

Saint Fiacre (*Fee-AH-kra*)

When you are in the garden, have you ever wished you had someone looking over your shoulder encouraging you? Well, maybe there is and it is the patron saint of gardeners.

Excerpts from *The Patron Saint of Gardeners*
By Leona Woodring Smith

So many public and even private gardens have a secluded spot reserved for a statue of St. Francis that many people mistakenly believe Francis of Assisi to be the patron saint of gardeners. Actually, that distinction rightly goes to an Irish monk by the name of Fiacre.

August 30 is the feast day of Saint Fiacre. Although his feast day is not officially celebrated in the United States, statues of Saint Fiacre can be found in many private and public gardens and museums

St. Fiacre was born in Ireland and raised in a monastery. Travelers brought seeds and plant material from as far away as Rome and the Holy Land. St. Fiacre's days at the monastery taught him a deep love of silence, the joys of planting and harvesting crops and an appreciation of nature.

Drawn to the religious life and the desire to serve God in solitude, Fiacre decided to establish a hermitage for worship. He traveled south and chose a wooded area by the Nore River for his home, with a cave for meditation, a well for drinking water and the river for bathing.

Monks in those days were regarded as physicians of the body as well as the soul. Soon people were flocking to Fiacre for prayers, food and healing. He fed the hungry and healed the sick with herbs from his garden and prayed for all who came there. Longing for solitude for his worship, Fiacre traveled to France where the Bishop of Meaux granted him land in a wooded area near the Marne River. He built a hut near a well, clearing space for his garden of vegetables, fruits, flowers and herbs.

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Picture from the garden of a Parker County Master Gardener