Spearmint

A popular "liberty tea" during the tea boycotts, spearmint was used to settle upset stomachs, freshen breath, and flavor communal puddings.

Tobacco

Along with recreational use, tobacco was a major cash crop in America during the Revolutionary era, it was cultivated for trade and export, especially to Europe.

In 1778, Coventry farmer Francis Brayton, who lived in the Paine House, recorded growing 700 pounds of tobacco, showing just how important tobacco farming was in the town's early history.

This project was created as part of my Girl Scout Gold Award to share the history and importance of early American gardens. My goal is to help visitors understand how these plants were used in everyday life and to inspire a deeper appreciation for the connection between history, nature, and our community.

Please scan the QR code below to take a short survey and share your feedback—your responses help measure the impact of this project and support future educational efforts.

Kelsey Authelet

Girl Scout Gold Award Project

Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England
Troop 38

THE PAINE HOUSE MUSEUM



Historical Garden Guide

Plants of the Revolutionary Era

Girl Scout Gold Award Project
by Kelsey Authelet

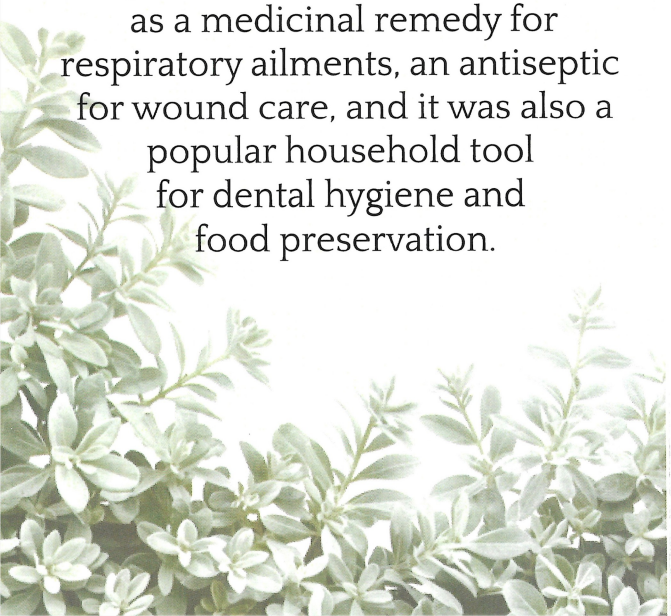
Amaranth

Is a highly resilient plant, it could thrive in poor soil and dry conditions, making it valuable for survival gardening. Amaranth was also very commonly used for food and dye.



Sage

Sage was most commonly used as a medicinal remedy for respiratory ailments, an antiseptic for wound care, and it was also a popular household tool for dental hygiene and food preservation.



Thyme

This fragrant herb was valued as a culinary seasoning for meats and a medicinal antiseptic used in tea to soothe coughs or as a "strewing herb" to mask household odors.

Flax

Essential for colonial self-sufficiency, flax was cultivated to produce linen fiber for clothing and linseed oil for paints and medicinal salves used to treat burns.



Rhubarb

Originally prized more for its medicinal roots as a potent laxative and digestive aid, rhubarb only began its transition toward a culinary "pie plant" late in the era.

Mullein

Known as "Hedge Taper," mullein's fuzzy leaves were used as insulating insoles for boots, while its dried stalks were dipped in tallow to serve as outdoor torches.

Comfrey

Commonly called "Knitbone," this hardy garden plant was mashed into poultices to accelerate the healing of broken bones, sprains, and open wounds.

Cotton

While primarily a Southern cash crop, cotton was imported to New England as a raw material for the region's emerging textile industry and to create "patriotic" homespun fabrics during British boycots. Popular products it was used to make was bandages, sails, undergarments, and candle wicks.

