

**James Malcolm *A Compendium of Modern Husbandry, principally written during a survey of Surrey III* (1805) pp. 116-135**

The cultivation of some of these very necessary articles in the materia medica is nowhere in England (or perhaps in the universe so far as we know) attended to with so much care and diligence as in this county; and as a grower, my friend James Moore Esq. of Mitcham, stands pre-eminently distinguished; to him, therefore, I stand indebted for such information as the following detail exhibits, and which I have found corroborated by the sentiments of other growers, whose attention to their cultivation in other parts of the county do them more or less credit, according as their pursuits are more or less confined to this subject.

It may not be altogether amiss to say, that Mr. Moore's predecessor and relative, the late Mr. Potter, began the cultivation of these articles in the years 1768 or 9 upon a very confined scale, and by great care, skill, and industry he so increased his growth, as at the time of his death, a few years since, to be considered the first grower in England, and to have amassed a competent fortune. Mr. Moore has, by repeated purchases of land and his manorial rights, which are very extensive, added greatly to the estate, and he now cultivates near 500 acres in physical and agricultural pursuits; which, when the value of land so near to the metropolis, and amidst so many manufactories, and the residences of gentlemen of large fortune is considered, must be deemed an extensive estate.

His land is of various qualities, some part of it very stiff and moist, other parts very dry, and some parts gravelly: but it is his uniform practice to plough both his farming and physic grounds very deep, let the quality of the land be what it may; to keep it very clean, to admit of no fallows, but always under crop, and to keep it in high condition by plenty of good dung, not less than 20 large cart loads to the acre of the strongest rotten dung, a great part of which he brings from the best London stables, or from St. George's Fields. He keep 16, or 4 waggon teams, of very powerful horses; two, and oftentimes three of these teams go to London every day, all the year round, with herbs, straw, &c. and return laden with dung. I counted no less than twelve carts of different sizes, five waggons, and a timber carriage in his yard; his ploughs are either the common swing drawn at length, or the turnwrest, and his harrows of the usual make of that part of the county.

His yard contains besides the necessary stabling for his horses, waggon, and cart lodges, barns, &c. a counting house with a dry warehouse attached to it; near to these is a large still room, with five copper stills, and without this room is a large horse mill to throw up the liquor into the back. These stills will run off 20 tuns of spirit or oil in 24 hours. Coals are burnt in the furnaces.

At a short distance from this, is a drying house, divided into two apartments, having each of them two furnaces or fire places, wherein coals are burnt; there are three flues in each room, in which the heat goes and returns, and over them, at about three feet distance, canvas frames are laid, resting upon joists, fixed at proper distances for the purpose, on which the herbs intended to be dried are placed; above these frames is the loft where the herbs are taken in, and where the men attend to their drying, &c.

At the back of the stables and barns, &c. is the rick yard, at the upper corner of which is a timber yard, with a carpenter, wheeler, and blacksmith's shop, where this essential part of the economy of the farm is carried on under his eye, and without that loss of time and inconvenience attending the sending everything from home to each of these professional people.

The tithe of his land is compounded for at 12s. per acre.

The poors'-rates are 5s. in the pound upon the rack rent.

His farm usually employs near 300 acres out of the 500, but as a very small portion of this is in pasture, it may be said that at least 350 acres are under the plough, and the whole in crop, since, as I said before, he allows no fallows. This last season he grew 100 acres of wheat of the hedgerow sort, which at the period of its blooming promised a very heavy crop; but owing to frost and other accidental circumstances for which this season has been remarkable, the straw blighted and became spotted, vegetation was suddenly checked, the middle clevel of the ears was destitute of corn, and the summits came to nothing; so that he cannot reckon upon more than half a crop, or from 18 to 20 bushels to the acre; but the corn is good; and here was something like an evidence, that neither soil, nor high dressing, could prevent so alarming a calamity from taking place, nor that one soil was more subject to blight than another; since the corn grew upon every sort of soil upon his farm.

I did not observe any thing peculiar in his way of corn farming, and therefore, I shall proceed \_ immediately to give the detail of his physical farming.

And first,

### **PEPPER MINT. MENTHA PIPERITA.**

*Didynamia gymnospermia, Linn. Sp. Plant.*

The celebrated Willdenow has 22 species of this genus, of which, according to our countryman Ray, no one possesses so much or so powerful an oil resembling pepper as this plant. Its virtues are that of being highly stomachic and carminative.

It is customary with Mr. Moore to grow, communibus annis, 150 acres of this plant, and to renew about 60 acres every year; this he finds absolutely necessary to do, because, both wet and frost injure the roots very much, and when severe, kill them.

