



## *News Release*

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### **Century College English Students Plant Mythology Garden**

Students in Century College Prof. Cheryl Gfrerer's English class last semester became so interested in the plants mentioned in their ancient mythology readings, they decided to plant a garden filled with "mythology plants."

The garden, which is located on East Campus outside the far north entrance not far from the Horticulture area, consists of plants such as hostas, lilies, yarrow, catmint, iris and an apple tree. It also features an engraved granite slab with the name of their class (English 2055) and a quote from Thomas Bulfinch's *Mythology*. (The slab was donated, and the English department paid for the engraving. Century's Horticulture department donated the plants.)

Each plant has a laminated information card noting its mythological significance.

According to research by Emily Linden, a member of the class, the plants related to mythology in the following ways:

Hostas: In Greek mythology, hope was the last item remaining when Pandora opened the box given to her by the gods. Some hostas are nicknamed "hope hostas" or "guardian angels."

Lily: In the ancient Near East, the lily was associated with Ishtar, also known as Astarte, who was a goddess of creation and fertility as well as a virgin. The Greeks and Romans linked the lily to the queen of the gods, called Hera by the Greeks and Juno by the Romans. The lily also was one of the symbols of Roman goddess Venus. In later times, Christians adopted the lily as the symbol of Mary the virgin mother of Jesus. Painters often portrayed the angel Gabriel handing Mary a lily, which became a Christian symbol of purity.

Yarrow: Achilles, the great warrior in the 10-year Trojan War, staunchly the bleeding wounds of his soldiers with yarrow. Yarrow was called the military herb by the ancients.

Catmint: Mentha was a nymph who, because of her love for Hades, was turned into the plant mint by Hades' wife, Persephone. The ancients scoured their tables with this herb when preparing for the gods.

Iris: The flower got its name from the Greek goddess Iris, goddess of the rainbow. Iris also was known to be the messenger of Zeus and Hera. Iris would take messages from “the eye of heaven” to earth traveling on the arc of the rainbow. The word iris means “eye of heaven” and it also refers to the center of your eye. Thus, each of us carries a piece of heaven with us.



Photo: Left to right: Austin Rozinka of White Bear Lake, Tim Swenson of Stillwater, Tony Anderson of St. Anthony Village, Rebecca Burns-Gausman of Mahtomedi, Tiffany LaPlante of Oakdale.