

TINKER HOMESTEAD PERENNIALS

WEST BORDER

<i>Amsonia hubrichtii</i>	Arkansas blue star
<i>Amsonia tabernaemontana</i> 'Blue Ice'	Blue star
<i>Astilbe arendsii</i> 'Bridal Veil' (white)	False spirea
<i>Astilbe japonica</i> 'Europa' (pink)	False spirea
<i>Campanula glomerata</i> 'Superba'	Clustered bellflower
Delphinium self-seeded from 'Magic Fountains' mix	Larkspur
<i>Delphinium chinensis</i> 'Diamonds Blue'	Dwarf larkspur
<i>Dicentra spectabilis</i> 'Alba' (white)	Bleeding heart
<i>Dicentra spectabilis</i> (pink)	Bleeding heart
<i>Geranium sanguineum</i>	Cranesbill geranium
<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>	Great blue lobelia
Narcissus	Daffodil
<i>Paeonia lactifolia</i> 'Kansas' (red)	Peony
<i>Paeonia lactifolia</i> 'Raspberry Splash' (Pink & white)	Peony
<i>Paeonia</i> (pink)	Peony
<i>Platycodon grandiflorus</i>	Balloon flower

EAST BORDER

<i>Aconitum x cammarum</i> 'Stainless Steel'	Monkshood, Wolfbane
<i>Alchemilla mollis</i>	Lady's mantle
<i>Campanula glomerata</i> 'Superba'	Clustered bellflower
<i>Chelone lyonii</i>	Pink turtlehead
<i>Chrysanthemum x morifolium</i> 'Pumpkin Pie'	Orange mum
<i>Corydalis cheilanthifolia</i>	Fern-leaf corydalis
<i>Dicentra spectabilis</i> 'Alba'	Bleeding heart
<i>Digitalis lutea</i>	Yellow foxglove
Delphinium 'Super Stars' mix	Larkspur
<i>Geranium sanguineum</i>	Cranesbill geranium
<i>Helleborus x hybridus</i>	Hellebore, Lenten rose
Hemerocallis	Daylily
<i>Iris siberica</i>	Siberian iris
<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i>	Sweet pea
<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>	Great blue lobelia
Narcissus	Daffodil
<i>Paeonia lactifolia</i> (pink, pale pink)	Peony
<i>Penstemon digitalis</i> 'Husker Red'	Foxglove beardtongue
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Black-eyed Susan

ANNUALS

Dusty miller 'Silver Dust'
Marigold 'Durango Yellow'
Marigold 'Durango Bolero'
Nicotiana 'Starmaker Mix'
Salvia 'Evolution Deep Violet'
Salvia 'Victoria White'
Salvia 'Vista Red'
Salvia 'Vista Purple'
Snapdragon 'Sonnet Mix'

TINKER NATURE PARK GARDENS HISTORY

Tinker Family and Homestead Area

The Tinker family were farmers for five generations. Farming must have been challenging in this rocky soil that provided the cobblestones gathered over two years to build the Homestead, completed in 1830. Through the 1850s to the 1880s, much of the area was cleared of trees for agricultural fields. Crops included wheat, barley, feed corn, hay, oats, potatoes, peas, and beans. The Tinker Brothers Farm, as it was known back then, raised sheep, cows, pigs, and chickens, and also had some horses. Soon it became one of the largest sheep farms in Henrietta and a good producer of wool. By 1900, the prospering Tinker Farm had expanded to 300+ acres. At this time, the cobblestone house was called "Colonial Hall" and the farm was run by Adelbert and Lorraine Tinker (third generation).

A summertime photo from 1915 shows roses and possibly hollyhocks growing by the front (north) entrance of the Homestead and on the east side, flowering shrubs – and the lilac shrub, which remains there to this day. Also on the east side of the Homestead in a separate yard was a kitchen garden, in which the Tinkers grew vegetables and a few flowers. There was also a 5-acre orchard of apples, peaches, cherries, grapes, currants, and raspberries. *[None of the currently existing apple trees are original and were planted in 1995 by the Henrietta Parks Department, who also do the pollarding-type of pruning, which keeps the trees short and easier to manage. The varieties are Cortland and MacIntosh.]*

Later in the Twentieth Century, most of the Tinker descendants moved away and sought other occupations. Carol Tinker Aldridge, fifth generation of the Tinker family, recalled in her memoirs that her mother, Louise (wife of Glen Tinker), filled an old well with stones and attempted to grow a rock garden on top of it, which unfortunately attracted many snakes. Louise then tried to grow a flower garden, however, it bordered the farm field so seeds of wheat or hay would spread into it. During the 1950s, foundation shrubs, including a tall yew hedge, were planted around the west, north (front), and east sides of the Homestead. These borders also contained barberry, spirea, deutzia, hydrangeas, lily of the valley, and spring bulbs. The present-day grapevines were planted in the 1950s and are Concord and Niagara varieties. Glen Tinker was said to make wine, while his daughter Carol made preserves.

