

The book cover is dark blue with a fine, woven texture. It features an elaborate gold-tooled border consisting of multiple concentric lines: an innermost line of small dots, followed by a line of repeating geometric patterns, and an outermost line of larger, more complex repeating motifs. The spine on the left is also gold-tooled with several distinct decorative bands, including floral and geometric patterns.

# Historic Gardens

*Aromatic Herbs & Secrets*

Eleanor Fitzroy

Medieval monastery gardens were open-air pharmacies where every herb whispered dual purposes.

Rosemary (*Salvia rosmarinus*) symbolized fidelity—brides wore it while scholars burned its leaves to sharpen memory during exams, unaware rosmarinic acid inhibits acetylcholinesterase.

In knot gardens, hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*) cleansed temples, its pinene-rich oil dispersing airborne pathogens long before germ theory.

Darkertales cling to mandrake (*Mandragora officinarum*): its humanoid roots were harvested with dogs (to avoid fatal shrieks), then distilled into anesthesia containing scopolamine.

Elizabethan gardeners prized borage (*Borago officinalis*) for "courage"—its starry flowers, steeped in wine, eased battlefield panic via gamma-linolenic acid.

Yet the true alchemist was sweet wormwood (*Artemisia annua*): Chinese texts from 340 BCE describe malaria treatments now known to contain artemisinin.

Modern studies confirm Tudor practices—marigolds (*Calendula officinalis*) indeed accelerate wound healing, while rue (*Ruta graveolens*) repels cats but causes phototoxic burns. These gardens live on as genetic libraries: seed banks preserve heirloom varieties whose drought-resistant genes may save future agriculture.