

# Feng Shui elements for a peaceful and inviting family garden

Ramira ACIA<sup>1</sup>, Cristina TOȚA<sup>1</sup>, Alina Țenche-Constantinescu<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Life "King Mihai I" from Timișoara, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Technologies, 119 Calea Aradului str., 300645 Timișoara, Romania.

\* Corresponding author: [alinaconstantinescu@usvt.ro](mailto:alinaconstantinescu@usvt.ro)

Manuscript received: 6 November 2024; revised: 16 November 2024; accepted: 17 November 2024

## Abstract

Japanese gardens are a beautiful reflection of a deep-rooted philosophy that values harmony between humans and nature. Their design emphasizes subtlety and respect for the natural world, creating an environment where people can experience tranquility and reflect upon the simplicity of life. This arrangement covers an area of 5,000 m<sup>2</sup>, being designed for a couple who are new to gardening and landscaping. The fundamental principles applied focus on achieving a balance between light and shadow, observing their movement and interplay throughout the space. These elements, combined with the natural contours of the landscape, are guided by Japanese principles of harmony, creating a cohesive and tranquil environment.

**Keywords:** Japanese gardens, Feng Shui elements, landscape planning, family garden

## Introduction

Japanese gardens exemplify the intricate relationship between humans and nature, articulated through seven fundamental principles: asymmetry, simplicity, austerity, naturalness, subtlety, transcendence, and tranquility [1, 2, 3, 4]. These principles are further enhanced by two essential elements that protect the garden space: fire and earth. It is imperative that these elements are consistently integrated into all components of the garden [2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9]. The element of fire is manifested through light sources and materials such as stone and metal, while the element of earth is represented by stones, water, animals, and plants [19, 20, 21, 22].

Green spaces are deeply connected to humanity, but trees, in particular, resonate with our sense of self, grounding us and connecting us to something timeless. [17,18]. In this context, the study examines aspects such as topography, spatial organization, the interplay between open and occupied areas, and the integration of various elements into a cohesive whole, while also considering the seasonal variations of these spaces [15,16,17,18].

Wet and dry gardens represent another significant area of study, as they categorize spaces into distinct zones. Wet gardens incorporate water features, wetlands, and serene oases, while dry gardens are characterized by the use of stones and rockery, simulating waterholes and requiring ongoing maintenance [10, 11, 12, 13].

Additionally, the influence of planted vegetation is examined to enhance the ecological and psychological connection between humans and the natural environment. This analysis considers the role of plants in creating a balanced ecosystem that embodies both natural and cultural elements. By thoughtfully integrating native and cultivated species, the design aims to support biodiversity, enhance ecological stability, and reflect cultural values. This approach fosters an environment where natural processes and cultural expressions align, contributing to a harmonious landscape that sustains ecological health while honoring human influences.

Dwarf plants require careful integration into the garden design, aligned with favorable cardinal points. They must meet criteria such as a lush growth habit, chromatic richness, and species diversity to enhance both ecological balance and aesthetic appeal.

Trees and shrubs play a vital role in the overall design, with factors such as size, height, shape, and color being essential. They must be healthy and integrate seamlessly into the broader landscape, contributing to both structural harmony and visual cohesion within the space. [6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12].

Another significant consideration is the placement and significance of plants within the arrangement. The pond, along with its integration into the landscape-ranging from Koi ponds to

fountains-holds essential importance. These features contribute to a continuous flow of energy that is both calming and revitalizing, thereby enhancing biodiversity.

Stone lanterns constitute a significant focal point within Japanese gardens, symbolizing profound spiritual meanings attributed to these spaces. Historically, these elements were originally utilized in Buddhist temples; their contemporary placement in Japanese gardens serves the purpose of guiding individuals through the metaphorical darkness of their lives [1, 2, 3, 4, 5].

