



Plants for Reflection: Herbs

A wide variety of herbs and spices are referenced in the Bible and can be grown in the UK. Often these plants were grown for medicinal purposes. Herbs from the Bible or Christian traditions include Coriander, Hyssop, Mustard, Rue and Rosemary.

Bible Passage: Genesis 1:29 (NRSV*)

God said, ‘See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.

The story of the Creation in the Bible is very familiar to many people, from the formation of dry land in the oceans, through the sprouting of vegetation, and the arrival of animals, then humans, to God resting on the seventh day.

And it’s entirely appropriate that this story is recorded in the first chapter of the first book of the Bible. The name Genesis means “beginning.” It’s where everything began.

In Genesis, we read that after each day’s work, God looked at what he had done, and saw that it was good. The problems only started when humans arrived on the scene and started to take control – the Garden of Eden, the Great Flood, war, famine, slavery and more.

Reflection: Creation

Over the centuries, scientific research has suggested there are other ways in which the Earth was formed, and life began, but the scientific and Biblical approaches are often similar, and the result is the same – a highly complex structure with many features that depend on each other: the weather, the atmosphere, the seas, the forests, and plains, often called the “balance of nature”.

As humans have grown in number and knowledge, they have upset that balance by using some of Earth's resources for other purposes, destroying forests, polluting oceans, hunting some animals to extinction, poisoning soil so that nothing will grow. Now we are beginning to see the results of some of that activity, as climate change brings extreme weather events to many parts of the world, including our own. Humans didn't understand enough!

This kind of behaviour is nothing new. Examples can be found later in the Book of Genesis. So, people have been causing problems for a long, long time, but over the years (and particularly the last two centuries) the combination of all these actions in various parts of the world has led to a situation where many people fear a serious global catastrophe if nothing changes.

It is now too late to reverse some of the damage, but we can all try to stop it getting worse by respecting the environment and everything it gives us, "treading lightly on the Earth."

Prayer

Creator God, we know that humans have upset the balance of your beautiful world. We recognise that we must look after this fragile planet and aim to pass it on unspoilt to future generations, and that all the goodness in the world should be shared equally by everyone, not wasted, or hoarded by those with the most strength or power.

We want to make things right again.

Help us, as individuals or communities, to take action now that will protect your creation and make a real difference in our lifetime.

Amen

What we do: Eco Church

The members of this church are working with the international Christian environmental organisation A Rocha ("the rock" in Portuguese) to identify ways, big and small, in which they can help to protect and conserve the planet. This includes using energy and water responsibly, buying Fairtrade products, re-using or recycling as much waste as possible, encouraging wildlife in the churchyard, providing areas of the church garden for rest and contemplation, and helping community projects aimed at improving the environment.