

FORT BEND COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS' JAPANESE GARDEN

A Japanese Garden differs from other gardens because it is asymmetrical. Balance is achieved through other means than the obvious symmetry seen in many western gardens. The objective of a Japanese Garden is to provide a peaceful, quiet place, closed off from the rest of the world. This is a place for meditation and contemplation. Also, a Japanese Garden can give us a sample of solitude within its walls, separating us from a chaotic world outside.

Our Japanese Garden is a shaded Japanese stroll garden. The elements of earth are represented best through plants and rocks; wind using chimes and grasses and bamboo that move in the wind; water, here in the form of a dry creek and through the Shi-shi-odoshi water feature; and fire, represented by the Japanese lanterns.

Notice there is only one entrance to a Japanese Garden. The stroll around the garden represents a passage through life, beginning and ending in the same place. Crossing the red bridge represents a passage from one time in your life to another. Often you see graduation pictures, wedding pictures or a picture of a grandparent walking with a grandchild across the red bridge. This is symbolic and means many things to many people.

For education purposes, we have planted over 15 different ground covers within the walls of our Japanese Garden. Many of these are shade loving ground covers, used to keep the weed population down. Others are used to bring color to the garden, though in a Japanese Garden, color is not important and is often considered a distraction.

This garden also demonstrates a variety of shrubs which require little or no irrigation once established and a variety of rocks that can be used as mulch.