ure farm on the Cottonwood Road and were originally planted by Percy Ure in the 1940's.

16. **Siberian avens** (*Geum urbanum* var. *sibiricum*)

Hardy and long lived, these siberium avens were purchased at the Beaverlodge Nursery in 1976. **See Chives.**

17. **Maltese Cross** (*Lychnis chalconica*)

From Grace and Stu Little's garden.

18. **Bearded Iris hybrid** (*Iris x germanica*)

Another old fashioned perennial, the iris has been cultivated since ancient times and used in European gardens for centuries. This particularly iris came from the garden of Maggie Wilson (nee St. Denys). Maggie, who lived across the highway from the Innisfail cemetery, was a very colourful resident of our town for years.

19. **Johnny jump ups** (*Viola tricolour*)

This pansy was popular in older gardens because it either struggled through the winters or self-seeded.

20. **Siberian Iris** (*Iris sibirica*)

21. **Fernleaf bleeding heart** (*Dicentra Formosa*)

Passed on to Grace and Stu Little from Grace's aunt Lil Smith in 1976, this plant had previous homes in Vermillion and Manville.

22. **Daylily** (*Hemerocallis spp*)

Ivy Hrdlicka was living in Saskatchewan when she found an Albertan pen pal through the Western Producer. They exchanged perennials including this peach-coloured daylily. When Ivy returned to Innisfail in 1976, she brought the daylily back to its home province.

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