In addition to these stone lanterns, the gardens also feature carefully arranged stone islands, ponds, illumination zones, and areas designated for relaxation, all of which embody similar themes. Bridges hold particular importance as they facilitate transitions between various components of the garden, thereby symbolizing the interconnectedness of life's journeys. The presence of bridges is essential within these landscapes, mirroring the strong symbolism associated with stone lanterns. Furthermore, gates and fences are incorporated into the design, allowing for a seamless transition from one area to another and inviting visitors into new realms of experience. Each space within the garden is meticulously defined by these passageways, with gates serving as gateways to unique aspects of the overall arrangement [6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21].

### Material and Method

A bibliographic study on Japanese gardens and Feng Shui principles into the historical, cultural, and philosophical foundations of both practices, was conducted.

The arrangement is set on a 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> area, surrounded by gardens, with a central entrance facing south. The project incorporates sound barriers and green walls to ensure privacy, an important feature requested by the beneficiary.

We have designed the family garden by integrating the conceptual essence of traditional Japanese gardens with the guiding principles of Feng Shui. This harmonious blend ensures a space that promotes balance, tranquility, and positive energy flow, creating a serene and welcoming environment for the family. We looked at the fundamentals of this concept, especially energy, which flows constantly and influences both luck and human well-being.

We have thoughtfully designed a variety of garden spaces, such as Zen, Tomatoes, promenade gardens, and others around the house, to meet the needs of the newlywed couple. Their desire is for a serene, airy environment with relaxing spaces and diverse vegetation, covering 30-50% of the total area. In this respect, we focused on creating a design where energy flows freely, promoting harmony and alignment with the couple's karma. Energy flows in constant cycles and patterns, influencing not only human luck but also having a direct impact on individuals. Based on our studies, we chose to design a space that facilitates smooth, fluctuating, and aerated energy flow, with a strong focus on the overall energy dynamics of the space.

### Results and discussions

The garden around the house includes: *Pinus mugo* "Mops", *Pinus mugo* "Mughus", *Picea abies* "Nidiformis", *Picea abies* "Conica", *Juniperus horizontalis*, *Juniperus communis rependa*, *Picea pungens* "Glauca globosa".

In the eastern area we have planted species that give a strong breath and subtly decorate the area. This area is located in front of the relaxation and barbecue area, near the house and I preferred to choose plants that are as simple and light as possible, especially floricultural ones: *Ligustrum terarium*, *Lavandula augustifolia*, *Lavandula augustifolia* "Hidcote", *Lavandula dentata*, *Lavandula intermedia* "Grossa", *Lavandula staechas*, *Quercus suber*.

In the northeast area there is the promenade garden area which is simplistic, calm and as green as possible. In this area, predominantly yellow plants, terracotta pots and vegetation on plant heights were used. As plants we have exposed: *Carex morrowii* "Ice Dance", *Carex morrowii* "Variegata", *Carex oshimensis* "Trish Green", *Carex oshimensis* "Evergreen", *Pieris japonica* "Variegata", *Pieris japonica* "Mountain" *Callistephus chinensis*, *Alstotis*, *Alstroemeria*, *Gasania*, *Zantedeschia*, *Helichrysum*, *Cleome*, *Chrysanthemum*, *Typha minima*, *Azzila filiculoides*.

In the western area where the red garden is located, there are several types of bamboo planted on level differences to provide as much insulation as possible in the area of the gazebo designed in that area.

From the plants that are found there we have: *Bodendeckesrosen*, *Phyllostachys aureosulcata*, *Phyllostachys* "Aureocaulis", *Phyllostachys* "Spectabilis", *Phyllostachys* "Bissetti", *Rosa banksiae* "Alba", *Rosa banksiae* "Luntea", *Rosa banksiae* "Rosca".

The Zen Garden is guarded by hedges, a lot of floriculture species and shrubs that offer privacy. In this place, a complex arrangement was tried, everything in this place having a partner. Everything has a partner and a connection, a duplicate leading to the subtency of life and the oft-used phrase that speaks of the world as a unit, of human similarities, but different at the same time.

Among the mentioned species we name: *Taxus baccata* "Cona", *Rosa rugosa*, *Stamm rosen*, *Bodendeckesrosen*, *arbori masivi precum Quercus suber*, *Acer palmatum garnet*, *Acer palmatum "bloodgood"*, *Acer palmatum "orange dream"*.

