

WHY DO WE HAVE A SYMPOSIUM DEDICATED TO THE CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC FRUIT AND KITCHEN GARDENS?

Historic kitchen gardens must be treasured for their unique qualities. They are unlike other departments in the garden. This may be largely due to the fact that they are enclosed by high walls, and often sited at some distance from the establishment to which they belong.

The sites which they occupy were chosen with care. Their associated buildings, structures, watering systems and layouts are living evidence of ancient horticultural techniques.

These techniques made use of the walls for protection and support. Fruit trees were trained on these walls in a specific manner, and glasshouses, with work-sheds at the back, were built against the walls, facing the sun. The training of fruit trees was also practised in the open garden, to provide both fruitfulness and beauty. Generations of skilled engineers, inventors and gardeners have worked on the heating, ventilation and design of glasshouses. The same can be said for the watering systems which might still be in use.

The traditional four-square layout of a kitchen garden can be traced back to ancient times; the improvement of semi-wild fruits and vegetables has been the constant aim of gardeners world-wide. The kitchen garden acted as their laboratory, and also as the training ground for garden apprentices.

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