

Landscape Design According to Feng Shui

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According to ancient Chinese tradition, the human character can be judged by the quality of its response to nature. A person who truly loves mountains and water more than worldly interests is seen as a person of deep spiritual cultivation. Gardens provide daily contact with nature that can bring you into closer union with its secrets. The principles of Feng Shui bring dimension and depth to garden and landscape designs so you can maximize nature's benefits in your yard.

The key to creating a beautiful landscape is to understand how land can be fostered as representative of nature. Much mental and physical disease can be attributed to humans' loss of connection to the earth. By creating a more natural setting within your garden and land, you are fostering an intimate and healing connection with the earth.

Design Elements



A more natural setting is created by imitating Nature's own curving lines, surprise turns, seasonal colors, fragrances, and enclosures.

The line of demarcation between your private space and public land must be clearly identified. Chinese gardens are famous for their *moon gates*, beautifully shaped arbors or gates that mark the entry of their garden from the public part of the street. Where does your entry begin? How much public space is in your front yard? A sense of entry can be accomplished with arbors, gates, trees, and shrubs or simply with a change of pavement. A curved walkway to the front door is most desirable; it encourages the gentle flow of Chi into your home.

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The materials and shapes used to construct the house should be utilized in the garden. For example, if your house has a Spanish tile roof, a rough form of this tile or brick can be used in the pathways or garden borders. Straight lines are generally not found in nature and should be softened. In the case of a rectangular patio, bordering it with curved flower beds filled with informally arranged plants can soften the hard edges.

In nature, plants of various sizes, shapes, and textures all grow together, and your garden and landscape should reflect this. Also, variations in light and shadow add richness and depth to your landscape. They bring alive the interplay and balance of the yin/shadow and yang/light. If your property is in complete sun, planting shade trees or building a shade structure will balance the yin energy and give you relief from the sun. If you have a very shady site, consider having an arborist thin out the trees to permit more yang energy to enter. Planting white flowering plants also lightens the space.

Using the Senses

People are drawn to a garden by their emotions, memories, and five senses. The more these *triggers* are incorporated in the garden, the stronger your relationship is to it and the more effective your healing experience will be. Visualize the gardens you experienced as a child or those places that most captivated you in your travels. No matter the climate, the plants, or the spaces you have to work with, there are always methods of capturing elements of those special places and memories.

Sight and Color

Vision is the most utilized sense. In designing a landscape with Feng Shui principles and the colors of the Bagua, incorporate plants which have the resident energy of each area of the lot. Not all plants in the *li* area need to be red, but adding red accent plants can definitely represent the energy of this area.



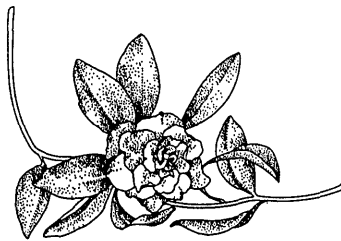
Sun purple	Li red	K'un pink
Chen green	yellow orange	Tui white
Ken blue	K'an black	Chien gray

This Bagua is designed to be overlaid on your property with the ken, kan, and chien areas adjacent to the street.

You should also select a color-coordinated palette that pleases you, though it is still important to retain the yin-yang balance. If you are enthralled with the *hot* colors: red, orange and yellow, be sure to balance them with some *cool* colors: green, blue or purple. White always balances the color wheel, providing yin for the hot range and yang for the cool range. Change the energy in sunny areas by adding yin or cool-colored plants and lift the Chi of shade areas with yang colors in the hot range. When planning your garden, try to accommodate for seasonal interest with the colors to accentuate or de-emphasize the change of seasons.

Smell and Fragrance

Our most primal sense is smell; memories are triggered most by the smells of our past. In addition to planting flowers with the fragrances you love, also plant with fragrances that create balance as suggested by aromatherapy. Fragrances are the essence of the plant that call forth the healing energy needed to bring you into equilibrium.¹



One of my favorite fragrances is the gardenia. Place it close to your patio or walkway, and pick some of its fabulous flowers to perfume your home.

¹ Please refer to "A Scentual Reminder of Feng Shui Remedies," p. 329.