Preparation. — The ground having been made very clean by repeated picking, &c. if necessary, and burning, is brought into the finest tilth by frequent ploughings, dunging, harrowing, rolling, &c. in doing of which the dung necessarily becomes incorporated with the soil; the ground is then set out into lands or beds, according to the quality of the soil from half a rod to three quarters wide, the plants are then put in and covered up; the first season they are constantly attended to during the weeding season and they receive at least six or more complete hoeings; this essential part of their cultivation is scrupulously attended to every succeeding year. In the months of November and December the plants are carefully covered with the soil thrown out from alleys or furrows left between each bed or land, otherwise, the repeated weedings in the course of the summer will have so exposed the roots of the plants, as to make them more susceptible of frost and wet, and so much the more liable to be thrown out of the ground by severe frosts.

The expence of the hoeing is six shillings per acre.

The covering at twenty-one shillings per acre.

The produce is very variable, as well as the price, some years it is worth 50, . per ton as it comes off the land, and in others £10; but upon the average it will bring £5 per ton. Some years, and on some soils, the produce will be four, six, and even more tons per acre, probably five tons will average it.

This plant is distilled for the oil.

### **SPEAR MINT. MENTHA VIRIDES.**

*Didynomia gymnospermia, Linn. Sp. Plant.*

The cultivation and treatment is exactly the same as the preceding sort, but it is not so valuable in any point of view; of course Mr. Moore grows but a few acres, about four being the usual quantity; this is distilled for the oil, and sold to the chymists. This plant is cultivated in our gardens, and used at our tables either green or dried. Physically it is stomachic and carminative, but in a less degree than the preceding.

### **PENNY ROYAL. MENTHA PULEGIUM.**

This plant being the least valuable of the three, he plants about two acres annually, which it is necessary to do to make it profitable; and the only difference in the treatment is that of the covering, which it is not necessary to do with a plant that is to be destroyed.

A part of the crop he distils for the oil for the chymiste, and the other part he sells to the physic shops.

### **MARSH MALLOWS. ALTHEA OFFICINALIS.**

*Monodelphia polyandria, Linn. S., Plant.*

There are nine species of this genus mentioned in Willdenow. Its uses as an unguent are particularly described in the *Materia Medica*, 166; also by Hoffman, Germ. S46, and by C. Bauhin, 315.

The cultivation of this plant is particularly calculated to clean land, because by repeated hoeings, which very much encourages its growth, the land cannot fail of being in a better state by every such operation; deep ploughing is also essentially necessary in order to give room for the roots to proceed downwards without

checking them, for it is observed that wherever the plants have not this advantage (for they have very fleshy large roots) they do not grow luxuriant, but on the contrary, are dwarf and diminutive.

When the plants are arrived at maturity they are taken up, well washed of their filth and dried, and when completely so they are sold to the physic shops.

About one acre is planted every year.

It is sold by the hundred weight, and at about 50s. per hundred weight.

WILD CUCUMBER. MOMORDICA.

*Monoecia syngenesia. Linn. Sp. Plant,*

There are eight species of this genus in the Systema Vegetabilium of Murray.

Mr. Moore plants a considerable plot of ground in beds annually, made rich and fine with this species of cucumber. A wet season is injurious to its fructification.

The fruit, which is the only valuable part of the plant, is sold to the apothecaries company, at their hall near Blackfriars, at 2s. per bushel.

SAVIN. JUNIPERUS SABINA.

*Dioecia Monadelphica. Linn. Sp. Plant.*

There are ten species of the genus juniperus, which includes the common juniper, the cedar, and the savin. As this is an abiding plant, or what is called a shrub, it is planted in rows to remain for a crop, and as it is very hardy, if care is taken of it, it will continue to flourish, and to furnish a considerable supply of green shoots for many years; but as it would not be politic to trust entirely to this circumstance, it is usual to plant a certain number every year.

It is not tenacious of any particular soil, so that there is but depth enough; but the more it is pulverized, the better the plants thrive. The shoots are cut green, and with the leaves are distilled, from whence an oil is extracted in great use among farriers; it is sold at 10s. per pound.

ANGELICA, ANGELICA ARCHANGELICA.

*Pentandria digynia, Linn. Sp. Plant.*

Professor Willdenow describes six species of angelica, every one of which, except the verticillaris, (or whose leaves surround the stalk or stem like the rays of a wheel) are natives of the coldest climates. The one under description is found in the greatest abundance in Lapland, upon the banks of rivers, and other humid places.

