

For Immediate Release  
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## **Historic Christ Church Installs Interpretive Panel for Herb Garden Funded by The Garden Club of the Northern Neck**

Dedicated in the summer of 1986, the herb garden at Historic Christ Church has been a labor of love for the hundreds of volunteers who have worked to maintain it over the past four decades. Culinary, medicinal, biblical, and fragrant herbs are selected and cultivated for their historical accuracy.

Created at a time when the landscape included the church and just a single building that housed a small museum, research library and office, the herb garden has grown into an important part of an expanded campus, serving both as a beautiful welcome point for visitors and a place to educate them about life in colonial Virginia.

This educational role expanded this summer with the addition of an interpretive panel that highlights the essential ways plants shaped the daily lives of early Virginians. Funded by a generous grant from The Garden Club of the Northern Neck, the panel resulted from the efforts of volunteers Val Verburg and Sally Beard, pictured, who in 2020 created a partnership between Historic Christ Church and the Master Gardeners of the Northern Neck to restore and care for the garden. Beard has done in-depth research into the herbs and their uses. She led an engaging presentation for volunteer training last spring, and recently partnered with local botanical artist, Celeste Johnson, to bring *Herbs and Art* to students ages 6-12 at our Hands-on History Day.

The new interpretive panel includes an excerpt from Robert “King” Carter’s diary on his use of herbs as well as a description from the colony’s first native-born historian Robert Beverley on “kitchen gardens,” which Virginians cultivated adjacent their houses with vegetables, flowers, fruit trees and other plantings. The panel also features a QR code that visitors will be able to scan to see a list of current plantings in the garden, historical uses for different plants, primary documents, and other materials that Beard has assembled.

“The dedication of the volunteers is truly appreciated. A team of more than a dozen Master Gardeners is assigned to the herb garden. They are on our campus almost daily, and whether they are planting, pruning, weeding, or watering it is done meticulously and with great pride. We are grateful to each and every one.” Reported Jill Sears, development director.

To learn more about Historic Christ Church please visit the campus at 420 Christ Church in Weems or go to [ChristChurch1735.org](http://ChristChurch1735.org).