When the Town of Henrietta acquired the Tinker property in 1992, the aging shrub borders around the Homestead were in a state of decline and had been severely damaged by an increasing population of deer. During the mid-1990s, the yew hedge and shrub foundation were removed in succession as they failed and finally replaced with beds of annuals. The Town of Henrietta Museum assistant curator, Arlene Hodge Oliver (deVito), was an avid gardener and enlisted volunteers from local scout troops to plant marigolds and petunias around the Homestead. The Kousa dogwood on the east side of the Homestead was planted around 1995. About this time, Arlene also designed the annual plantings around the Museum and in Lavender Way, the curving bed that parallels the sidewalk leading to the Homestead.

The Garden Tinkerers, a team of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County Master Gardeners and Henrietta Garden Club volunteers, picked up the ball in 2010 and took over planting of annuals around the Homestead and general garden maintenance. Cannas and other tropical plants in cast iron kettles appeared at the front of Lavender Way. In 2016, a new project of developing old-fashioned cottage borders with peonies, delphiniums, mallows, foxgloves, and other heirloom perennials around the Tinker Homestead was initiated by the next wave of CCE Master Gardeners. Traditional bedding annuals of mealy cup sage and dianthus, Madagascar periwinkle, or verbena were planted along Lavender Way and the kettles were filled with marigolds, petunias, and salvias.

Demonstration Gardens

In 1997, Arlene requested that the Henrietta Parks Department clear out the area south of the chicken coop, formerly a pig pen. The soil was rich there and would support a nice, 30 feet by 30 feet kitchen-type display garden that could be enjoyed by the public and would be the right size to maintain. Instead, a more generous 70 feet by 70 feet garden area was installed in March 1998, enclosed by supporting walls of cinder blocks. The layout of the beds resembled a barn foundation.

One of the first beds to be established was the Alphabet Garden, specifically for children, which had colorful wooden letters on stakes to represent the first letter of plants. Later on, the red brick path was added by scout volunteers, and in June 2000, an arched, wooden trellis gateway was built as a dedication to the memory of Ruth Van Erp, a teacher in the Henrietta School District and long-term advocate of enrichment programs for children and teenagers. The English walnut trees that overlook the Alphabet Garden pre-date the gardens and were planted about the 1950s or possibly earlier. The lending library box in which children and their parents can exchange books was installed in the summer of 2015 as a Girl Scout project, supported by the Henrietta Library.

Next, the rest of the beds were edged with landscape timbers and filled with compost by the Parks Department. The walkways were laid out with wood mulch. In the center of the Display Gardens, a Callery pear tree was planted and two wooden benches set up. Community volunteers and Tinker Park staff assisted Arlene with this new, mostly herb garden as well as with all of the other beds in Tinker Park. As a member of the Henrietta Garden Club, Arlene also received help from the club. After she retired, regular garden maintenance and the appearance of persistent weeds became overwhelming issues.

Eventually, a dedicated group of CCE Master Gardeners, joined by the Henrietta Garden Club, took on the task of renovating the Display Gardens in 2010. All of the beds were sheet-mulched with cardboard, clean compost, and wood mulch to smother weeds. Gro-Moore Farms donated herb plants for the two herb beds, while the Rochester Butterfly Club sponsored the Butterfly Garden and the Rochester Birding Association supported the development of the Hummingbird Garden. A small, lined pond was dug in one of the inner beds and this Pond Garden was sponsored by Broccolo Tree and Lawn Care. Another inner bed became the Pumpkin Patch. This volunteer team, nicknamed the Gardener Tinkerers as mentioned above, also worked on the other flower beds, planting annuals and maintaining the gardens.

In August 2012, the rotted wooden timbers were replaced with black, recycled plastic edgers as an Eagle Scout project by BSA Troop 134 (sign posted in Herb Garden). A year later, another Eagle Scout project by BSA Troop 171, set up the multi-tiered Honey Bee Garden (sign is there), which was planted with flowers attractive to honey bees and is now known as the Mint Garden. In memory of Betty Miller, a Rose of Sharon shrub was planted at the end of the Butterfly Garden in 2015 (sign posted). The decomposed mulched pathways were allowed to grow into turf that could be mowed. The old chicken coop north of the gardens was removed by the Henrietta Parks Department. East of the Demonstration Gardens, hops vines were planted - the varieties are: Cascade, Centennial, Early Cluster, Chinook, and Nugget.

More recent renovations have taken place since 2016. Because of deer and rabbit predation on pumpkin plants, the Pumpkin Patch evolved into the Vegetable Garden. This bed now features low maintenance perennial vegetables that are animal resistant – asparagus, rhubarb, and horseradish, as well as annual garlic. The Pond Garden had algae overgrowth and other issues and so, was changed into a Flowering Shrub Garden. In 2019, the Hummingbird Garden received a sundial, inscribed with "West Town Garden Club 1965," that had originally been located by the Henrietta Town Hall, where the club held their meetings. This club became the Henrietta Garden Club. In the fall of 2021, the L-shaped southeast herb bed was shrouded with a double layer of cardboard and compost sheet-mulching and was transformed into the Native Perennial Garden. The success of the hardy North American native plants in this bed has encouraged our team to continue to increase the diversity of native plantings to support native pollinators and other beneficial species in the Butterfly Garden and the Hummingbird Garden. Another current project is upgrading the remaining Herb Garden into a true kitchen garden, in part secured with donations from Van Puttee Garden Center. The Display Gardens have been renamed the Demonstration Gardens to emphasize their educational aspect for visitors to not only enjoy but also to learn about plants and gardening techniques.

Judy Bigelow
2023