



From the earliest days of European settlement, immigrants to America brought plants with them that are native to their home country, or that they acquired from other parts of the globe. Our pioneer garden is inspired by the gardens of Thomas Jefferson at his Monticello plantation near Charlottesville, Virginia. Jefferson's fascination with horticulture and science led him to experiment with exotic species from abroad as well as native plants.

WHAT GROWS HERE

- 1556 Upland Cotton:** Believed to have been planted in Florida in 1556 and in Virginia in 1607, the cotton industry exploded in 1793 by the invention of the cotton gin. Within 10 years, the value of the US crop rose from \$150,000 to more than \$8 million.
- 1700s Peanuts:** Dating back 7,600 years, it entered America via the slave trade in the 1700s and became a major commercial crop after the Civil War.
- 1774 Zatta di Massa Melon:** Planted at Monticello by Thomas Jefferson, who called it "Cantaloupe Massa" (ugly but good), it is known for its intensely aromatic, sweet and salmon orange flesh.
- 1781 Okra:** Noted by Thomas Jefferson as being well established in 1781 and commonplace through the South by 1800, it was brought by the Atlantic slave trade in 1658.
- 1797 Broom Corn:** Originally used in the Mediterranean for sweeping, it was popularized in the U.S. by Benjamin Franklin in the late 1700s. Franklin noticed a single seed on an imported broom and planted it. Broom Corn is a native sorghum variety.
- 1800s Mennonite Sorghum:** Brought to the U.S. by Mennonite immigrants from Russia, this variety provided a source of gluten-free grain, flour and sugar and was popular during the Civil War as an alternative to blockaded cane sugar.
- 1840s Amish Deer Tongue Lettuce:** Unique triangular leaves with a taste often described as rich and nutty, this is a Pennsylvania Dutch heirloom.
- 1840s Bulls Blood Beets:** This French heirloom is considered one of the oldest cultivated beet varieties, and notable for its striking dark crimson leaves.
- 1864 White Burly Tobacco:** Discovered and cultivated near Ripley, Ohio, this became the most commonly grown tobacco variety in the world. During its prime, Ripley's four massive warehouses handled up to 16 million pounds of tobacco per year.

HOW WE GROW IT

When introducing plants from other regions and climates, early American gardeners had to consider the length of the growing season, temperature and humidity, and the impacts of frosts and cold winters on flowering, fruiting and seed germination. Perennial plants from warmer climates may be grown successfully as annuals here in Ohio, and the seeds saved to plant the following spring.

