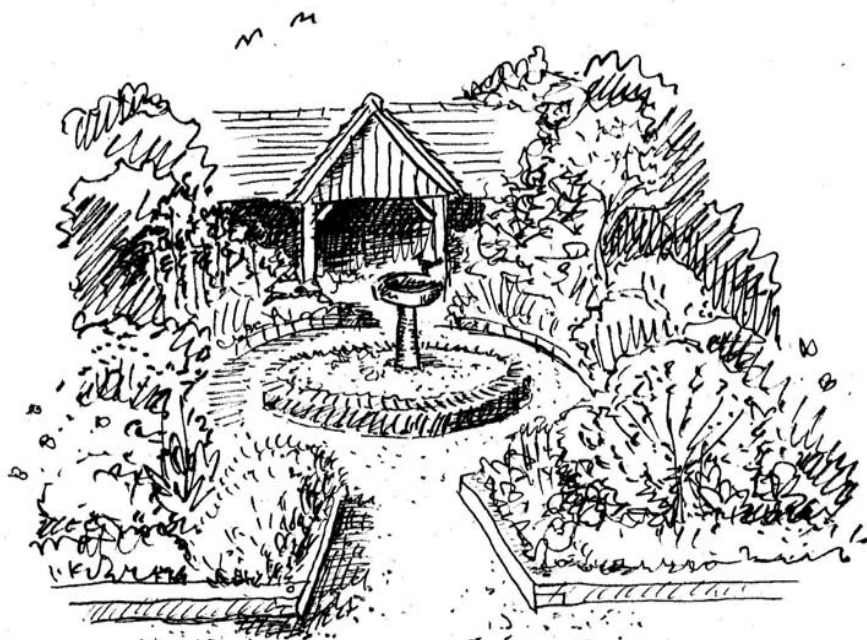


The garden at Shropshire Wildlife Trust



Shropshire Wildlife Trust
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury SY2 6AH
01743 284280
www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

You can visit the Trust's garden
Monday – Saturday, 10am – 4.30pm.

We have a selection of wildlife-
friendly plants on sale including herbs,
wild flowers and cottage garden
varieties.

You may also like to take the
opportunity to find out more about
Shropshire Wildlife Trust and our
membership scheme.

Our shop stocks a wide range of
environmentally friendly gifts for all
ages and a large selection of bird food,
feeders and nest boxes.

*Shropshire Wildlife Trust protects wildlife
where you live*

Welcome to Shropshire Wildlife Trust's garden, a place that has lived through many changes. For hundreds of years, until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1540, it belonged to Shrewsbury Abbey, a historical connection revived in the 1990s when it was developed as a medieval herb garden for the Quest, a visitor attraction based on the Brother Cadfael stories by Ellis Peters. A major clean-up operation was necessary at this point – the site had previously been used by British Rail for engineering work and had become heavily contaminated.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust has revived the herb gardens associated with the monastery and given a greater emphasis to the creation of wildlife habitats. More than 40 species of bird have been spotted here, along with 10 kinds of butterfly, 6 dragonflies and damselflies and a bush cricket. The structure of the garden is formal, but in summer you will find plants spilling over the edges, running riot up woven arches, breaking and softening the straight lines of the flower beds. Many new features have been added to the garden. These are both traditional and innovative, reflecting the history of the place while embracing the latest technology for water and energy saving.

Herb garden

At the centre is a chamomile lawn, edged with reclaimed roofing tiles. Brush your hand over the surface to catch its bitter aroma. Many old favourite culinary herbs grow here – lavender, rosemary, thyme, sage – alongside medicinal plants such as evening primrose, echinacea and feverfew. Look out for woad, a tall branched plant with sulphur yellow flowers that ripen to showers of shiny black seeds. It was once widely cultivated for its blue dye and even used to provide colour for policemen's uniforms.

