

Planting a Mary Garden

Inspiration and Ideas



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Welcome to Our Family

In addition to longer days, sunshine, and school graduations, spring is time for a one-of-a-kind event: the Museum of Family Prayer's annual Mary Garden Contest. Gardeners, gardener "wanna-be's," and families young and old are invited to cultivate and care for gardens dedicated to the Mother of God.

What is a Mary Garden? Traditionally, it is an enclosed garden of flowers and herbs whose names speak of Our Lady. These gardens, which appeared in Europe as early as the Middle Ages, are typically planted around a statue of Mary, creating a peaceful space for prayer. Since we welcome gardens of all shapes and sizes, we hope you and your family will be creative as you plan your Mary Garden together and take this opportunity to begin or deepen a habit of family prayer.

You can learn more about this longstanding tradition, find practical advice for creating your own Mary Garden, and submit photographs of your work on the Museum of Family Prayer's website.

As new life springs forth in creation, let us entrust our families to Mary, the Mother of Our Hope. May God bless you and your family!

A Little History

Servant of God Patrick Peyton began his ministry in 1942 with the goal of building family unity through daily prayer of the Rosary. Inspired by his own father who had a deep devotion to family prayer, praying the Rosary became the foundation for the life of Father Peyton (1909-92).

We at Family Rosary are ever so grateful Father Peyton's family instilled in him the importance of family prayer. Now it can be part of your family's tradition so you can fulfill the vision that "The Family That Prays Together Stays Together," the slogan coined by Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., so many years ago.



Family Rosary

HOLY CROSS
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The family that prays together stays together

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*A Mary Garden is a great way to share our faith
in a fun and easy way for the entire family, especially as you continue to
watch it grow and help take care of it together as a family.*

She's been hugged and kissed. She's been hit with soccer balls, footballs, and baseballs. I even found her once with a Disney princess bike helmet perched on her head and two pinwheels by her side. But she's a mother, too. She's used to it. And so she still stands, a stoic figure of stone, hands open in a gesture of grace for all who cross her path.

I love how our Mary statue stands in our backyard garden, watching my children as they play. Somehow she and her flowers survive all of their games—and remind my children that she is an important part of their lives.

From a very young age, my children have been naturally drawn to her gentle motherliness. I've often caught my little ones talking to her, ending their conversation with a kiss on her stone cheek. Planting a Mary garden has been an effective way to draw our whole family closer to Mary. And as we draw closer to her, I know that she is drawing us closer to her Son.

Mary gardens can be planted outside in a flower bed or container. They can also be created in a small container or terrarium for indoor enjoyment. They can evoke a certain aspect of Mary's life, or be comprised of a variety of flowers that work well in your particular region. Many, many flowers and plants are named after Mary, the saints, or some other facet of Christianity.

Don't become overwhelmed with the project! Just obtain a statue of Mary and start small. One rosebush (Our Lady's flower) or a few marigolds (Mary's Gold) can create a lovely little grotto for Mary. Over the years, our family has added some tiers for annuals and a trellis for morning glories (Our Lady's mantle). A garden bench provides a place for prayer and meditation.

The family that prays together stays together

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Some years we have planted bedding plants; other years we've planted seeds and watched with delight as the surprises popped up. Involving my children in the process has become more important than a perfectly manicured garden, and as we pull weeds together (along with a few flowers sometimes...oops!), we talk about why we care for this special space.

Every so often, I get to sit in peace on our garden bench by myself. And as I gaze at the beauty of the butterflies and flowers, Rosary beads in hand, I am certain there are times that the scent of roses—stronger than what my rosebushes alone could produce—permeates the air. A sure sign that my mother Mary is close by.

Some common Mary garden plants and what they symbolize:

Foxglove – Our Lady's Gloves
Pansy – Our Lady's Delight
Chrysanthemum – All Saints' Flower
Columbine – Our Lady's Shoes
Forget-Me-Not – Eyes of Mary
Strawberry – Fruitful Virgin
Violet – Our Lady's Modesty
Alyssum – Mary's Flower
Cosmos – St. Michael's Flower

Marigold – Mary's Gold
Morning Glory – Our Lady's Mantle
Petunia – Our Lady's Praises
Snapdragon – Infant Jesus' Shoes
Geranium – Gentle Virgin
Daffodil – Mary's Star
Peony – Pentecost Rose
Tulip – Mary's Prayer
Rose – Emblem of Mary

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Continue the Journey

Want to learn more about Mary or explain to someone you know Mary's role in your faith? Catholic Central, a free video web series that talks about the big Catholic topics, has an episode all about Mary! There you'll learn that she's venerated, not worshiped; asked to pray for us; and makes occasional appearances to the faithful to achieve her one mission ... bringing people closer to her Son.



Charisse Tierney

Charisse Tierney lives in Newton, Kansas, with her husband Rob and six children. Charisse and Rob are Natural Family Planning and Theology of the Body for Teens teachers. Charisse holds degrees in music performance and is a contributing author to The Catholic Mom's Prayer Companion. She also writes for Family Foundations magazine and blogs at Paving the Path to Purity.

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Share your newly finished Marian Garden or your long-time Mary Garden. You've put a lot of work into it, now share that beauty with others. As you enjoy your garden, let it be a special place for your family to pray. Our family is one of our greatest gifts from God. Haven't ever prayed in a garden or as a family? Sounds uncomfortable? Give it a try. You'll be surprised how quickly it becomes comfortable. Or, maybe you pray all the time? Head over to your Mary Garden the next time you need to pray. Whatever your situation, we have prayers to make it special.

Keep an eye on:

Family Rosary @familyrosary.org

Catholic Mom @catholicmom.com

Museum of Family Prayer @museumoffamilyprayer.com

and on our Facebook and Instagram sites too!

#MaryGardenContest #May2021



We hope the time you've spent reflecting with this material has been enriching. Continue to pray with your family every day, wherever you are.

For additional online resources for family prayer including additional e-books and the mobile Rosary App, please visit our website at www.FamilyRosary.org.

This e-book and all our resources represent a culmination of Father Peyton's passion for family unity through prayer. We hope our services will enhance your family's prayer life particularly remembering Father Peyton's famous words, "The family that prays together stays together."

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