From half an acre to one acre is the annual growth, and is planted every year for the purpose of succession, although it is two years before it comes to perfection. The ground is made rich with

dung, and made loose to a great depth by ploughing or digging; the more moist the soil the better the plants thrive. The sets are then planted at 2½ feet row from row, repeatedly hoed and weeded during the season. If the plants are suffered to stand for seed the second or any succeeding year, the roots are not so fine; and where the roots alone are required, they stand for a certain period, are taken up, well washed and dried, and are then sold to the physic shops.

The stalks were formerly blanched and eaten as celery, of which they have some faint resemblance; but it is as an aromatic that is so highly esteemed, being generally considered one of the finest in Europe.

It is by some of the cultivators sold to the confectioners for sweetmeats. As a confection it is not only one of the most warm, but the most agreeable Imaginable. It is good to expel wind and strengthen the stomach, and is surpassed in that instance only by ginger.

The value of it I am not acquainted with.

HOREHOUND, MARRUBIUM VULGARE.

*Didynamia gymnospermia. Linn.. Sp. Plant.*

Willdenow particularizes 14 species of this plant, none of which, says Hoffman, possess any medicinal virtues except the one now under detail; the peregrinum which is a native of Sicily, Crete, and the dry parts of Austria, and the Creticum, which is found in the East Indies. See Hoffman Germ. 810.

The mode of cultivation is so exactly a counterpart of the preceding article as to make it unnecessary to recapitulate it.

The branches and shoots are cut off and dried, tied in bunches and sold at four-pence per dozen. The mart for it is Apothecaries-hall.

#### CHAMOMILE, ANTHEMIS NOBILIS.

*Syngenesia polygamia superflua. Linn. Sp. Plant.*

There are 17 species of this genus in Murray, but Professor Tournefort was of opinion that the plant I am about to detail did not belong to the genus Anthemis. It is not my business to dispute this point here.

There are two varieties of this species cultivated in our physic gardens for the shops, viz. the single and the double, the former is grown for, and sold almost exclusively at Apothecaries-hall, the latter finds a ready sale at the chymists and physic shops.

A spot of light dry soil made extremely clean, is chosen for this plant; the ground is set out in beds of four feet wide, with eighteen-inch alleys between, and on these beds the sets are planted about eight or nine inches asunder, and kept carefully hand weeded; they will, if the season is not too wet, bear an abundant crop the first summer. In November, or the early part of December, the beds having been just weeded, the alleys are dug, and some of the finest mould thrown over the plants, which not only greatly refreshes them, but effectually covers the roots which the frequent weeding may have exposed, and preserves them from the frost.

Mr. Moore has seldom less than four acres of the double sort, and fewer of the single under cultivation. The average produce is about six hundred weight per acre, which is sold at one shilling per pound; the gathering costs one penny per pound.

#### WORMWOOD, ARTEMESIA ABSINTHIUM.

*Syngenesia polygamia superflua. Linn. Sp. Plant.*

Of the genus artemesia there are 29 species, of these the plants called mugwort and tarragon make a part.

These plants being herbaceous, that is the stem dies down annually, but the root abides, and which forms the intermediate link between those plants which are shrubby and whose stems are permanent, and those plants which are annual and which altogether die in a year, or two when they are termed biennial. These plants, I say, are planted in rows, at from 18 inches to two feet asunder in a deep rich mould, or made so by tillage; are kept perfectly clean during the summer, and are refreshed with soil from the intermediate spaces during the progress of digging them in the month of November, or the early part of December; but as it is the seed only that is wanted, it is thought to be the most profitable method to take up a certain portion of the roots every three or four years, and after cutting away all the decayed and old parts of them to replant the young roots.

The seed is sold to the physic shops as well as to the distillers and rectifiers, who, I suppose, use it among their British compounds. The price is usually 30s. per hundred weight.

#### LIQUORICE, GLYCIRRHIZA GLABRA.

*Diadelphia Decandria Linn. Sp. Plant.*

There are only six species of this plant mentioned in Willdenow, and among them I find two whose roots are endowed with a rich sweet flavour peculiar to themselves, these are the echinata and the asperima, the latter most particularly so, as well as extremely long; it is found between the Wolga and Isicum, and is well described by Professor Pallas in his Icin. I app. No. 121, t. m. f. 3; the former of the two has long been known in our English gardens, but I do not know that it has ever been cultivated for its medicinal uses, because I do not find any of the growers are acquainted with it; the latter I am wholly unacquainted with; but as it is easily obtainable, if it is not already among that most superb collection at the royal gardens at Kew, it

might be well worth the attempt to procure it. I introduce these hints as a stimulus, and in order to shew how much we may improve our collection of physical plants.

