



Asian American Garden

Use the handout "Interesting Facts About Japanese Gardens" to help you with this workshop.

Take a walk down the exit path of Bellingrath Gardens and Home and you will find the beautiful entrance to our Asian-American Garden. At first glance this garden will seem just like any other garden with the exception of the structure at its entrance. Walk in and take a closer look and you will discover the grace, beauty and intricate design of this very special place. Below are some questions to ask so that students will begin to understand the reasons why this garden is different.

The Entrance:

The entrance includes many components.

- Why do you think the structure is at the entrance?
- What do you notice about the rocks?
- What kind of ground covering do you see?
- What function do the plants have at the entrance?
- What can you see inside the garden from the entrance?

The Bridges:

- As you stand still in the garden, record where you are standing and count the number of bridges. Compare your answer to someone else who is in a different place in the garden. If your numbers are different, what do you think made the difference?
- Sketch a bridge that you can see. Notice how it is different and how it is the same as other bridges in the garden. Why do you think that the bridges are different?

- Stand on a bridge. Look at the garden from where you are standing. Record the things you observe from this point on the bridge. Do you see anything you have not already seen?

The Water:

- Observe the water in the Asian-American garden. What does it remind you of? What color is it? Listen to the water. What does it sound like? Does the water stay in the garden? How can you tell if it does or it does not?
- Look at the island in the middle of the pond. What does the shape of the island remind you of?
- Do you think the water is important to the garden? Why or why not?
- As you look at the water, do you see any animal life? What do you see?
- The water in an Asian garden is supposed to represent something. What do you think that might be?

The Stones:

- There are stones, or rocks, in the garden. What do you notice about them and how they are grouped?
- Why do you think that the stones are in the garden?

The Pathways:

- The pathways in the garden are not straight. What does this cause you to do as you walk? Why do you think the garden is designed this way?
- As you leave, what did you discover about the garden that you did not already know?



Interesting Facts about Japanese Gardens

(From www.columbia.edu/itc/ealac/V3613/gardens/water.html)

A Japanese garden is a work of art, simply designed to interpret nature in an ideal setting.

Most Japanese gardens have, in their center, a home or structure from where the garden is viewed.

Japanese gardens often have several of these elements:

- Water (real or symbolic) which can represent the sea, lake, pond or river in nature. The banks of the water area are usually bordered by stones.
- Rocks
- A lantern, typically of stone
- A teahouse or pavilion
- Some kind of traditional hedge, fence or wall
- A bridge to an island, or stepping stones
- Walking path designed for slowing down and looking at specific places in the garden

Japanese gardens are designed to include the surrounding landscape and distant views as a part of the garden.

Green plants and evergreen trees, symbolizing eternity, are basic garden elements. Some color is added during seasons.

Water in the gardens symbolizes human existence: birth, growth and death.

Bridges are found over water as well as over sand. Those over sand are usually non-functional and are designed for spiritual and intellectual meditation.

Trees are carefully pruned to ensure visibility of the garden. All trimmings are collected and disposed of. Footprints in gardens and pathways are erased so that nothing disturbs the natural beauty.

Plant materials are used to create defined places, barriers, resting places, foot paths as well as more formal areas of the garden.

Stones in a Japanese garden are placed in specific areas based on their shape and form. Stones are rarely found alone and are often grouped together in number from two to five. Stones are placed together to create a balanced image.

Shoes are removed before entering a building in a Japanese garden.



Understanding the Asian-American Garden Inventory List

This workshop kit includes:

- 5 copies of Interesting Facts about Japanese Gardens
- Copies of Asian American Garden
- Paper for sketching and making notes
- Pencils

Directions for this workshop:

- Tell your group that you are going to be visiting a very special part of Bellingrath Gardens.
- Using the "Interesting Facts about Japanese Gardens" hand-out in your packet (front and back of page), talk about why this particular garden will be so different from the rest of the Gardens.
- Emphasize the garden "elements".
- Tell participants that our garden also has elements of an American garden, so we call it the Asian American Garden.
- Using the hand-out guide found in the workshop container, each adult should take a small group of participants through the Asian American Garden and talk about the different areas and elements.
- After the walk, bring entire group together to compare answers to questions and share ideas and drawings.

Use your information to do more research on this type of garden.