

Stratford Shakespearean Garden

is now over eighty years of age. Our garden is the only complete garden of its kind in Canada and has a number of components which we describe below.

Woodland Garden



Many years ago the parks board were able to acquire a rather large property addition to the Shakespeare Garden site. The most

westerly part of the garden is a beautiful natural area surrounded by trees and provides all visitors with a tranquil area to sit and rest. Crowning the middle of the sylvan Garden is an unexpected pergola providing a garden enhancement.

Rose Garden



The original intention was to have York and Lancaster roses and perhaps in the near future research will provide the garden once again with those rose varieties.

The most significant element in this formal area is the handsome sculpture of William Shakespeare designed by Canadian sculptor Cleeve Horne. The dramatic pose of the bust suggests not so much an accurate depiction of the poet but a suggestion of greatness which has come down through the ages.

The Chimney



The chimney provides our garden with a dramatic element in that it is a 60 foot high original factory chimney which survived a disastrous fire in 1922.

Mr. Thomas Orr had hoped that the chimney top could serve as a bird sanctuary, however, there were unforeseen problems and so the nesting boxes were sealed permanently years ago.

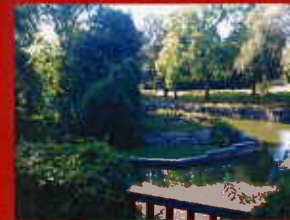
Sun Dial



The Knot Garden is designed as a quadrant with changing colour choices from year to year. Featured in the middle is the original sundial presented to R. Thomas Orr for his

developing of Shakespeare Gardens, here in Stratford. Britain's Sir Archibald Flower, who at the time was in charge of Stratford's Shakespeare Trust. It is hoped that the sundial, which was vandalized some years ago, will find a sponsor to restore the dial.

The Island



Sitting in the middle of our Avon River adjoining the more formal area of the garden is an island measuring 130 ft by 30 ft. It provides us with intriguing mystery.

Research has provided us with the information that the island was to have a formal element as well, however, for whatever reason that intent was not carried out. Perhaps at some point some enterprising landscape student will offer to design an appropriate island design for Stratford's historic Shakespeare Gardens.

Long Bed

Perhaps the most striking and visually attractive garden element is the long bed. A 270 foot long garden, running through most of the formal area filled from spring to fall with spring bulbs and the summer annuals providing for most of our visitors a garden size and length not usually seen anywhere by most visitors.

The Knot Garden

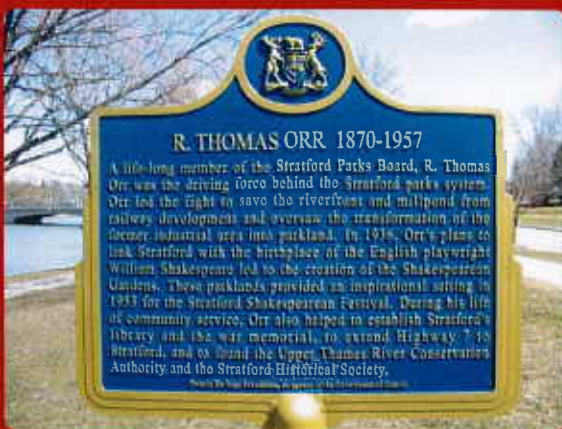
The first garden section is in the form of a quadrant as was the custom of Elizabethan/Shakespearean gardening. During summer, it has been filled with colourful summer plants.

The Common - A Lawn Element

Occupying a large area of the garden is a beautiful open central space with a handsome green lawn which reminds one of the public spaces in early times in which the community gathered to socialize.

R. Thomas Orr

The city of Stratford has had the good fortune of having a local citizen, R. Thomas Orr who was a trained architect, a historian and a visionary who strongly urged the community and city council to create a park system with a Shakespeare Garden both of which are known nationally and internationally. It is most fitting that the province of Ontario's Heritage Foundation installed a commemorative plaque on the river drive to honour the Stratford visionary who "wanted the best" for his various community projects. That personal ideal of R. Thomas Orr is now Stratford's beneficiary.



A history

- **1900's** - Today's Garden site was originally the site of the Dufton Woolen Mill
- **1903** - Parks Board proposal to City Council was promoted by R. Thomas Orr
- **1904** - A public vote was held and the proposal was passed
- **1911-12** - Canadian Pacific Railway proposes a Railway spur through the developing park area and very contentious arguments enveloped the community
- **1913** - A referendum was held and the park proponents won a narrow victory
- **1922** - A disastrous Woolen Mill fire forced the Dufton family to halt mill operations permanently
- **1926** - The Dufton site was finally cleared of debris and R. Thomas Orr was intent in his interest in creating a garden on the old Mill site
- **1927** - Mr. Orr travelled to Britain to find information and ideas for his proposed garden
- **1929** - The International Stock Market collapse halted the garden proposal for some years
- **1935** - Sensing that the time was more favourable, Mr. Orr once again pushed for his garden project. Council passed the proposal and a landscaping firm was hired to design a terraced site
- **1936** - The City invited Canada's Governor General, Lord Tweedsmuir, to officiate at the garden dedication
- **1949** - The Sons of England - A local organization donated funds to have Canadian Sculptor Cleeve Horne of Toronto create a striking bust of William Shakespeare, now gracing the Rose Garden

Vice Regal Visits to the Shakespeare Gardens

Stratford's Parks board was honoured in 1936 when the then Governor General of Canada Lord Tweedsmuir accepted an invitation to officiate at the opening of our Stratford Garden - probably unique in Canada at the time. In 1947 once again a vice regal visit was made to the classic city when Governor General Lord Alexander and his wife toured the garden. In 1978 after the long garden was renewed by a Stratford volunteer of the Horticultural Society of Stratford, the board invited Ontario's Lieutenant Governor Pauline McGibbon to re-open the garden.



A Shakespearean Garden by it's style, is actually Elizabethan, thus we display Queen Elizabeth the first, Coat of Arms.

Friends of the Shakespearean Garden
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Shakespearean Gardens

Stratford, Ontario Canada



Stratford's Elegant
Park System