Of the plant under consideration, Mr. Moore has seldom less than 10 acres, which are planted in rows at 18 inches asunder, in a very deep rich soil made loose by tillage; it is usual, therefore, before planting, either to trench the ground with the spade two feet deep, or to trench plough it, but he gives the preference to the former method; and after laying down the trenches, which helps to pulverize it, 20 double cart loads of rich spit dung is laid on per acre, evenly spread, and pointed in with the spade; the ground is then lined out, and a small triangular hole being made, with the spade where the root or set is to be planted, it is then put in, the earth returned, and gently trod so as to close the mould about the roots; it is kept clean during the summer, and about November the old stalks or stems are cut off close to the ground with a sharp pruning knife and cleared away, the spaces between the rows are dug up and left rough, taking care as they proceed in this operation to clear away all the weeds that: may be among the plants, and to bury them.

The third year after planting, if the soil is suitable to them the roots are usually taken up with the spade, thoroughly washed, cleansed of their filth, and the fibres trimmed off, as well as all the smaller root« and ramifications. The latter are termed the offal, are dried, and then ground to powder. The main or principal roots are then packed up for sale, and sold to the druggists.

The prime roots are sold from 50s. to £3 per cwt.

The powder at £3 per cwt.

A fair crop will yield 20 cwt. per acre.

The expence of taking up the roots with the spade alone is £10 per acre.

The ground is usually sown with wheat, unless wanted for any particular crop, and the produce is generally immense, almost exceeding credibility, seven or eight quarters per acre. Quere, Is this not another proof of the advantage of deep ploughing, which the taking up the roots may be termed, for many of them run a yard deep, which they are obliged to dig under to get up without injury to the roots?

HYSSOP, HYSSOPUS OFFICINALIS.

*Didynamia angiospermia. Linn. Sp. Plant.*

This genus contains six distinct species, but I do not perceive that any other species is medicinal besides the plant above alluded to, indeed it appears that it is so from the exclusive title given to this species.

The ground having been previously prepared in the same manner that has been described for the other medicinal plants, and the plants having been previously raised from seed, either the preceding year, or very early in the present, are planted out in rows, 18 inches asunder, kept clean hoed, and the following autumn the ground is carefully dug between them. When the plants have been two years quartered, all the green shoots are cut off and tied in bunches, about twelve of which make one pound: the plants are afterwards destroyed, so that it is necessary to make a fresh plantation every year to keep up the succession.

These bunches are sold to the chymists and physic shops, at 6d. per dozen.

This plant is by some considered extremely grateful to the smell, and is usually recommended against asthmas, coughs, and all disorders of the breast and lungs, whether boiled in broths or otherwise used. The chymists distill the plant, and a water or liquor is drawn from it, which is considered a good pectoral. Notwithstanding which, such is the prevalence of fashion for foreign drugs, that this plant is no longer in repute, and therefore Mr. Moore seldom grows more than half an acre.

ELECAMPANE, INULA HELENIUM

*Syngenesia polygamia superflua. Linn. Sp. Plant.*

Murrey enumerates 25 species. As both the seed and the root are made use of in the Materia Medica, it is absolutely necessary that to deep ploughing the soil should be made rich and open, it is then planted in rows at two feet asunder and kept very clean; the first autumn the old stems and leaves are cut off close to the ground with a sharp knife, and the intervals between the rows well dug, and some of the finer mould laid upon the plants; the second year if the plants have thriven, they are deemed in perfection, when some of them are left for seed, and the rest taken up for the roots, which are carefully washed, trimmed, and dried.

The third year the plants are renewed; but it is to be observed, that as fresh ground is always chosen for every sort of physical plant, Mr. Moore deems it the most prudent way to plant every year about half an acre.

The seed is sold at 2d. per pound, and the roots at 4d. per pound.

#### POPPY, PAPAVER SOMNIFERUM.

*Polyandria monognia. Linn. Sp. Plant.*

Of the nine species described by Willdenow, no less than five of them are mentioned as being of use in the *Materia Medica*. The species now before us is, however, the plant that is cultivated in the physic gardens for the heads.

The ground has two or three ploughings not very deep, and the land is brought into fine tilth by rolling and harrowing; it should be moderately rich, and laid level.

In March, or the beginning of April, and on a calm day, the weather being dry, the seed is sown at the rate of something less than a pound of seed per acre. If the land plants well, they are carefully hoed out, and left at about six inches asunder, and nothing further is done to them until the pods are ripe, when the ripest are picked over, and put into bags holding about 3000 each; as fast as they ripen, they are gone over, and treated in the same way until the whole are gathered; they are in this state fit for sale. I do not find upon inquiry, that any distinction is made between these several gatherings, all of them being sold at one and the same price, but as far as my judgment and observation goes, it appears to me that every gathering is inferior to the preceding, and consequently that the first must be infinitely the most valuable, as possessing the greatest portion, as well as the most potent essential oil.

