Lecture 20
Medieval Horticulture

Breakdown of Roman Empire—Split into East and West
Slow process brought about decline in technology
“The Dark Ages”
Rise of Christianity
Heresy and Church Schisms
Rise of Islam and Confrontation with the West Crusades
History of Horticulture: Lecture 20

Chapel of Suwayfiyah, Philadelphia Jordan, 3rd century

Mosaic of the Paradise, Madaba Jordan, late 6th century

Feudalism

A power relation between land and people
- Nobility
- Land owners
- Clergy
- Vassals (Peasants)
- Slaves, Serfs
Clergy organized into self-perpetuating monastic communities
Monastic communities became large landowners but subject to expropriation when they got too powerful
Church became repository of the classical information of antiquity
Superimposed on the system was the development of national groups separated by language.
Present day Europe is the heir of this system

Albertus Magnus (1193–1280)
Although land and agriculture was the basis for the feudal system, a competing class developed with small scale manufacturing, the craft system controlled by guilds, and finally the development of industrial capitalism which created a demand for credit and banking.

The rise of cities and their power led to the breakdown of the feudal system, the emergence of the middle class of managers, and a money economy.
This French illumination of 1325 shows the detailed construction of grapevine trellises, frequently renewed at great expense. Such props are distinct from the tunnel arbors and pergolas built in pleasure gardens with ornamental vines.

A painting (1410–1420) by a master from the Upper Rhine that provides evidence for medieval plantsmanship, showing an informal combination of trees, border flowers, small plants, and lawn.

This painting from an illuminated manuscript of about 1400 depicts a very sturdy, businesslike window box.
Convent of Sao Francisco Salvador, Bahia

Tiles depicting virtues of agriculture.
Convent of Sao Francisco Salvador, Bahia
Medieval village scene. Wattle fences surrounds plantations of young fruit trees, while men on long ladders pick fruit from old ones. A vine is trained on the front of one of the houses.

An Illustrated History of Gardening. Huxley, 1978

Medieval plantings were often rather casual. These vine growers rooted their young plants from cuttings in wicker baskets which they are burying.

An Illustrated History of Gardening. Huxley, 1978

Tending vines, from a XIII century miniature
This miniature, in the *Roman de Renaud de Montauban* of c. 1475, shows Maugis and La Belle Oriande seated in a garden of rather formal design. The pot of trained red carnations exhibits this flower in the first flush of its introduction to Northern Europe, but the turf is still beset with plants in the old manner of the flowery mead.

*Medieval Gardens*, Harvey, 1981
Wooden fences of simple lattice patterns enclose the simplest checkerboard beds in these medieval paintings. In the center, the fence has wider uprights and top members and supports carved animals beside the opening. In the arbor below, the horizontal and upright members are fixed together with twisted osiers.
Romance of the Rose
15th century

Lover gathers Rose 1538

Jacopo de’ Barbari’s map of 1500 marks suburban villas on the Giudecca at Venice.

The ornamental gardens of the two largest houses, one with a loggia, show the medieval system of small beds combined with the simplest form of open knot.

Loves game of chess

Garden of Nature—Nature holds the key.

Venus (love),

Pallas (wisdom),

Juno (virtue).