



Shaftesbury Abbey Education Days

Herb Bags and Soap

Activity Objectives:

- To show the importance of herbs used by the nuns.
- To use herbs from the Abbey garden to make a simple herb bag, and soap, activities carried out regularly by the nuns.
- To demonstrate how herbs were used for other purposes, such as medicine, cleaning teeth, flavouring food and scenting floors.

Background:

Herbs played an essential role in the nun's daily life and were used for cooking, medicinal purposes and cleanliness. The Abbey gardens would have been well stocked, and our herb beds today have been designed to grow herbs most commonly used by the nuns. Saxon plants feature in the herb garden on the north wall of the Abbey grounds, and later medieval plants in the 4 raised beds by the museum.

Instructions:

Herb Bag (used to aid sleeping, or as a scent bag for masking bad smells!!)

1. Use a piece of muslin cloth.
2. Mix herbs of your choice (choose the herbs that are most suitable for the purpose of your herb bag) in a bowl and put them in the middle of the muslin cloth.
3. Pull together and tie with ribbon.

Soap

1. Flake soap into a bowl
2. Choose different herbs to scent the soap. Look at the properties of the herbs to choose the best ones for cleanliness)
3. Mix with a little essential oil for extra scent.
4. Shape into a small ball and leave to dry.
5. Wrap in muslin cloth to take home.

