

Point Ellice House flourished in the warmer months as family members and their many guests convened for intimate dinners in the dining room, recreational activities on the lawn, boating on the Gorge waterway, and enchanting strolls through the gardens.

The gardens are a quintessential aspect of summer at Point Ellice House. The landscape and plants are an extension of the site's collection and they provide insight into the tastes and lived experiences of the homeowners who once cared for them.

Kathleen O'Reilly took great pleasure in planning the layout of the garden beds and sought new varieties of her favourite flowers to grow. Roses, bulbs, and annuals were used for interior display throughout the year and Kathleen frequently kept her father updated about the condition of the gardens and their use inside the house:

You asked in your letter to Mama if the box for the flowers at the dining room window had been put up. We did it a day or two after we returned from Yale. We now have three tables with plants in the dining room and one in the drawing room, also in the box outside the dining room window and on the shelves in the porch. The pear tree in the Strawberry bed near the croquet lawn is in blossom now...

- Kathleen's letters to Peter; June 23, 1881

Though she shared a love of roses with her parents, Kathleen's most favoured were white lilies, sweet peas, and gladiolas, reflecting the late-Victorian passion for exotic flowers. The gardens were a space for Kathleen to relax, paint, and enjoy tea with her peers.

The gardens at Point Ellice House required meticulous care to keep them healthy and beautiful. In 1871, Caroline O'Reilly noted that the gardens were very much a family affair:

I did not go out on Friday except to garden, the weeds are dreadful it is a never ending labour. The little man [Frank] works away like a Trojan and the Puss-Pie [Kathleen] runs about doing nothing. The Pop [Mary Augusta] runs about too - she does not like to sit in her carriage and...when she is running about she is always in trouble about picking the flowers...

- Caroline's letters to Peter; May 14th, 1871

This display case shows some of the artifacts from the Point Ellice House collection that were used in the gardens. Today, our dedicated team of garden staff and volunteers keep the grounds looking as brilliant as Kathleen, Caroline, and Peter did.

Objects [inset display; left to right]

Birdbath. PEH 1975.001.3555a-b. Date: 19th Century. Materials: Concrete, steel, paint.

This originally belonged to the Trutch family, given to the O'Reillys.

Tea Table. Point Ellice Collection. Date: Unknown. Materials: Wood.

Folding tea table with shelves shaped like lily pads.

Horticultural Society Award Presentation Card. PEH 1975.001.9366. Date: 1909. Materials: Paper.

This award card was presented to Miss Kathleen O'Reilly by the Victoria Horticultural Society for her entry of 4 Coleus plants. Awarded First Prize. 1909.

Gardener's Diary. PEH1975.001.9367. Date: c. 1890-1910. Materials: Paper, Wood, String.

This small diary, for making notes in horticultural shows. Belonged to Kathleen O'Reilly. Hand written notes on page 3 list Spitzenburg Apple, Yellow berried Holly and Exkenville Seedling Apple in Kathleen's handwriting.

Chair. PEH 1975.001.3240. Date: Unknown. Materials: Wood and Wicker

Hat. PEH 1975.001.10002. Date: c. 1920-1940. Materials: Straw.

Stool. Point Ellice Collection. Date unknown.

Book. PEH 1975.001.271 Date: c. 1870. Materials: Paper.

"The Amateur Gardener's Calendar Being A Monthly Guide As To What Should Be Avoided, As Well As What Should Be Done In A Garden In Each Month" by Mrs. Loudon. This book was given to Peter O'Reilly from his children, Frank and Kathleen, on his birthday, March 27, 1876.

Rhubarb Forcing Pot. PEH 1975.001.3557a-b. Date unknown. Materials: Terracotta.

Manure/fertilizer was piled around and created a greenhouse effect for plants to grow faster. Also caused vegetables to grow white (because they were grown in the dark) for a novelty effect.

Box. Point Ellice Collection. Date unknown. Materials: Wood.

Garden Weeding Fork. PEH 1975.001.7654. Date: 19th Century. Materials: Wood, Metal.

Garden Fern Trowel. PEH 1975.001.7651. Date: 19th Century. Materials: Wood, Metal.

Garden Hoe. PEH 1975.001.5347. Date: 19th Century. Materials: Wood, Metal.

Flower Basket. PEH 1975.001.2024. Date unknown. Materials: Wicker.

Garden Shears. PEH 1975.001.7826. Date: 19th Century. Materials: Steel.

Tea Table. PEH 1975.001.2030. Date unknown. Materials: Wicker.

Tea Set. PEH 1975.001.212; 229. Date unknown. Materials: Porcelain.

Objects [display below; left to right]

Watering can. PEH 1975.001.8583. Date: 19th Century. Materials: Galvanized Metal.

Kale forcing pot. PEH 1975.001.3558a-b. Date: 19th Century. Materials: Terracotta.

Manure/fertilizer was piled around and created a greenhouse effect for plants to grow faster. Also caused vegetables to grow white (because they were grown in the dark) for a novelty effect.

Cultivator. Point Ellice Collection. Date unknown. Materials: Wood, Metal.

Shovel. PEH 1975.001.710. Date: c. 1885-1895. Materials: Wood, Metal.

Forcing Frame. PEH 1975.001.10061. Date: 19th Century. Materials: Metal, glass.

Manure/fertilizer was piled around and created a greenhouse effect for plants to grow faster.

Images [left to right]

Kathleen on Garden Path at Point Ellice. BC Archives, Image H-05582. [Date: Unknown].

“Kathleen Watering the Gardens at Point Ellice House.” BC Archives, Image I-51789. [c. 1890].

“Tea Party on the Lawns of Point Ellice House.” BC Archives, Image H-06661. [Date: Unknown]

“Tennis Party at Point Ellice House.” BC Archives Image C-03925. [c. 1880s/1890s].

Peter and Caroline sit on the bench in the back with “The Colonel” propping his foot up on the bench. Kathleen is in the center, with Captain Henry Stanhope reclining in front of her. To Kathleen’s right are her two brothers, Frank and Jack. (Source: *BC Historical News*, Liberty Walton, Fall 2002).

“Gardens at Point Ellice.” BC Archives Image I-51787. [c. 1890].

This picture shows the forcing pots in use at Point Ellice House.

“Pathway in Between Gardens at Point Ellice House.” BC Archives Image I-51788. [c. 1890].

Note the wood handled shovel, likely the shovel on display in this case.