The Fountains and Statuary of Battle Abbey

Alexander Neckam, an Augustinian monk living in the twelfth century, is the earliest English writer on fountains, statuary, and gardens. flood cleanup san antonio In his De Naturis Rerum, he describes the herbs, trees, and flowers growing in a noble garden, flanked by flowing water from statuary fountains. His list, however, can hardly apply literally to plants then flourishing in England, for the pomegranates, almonds, dates, oranges, nor lemons mentioned by him could have survived there out of doors, even with the abundant water supplied by the fountains. On the other hand, “the drowsy poppy,” the daffodil, and brank ursin (acanthus), peony, violet, rose, marigold, and lily, are among other flowers he cites, and were likely grown in many gardens, as they are also described in the oldest English herb diaries.Battle Abbey, the first great monastery in England founded after the Norman Conquest, belonged to the Benedictine order, and was originally called “La Bataille.” William the Conqueror ordered it to be built on the site of the decisive conflict between the Norman and Anglo-Saxon armies, with a series of fountains to honor the ferocity of the battle. The high altar garden statue is said to mark the spot where, in the thick of the fiercest fighting, Harold, the king, was killed and his body found by his betrothed, after nightfall.A step away from this historic spot, stretching between it and the restored outdoor fountains of the monastery, **Check out here** are some beautiful modern gardens enhanced with large statues laid out by the late Duchess of Cleveland. The stiff, geometrical patterns of the most modernistic statuary, bedded out with geraniums and edged with box, covering the edge of each fountain, produce an effect harmonious with the building, although they are utterly unlike the homely plantations formerly cultivated by the monks. Another attractive garden dcor arrangement is the terrace walk of grass through the fountains, and beside the Abbey, with enclosures in the thick wall for seats, where, walking or sitting, one overlooks a wonderful stretch of woodlands and dancing fountains once traversed by William and his army.