The expence of gathering is six-pence per bag.

They are sold to the chymists, druggists, and physic shops, at 30s. per 1000.

Mr. Moore sows annually about two acres.

#### LAVENDER, LAVANDULA STOECHAS

*Didynamia gymnospermia. Linn. Sp. Plant.*

Miller describes this plant characteristically by the name *officinatum*, because this sort is peculiarly used in the *Materia Medica*, not but the French and Italians, &c. distill the spica also. These are the only sorts out of eight species described by Willdenow that are used in medicine, so far as I can tell.

The ground is well prepared by deep ploughing, and ample dressing, the plants being raised from seed in a bed of fine mould, are planted out in March or April following, in rows at two feet asunder, they are carefully hoed and weeded, and in the autumn pruned and trimmed, and during the month of October or November the ground is turned in; every other year 20 loads of the best rotten dung is laid on per acre, and regularly pointed in. As the flowers are not sold, but distilled by Mr. Moore, they are not bunched when gathered, as if for sale, but are thrown loose into mats, in which state they are carried to the still room, where they are distilled for the oil. The expence of cutting the flowers is 21s. per acre.

The oil is sold to the perfumers and chymists at 40s. per pound of 16oz.

Between five and six acres are planted annually.

#### DAMASK AND RED ROSES. ROSA DAMASCENA ET VILLOSA.

*Icosandria polygnia. Linn. Sp. Plant.*

As there is no difference in the cultivation of these roses I have not separated them. Professor Willdenow enumerates 39 distinct species of roses, besides, as he says, almost numberless varieties, particularly of the hundred-leaved sort cultivated in the English gardens. I do not find that any of our growers of physical plants cultivate any other sort than the two above-mentioned, whereas Desfontaines. L. C. says than an essential oil of the most fragrant kind, far surpassing any other rose, is obtained from the petals of the musk-rose; it is reasonable to believe that this observation of the French chymist is well founded, since, as a perfume, it is very sensibly more odoriferous than any other. This observation may be worth the attention of our growers, notwithstanding the plants of the musk are not so easily propagated as the other sorts.

The ground is prepared in the same manner as for lavender or liquorice, and the roses planted three feet asunder, are kept well cleaned and hoed, and in the autumn all the superfluous and dead shoots are cut out, and the ground dug between them. Every other year they are refreshed with 24 loads of spit dung, pointed in between them, and close to the roots. The flowers are gathered every other day in dry weather all the season, by women and children, by the day, into baskets containing one bushel, and carried to the warehouse. They are then sold to the chymists at two shillings per bushel.

Mr. Moore has about seven acres of the former and three of the latter, of each of which he plants a few every year to keep up a succession in high order.

Besides the before-mentioned articles, some of the growers, such as Mr. Anderson, the successor to the celebrated Mr. Dickson, of Covent Garden, Mr. Reffell, and Mr. Killick, grow pot-marygold, garlick, shallots, borage, celandine, basil, saffron, mezerion, clary, lovage, feverfew, baulm, marjoram, French sorrel, garden burnet, common or tart rhubarb, medicinal soapwort, savory, Scotch Alexanders, tansey, rue, lemon-thyme, coltsfoot, medicinal vervain, rosemary, rocambole, &c.

Of these and the preceding articles, Mr. Reffell, and Mr. Killick grow each of them between 30 and 40 acres. Messrs. Drivers have lately begun a plantation near Sutton, and there is one or two more growers upon a small scale.

In addition to those, we have some gardeners who occupy several acres of land in the growth of such articles, as daisies, wallflowers, sweetwilliams, primroses, violets, pinks, bachelors'-buttons, and the like, and insignificant as these articles may appear, yet it is wonderful the returns that are annually made in them. What will the Board think of several thousand pounds per annum?

They are carried to the several markets in London where they are exposed for sale in full blossom, and I am informed meet with as ready sale as any sort of vegetables. Indeed Mr. Shepherd, who lives in Horsemonger-lane, Southwark, and who was an old servant of my father's, has accumulated a considerable competency, and almost disdains the idea of carrying these things to market, having always a ready sale for them at home upon his own terms. Mr. Arthur Connor, of Mitcham Common, is a large grower, and it is no unusual sight to see three or four carts following each other in the height of the season from his grounds.

Downloadable from [A Compendium of Modern Husbandry: Principally Written During a Survey of Surrey, Made at the ... : James Malcolm : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)