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Taste: Herbs and Food

Adding food and herb plants to your garden brings added dimension. Who has not experienced the miracle of watching a seed germinate and food ripen through the interplay of sun, water, air, and earth? Growing your own food in an organic garden is the only guarantee that you can get the freshest, purest food to nourish your body. Herbs are particularly powerful plants to include in your garden. Not only do they offer fragrance and taste but medicinal qualities as well.

They can be placed in the area of the Bagua that corresponds to the area of your body that may need healing or near the center of the property, which is the health area.

Sun thighs	Li eyes heart	K'un abdomen
Chen feet throat		Tui chest mouth
Ken hands	K'an feet neck	Chien head lung

Sound

The use of water and sound in the front of the house is also highly pleasing. There is nothing like being greeted by the sound of running water. It is helpful in fostering harmonious relationships for the occupants. Wind chimes are beautiful positioned not only for the wind to animate them, but also so they can be rung by passers-by.

Other lyrical garden sounds belong to the birds and bees that visit your garden for the food, building material, and water that you share with them. A third method of creating sound in your garden is to use members of the grass family, like bamboo, which whisper beautiful music in the wind.

Touch

Touch is experienced not only through your hands but also your eyes. Big, bold textured plants represent yang energies while finer, smaller plants represent yin. Balance is the choreography between the two. There are also

many tactile plants that encourage a physical interaction and foster a connection with the plant kingdom.²

**Who can be cross when there are Lamb's Ears
in your garden?**



Uses of Your Garden

How your garden takes shape will depend on how you intend to use it. If you want a garden or portion of it to be dedicated to spiritual practice or contemplation, there are a number of methods you can use. Zen gardens have long been used as contemplative spaces. Labyrinths and mazes using sacred shapes and numbers can be employed for walking or sitting meditations. In general, use cool, restful green plants of consistent texture that do not flower. This green backdrop emphasizes peace, calmness, and a quiet mind.

Any one of hundreds of mandalas can be created in a garden using plant materials, stones, and building or art material. Statues, gazing balls, and special stones or crystals can be strategically positioned as focal points for meditation. In Europe, secret gardens, enclosed green spaces, have often been used for quiet thought. Their placement would be most desirable in the chien (heaven and benefactors) or ken (knowledge) areas of the property or backyard.

Sun Wealth Wood 4	Li Fame Fire 9	K'un Partnership Earth 2
Chen Family Wood 3	Health Earth 5	Tui Creativity Metal 7
Ken Knowledge Earth 8	K'an Career Water 1	Chien Benefactors Metal 6

When placing objects in the garden, it is most beneficial to use the element that corresponds to each area.

² *This is an important element for children's enjoyment of the garden where many times there is a "look but do not touch" policy.*

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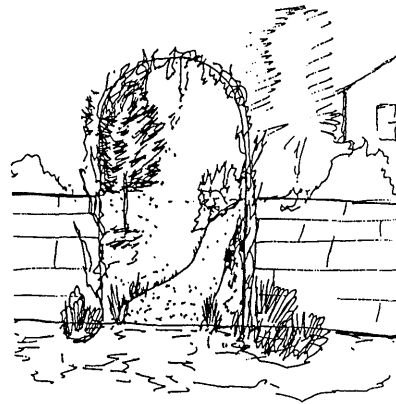
For example, a metal gazing ball or bronze statue would work best in the tui and chien areas; a stone statue, special rocks or crystals would work best in the kun, center, or ken areas; wood objects or topiary would be best in the sun or chen areas; fountains or garden pools are best in the kan area, and incense or flame would be best in the li area.

A standard guideline for designing with plants is to use an odd number, when creating a grouping of less than ten. Whenever appropriate, use the quantity (individual plants or number of groupings) indicated in the Bagua to further energize those areas.

**What is needed in all garden design is balance:
yin and yang in coordination.**

Honoring nature in your garden by including the elements and representations of earth will always produce nourishing energy for you and your home. A garden is a microcosm of nature, always changing as it grows.

As your garden grows and evolves, you are reminded of your own growth and the work needed to achieve and maintain balance and harmony.



In your garden, there may come times when a color, texture, smell, taste or sound that once delighted you no longer feels right. You must be open to the change occurring within yourself and give it a voice and reflection in your garden. Your growth and health depend on reestablishing this awareness and your link to earth. Your garden will help you reconnect with nature and foster healing for both you and the planet.

Excerpted from
The Feng Shui Anthology

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