

## Thistles

To the man God said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, "You shall not eat of it", cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.

Genesis 3:18

'If my land has cried out against me,  
and its furrows have wept together;  
if I have eaten its yield without payment,  
and caused the death of its owners;  
let thorns grow instead of wheat,  
and fowl weeds instead of barley.'

Job 31:40

## Valerian

Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

John 12:3

Spikenard, also called nard, nardin, and muskroot, is a class of aromatic amber-coloured essential oil derived from a flowering plant of the Valerian family which grows in the Himalayas of Nepal, China, and India. The oil has, since ancient times, been used as a perfume, as a medicine and in religious contexts, across a wide territory from India to Europe.

## Wildflowers

Consider the lilies, wildflowers, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith!

Luke 12:27-28

## Willow

Is sometimes used to represent the Gospel because, no matter how many of its branches are cut off, it continues to flourish ...

... here in St Marks Graveyard, we have used willow branches to create a tomb for our Easter celebration, as we remember how from death, Jesus brought life.

The Graveyard and Garden of St Marks has many distinct areas which are in continuous development and improvement.

- There is a circular bench under a cherry tree, beautiful in Maytime when you are surrounded by the blossom. From the bench you can glimpse the sea and Fife.
- There is a garden of memory in the south-eastern corner, a place of reflection as we remember those we have loved, but see no longer.
- There is a section of the garden planted and designed by the children at the Ecumenical Holiday Club in Portobello.
- There is a "tomb" made of Willow branches, planted by our youth group and used to remember Christ's Resurrection at Eastertime. It is also used at Christmas to house a nativity scene.
- There is a cut flower garden, to enable the church to have flowers in the building.

Around the garden we have placed some notices which refer to plants mentioned in the Bible. Our plants give us a link back through many centuries and places, and enable us to enjoy God's creation.

## The Future

St Marks Graveyard and Garden offers great potential to be developed into a species-rich grassland. It is hoped that this would encourage the Northern Marsh Orchids which have been seen in previous years. There are also plans to repair the front tarmac area and to construct a memorial garden.

Recent repairs generously supported  
by the Heritage Lottery Fund,  
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Dunderdale Trust.



# St Mark's Episcopal Church

## Portobello



## Our Flora ....

This Graveyard and Garden is a quiet and sacred space for the people of Portobello. A place of reflection, meditation, enjoyment and joy.

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## Bitter herbs (dandelion)

In the second month on the fourteenth day, at twilight, they shall keep the Passover; they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

Numbers 9:11

The Dandelion is sometimes used as a symbol of Christ's passion in art because of the bitterness of its leaves.

## Chestnut (Plane Tree)

Jacob took fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane, and peeled white streaks in them, exposing the white of the rods.

Genesis 30:37

A chestnut tree has been used as a symbol for chastity because, in autumn, the nut (chestnut) is surrounded by the thorns of the case, but is not harmed by them.

## Crocus

Your channel is an orchard of pomegranates  
with all choicest fruits,  
henna with nard,  
nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon,  
with all trees of frankincense,  
myrrh and aloes,  
with all chief spices—

Song of Solomon 4:13-14

Saffron is a spice derived from the flower of the crocus. Beneath the ground, our crocus bulbs await to burst out in spring. The purple ones are planted in a shape of a cross, purple being the sign of Lent and penitence. Yellow daffodils remind us of Christ's Resurrection burst forth when the crocus cross is finished, normally around Easter Day.

## Flowers of the field ... a daisy

A voice says, 'Cry out!'

And I said, 'What shall I cry?'

All people are grass,

their constancy is like the flower of the field.

Isaiah 40:6

## Holly

The holly tree is used in art as a symbol for the crown of thorns the soldiers placed on Christ's head when they were mocking him just before they crucified him. It is therefore by extension also a sign of Christ's Passion - the word comes from the Latin word for suffering and is used to refer to the last few days of Christ's life when he was arrested, tried and crucified.

## Hyssop (Marjoram)

You desire truth in the inward being;  
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.  
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Psalms 50:6-7

Hyssop is likely to be the word used for the group of aromatic herbs of the genus marjoram and thyme.

## Ivy

The ivy plant is used in art to represent faithfulness and eternal life, because it is evergreen.

## Lily

I am a rose of Sharon,  
a lily of the valleys.  
As a lily among brambles,  
so is my love among maidens.

Song of Solomon 2:1-2

## Mallow (Hollyhock):

Job said:  
'But now they make sport of me,  
those who are younger than I,  
whose fathers I would have disdained  
to set with the dogs of my flock.  
What could I gain from the strength of their hands?  
All their vigour is gone.  
Through want and hard hunger  
they gnaw the dry and desolate ground,  
they pick mallow and the leaves of bushes,  
and to warm themselves the roots of broom.

Job 30:4

## Mint

Jesus said:

'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practised without neglecting the others.

Matthew 23:23

## Poppy

They utter mere words;  
with empty oaths they make covenants;  
so litigation springs up like poisonous weeds  
in the furrows of the field.

Hosea 10:4

The gall offered to Jesus on the cross is likely to have been derived from the opium poppy plant

## Rosemary

A symbol of fidelity and remembrance

In the Middle East at the time of Jesus this was widely used for maintaining the household, especially to repel insects. It would have been put into straw mattresses and bedding, it was on rosemary branches that clothes would have been hung to dry, and rosemary was strewn in the tombs of the departed. It is commonly used today for memory.

One story tells that the flowers were originally white but changed to purple when Mary hung her cloak on a bush while fleeing from Herod's soldiers with the Christ child.

'But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and herbs of all kinds, and neglect justice and the love of God; it is these you ought to have practised, without neglecting the others.

Luke 11:42