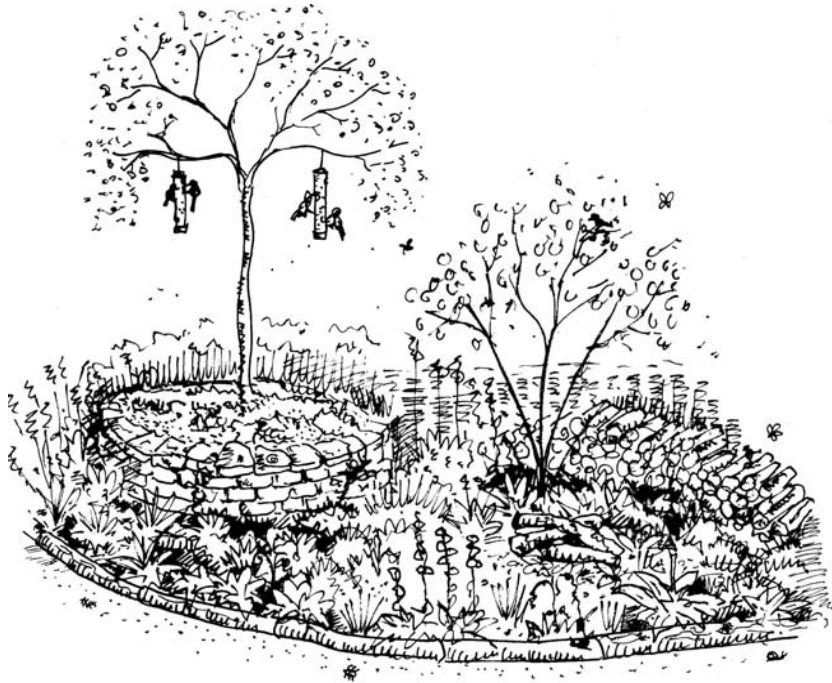


Edible arch

The arch is made from locally-grown chestnut timber and supports old-fashioned varieties of peas, runner beans and other climbing vegetables according to the season. Everything is grown organically here. Marigolds are grown alongside the vegetables as hoverflies love to feed on their pollen. Lured by the tasty food, they lay their eggs here and their larvae, (who have less sophisticated tastes), devour heaps of mealy bugs, thrips, aphids and mites – making them ideal creatures to share a vegetable bed.

Glastonbury thorn

This tree was grown from a cutting of the original Glastonbury thorn, which is said to have sprung from the ground when Joseph of Aramathea tapped his stick on the ground. Its miraculous reputation is renewed every Christmas when it bursts into flower. The dry stone wall surrounding the tree provides hundreds of crevices where insects can shelter and hibernate.



The bird feeders attract all sorts of birds including greenfinches, blue tits and great tits. Bullfinches are also seen in this area from time to time, while house sparrows make the most of the tangled ivy on the wall nearby for roosting and nesting. Clusters of shiny black berries on the elder bushes in the corner are rapidly reduced to skeletal stalks in autumn by hungry birds.

Front garden

Archaeological investigations here in 1985-86 (see SWT leaflet *The House, the Garden and the Old Infirmary*), threw up lots of evidence in the shape of broken pots and pans and bones to suggest that the sunken garden you see today is the site of one of the Abbey kitchens. This sunny, sheltered garden is ideal for butterflies and a delight to relax in.

Several unusual fruit trees grow here including quince and medlar, while an Indian bean tree, with distinctive floppy white flowers in spring, grows in the north-east corner of the garden. In summer self-sown ox-eye daisies, lovage and sage, beloved by bees, break the boundaries of the flower borders, flowing on to the paths.

Volunteers

The garden is maintained and developed by a group of around eight volunteers who come in for a couple of hours or so every week.

Climbers and ramblers

Honeysuckle and rambling roses not only look good and have a wonderful fragrance, they also provide nectar and pollen for bees, butterflies and other insects and make excellent nesting and sheltering habitat.



Barley sheaf fountain

The millstone through which the fountain springs was found during excavations for the road now called Old Pott's Way. It is likely that it came from one of Shrewsbury Abbey's medieval mills. Spiky and ripe with the promise of food, the copper barley sheaf shows a type of grain commonly grown in the middle ages. The fountain is powered by the nearby solar panel.

Compost bins

All garden waste, grass mowings; teabags from the SWT kitchen, apple cores, banana skins and all organic waste are composted here where it is transformed into wonderful black crumbly food for the garden.

Wildlife Watch Garden

Designed by a music-loving 9-year-old, the garden is shaped like a violin, using old glass bottles as an edging to the flower-beds. The garden was made and is used by Shrewsbury Wildlife Watch Group.

Solar shower

On sunny days look out for a gentle shower of sparkling raindrops falling from the cloister roof nearest the abbey. Water is continuously recycled, powered by solar panels on the cloister roof on the Abbey Foregate side.

Woodland garden

Snowdrops, primroses forget-me-nots and a variety of other mostly native spring flowers grow here among hazel bushes, creating an attractive low-maintenance wildlife area in a shady corner. The winged jaguar was created by Richard Taylor.