In the design, I have incorporated both plants that will provide aesthetic enhancement during the warmer months, from spring to summer, and areas with trees and shrubs that will contribute to the chromatic composition during autumn and winter. The space was conceived to undergo a dynamic chromatic transformation throughout the year, while also aligning with the superimposition of the Luo Shu trigram onto the space. Among the selected plant species are trees and shrubs from the genus *Acer*, known for their distinctive and constantly evolving form, as well as coniferous trees and shrubs, including *Taxus baccata*, species from the genus *Juniperus* and *Picea*.

**Table 1. Proposed vegetation**

Proposed vegetation	Species	UM(pcs,kg)	Unit value (ron)	Total value
Shrubs	<i>Juniperus communis repanda</i>	4	38	152
	<i>Juniperus communis horizontalis</i>	7	18	126
	<i>Picea abies "Nidiformis"</i>	4	30	120
	<i>Picea glauca"Conica"</i>	11	35	385
	<i>Picea pungens "Glauca globosa"</i>	3	250	750
	<i>Pinus mugo"Pug"</i>	2	145	290
	<i>Pinus mugo"Mughus"</i>	1	32	32
	<i>Ground cover roses</i>	7	45	315
	<i>Phyllostachys aureosulcata</i>	17	140	2380
	<i>Phyllostachys aureocaulis</i>	9	135	1215
	<i>Phyllostachys aureosulcata "Spectabilis"</i>	9	185	1665
	<i>Phyllostachys "Bissetti"</i>	16	120	1920
	<i>Pieris japonica "Variegata"</i>	8	20	160
	<i>Pieris japonica "Mountain fire"</i>	2	139	278
	<i>Rosa banksiae "Alba"</i>	2	50	100
	<i>Rosa banksiae "lutea"</i>	2	90	180
	<i>Rosa banksiae "Rosea"</i>	2	175	350
	<i>Rosa rugosa</i>	2	65	130
	<i>Stem roses</i>	2	100	200
Trees	<i>Taxus baccata "cona"</i>	3	174	522
	<i>Acer palmatum garnet</i>	3	245	735
	<i>Acer palmatum "orange dream"</i>	3	139	417
	<i>Acer palmatum "bloodgood"</i>	2	259	518
	<i>Acer palmatum Osakazuki</i>	2	135	270
	<i>Quercus suber</i>	5	150	750
Aromatic plants	<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	3	40	120
Flowering plant	<i>Alstroemeria</i>	1	19	19
	<i>Arctotis</i>	6	12	72

	<i>Callistephus chinensis</i>	5	10	50
	<i>Ornithogalum nutans</i>	4	20	80
	<i>Cleome</i>	7	12	84
	<i>Gazania</i>	4	27	108
	<i>Helichrysum</i>	2	120	240
	<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	1	15	15
	<i>Lavandula of angustifolia "Hidcote"</i>	1	20	20
	<i>Lavandula dentata</i>	2	40	80
	<i>Lavandula intermedia "Grosa"</i>	1	80	80
	<i>Lavandula stoechas</i>	1	30	30
Aquatic plants	<i>Typha minima</i>	7	15	105
	<i>Azolla filiculoides</i>	5	25	125
Grasses	<i>Carex morrowii "Ice Dance"</i>	3	35	105
	<i>Carex morrowii "Variegata"</i>	3	35	105
	<i>Carex morrowii "Trish Green"</i>	3	35	105
	<i>Carex morrowii "Evergreen"</i>	3	35	105
	<i>Lolium perene-Festuca arundinacea</i>		65	
Lianas	<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	9	20	180

### Conclusion

The landscaped space is a space that respects the principles of the Japanese garden, but also an environment that manages to amplify the connection between man and green space. Through this connection we want a practical and useful union, forming a pleasant, ambient, simple and meaningful space for the couple.

The design of the family garden follows key Feng Shui principles that create a harmonious, balanced, and nurturing environment such as: *harmonious chromatics; a space full of life and vitality to attract luck and grow it; symmetry and calm; naturalness exhibited by simple, acclimatized plants; subtlety, marked by complex and unique symbolism; silence and austerity.*

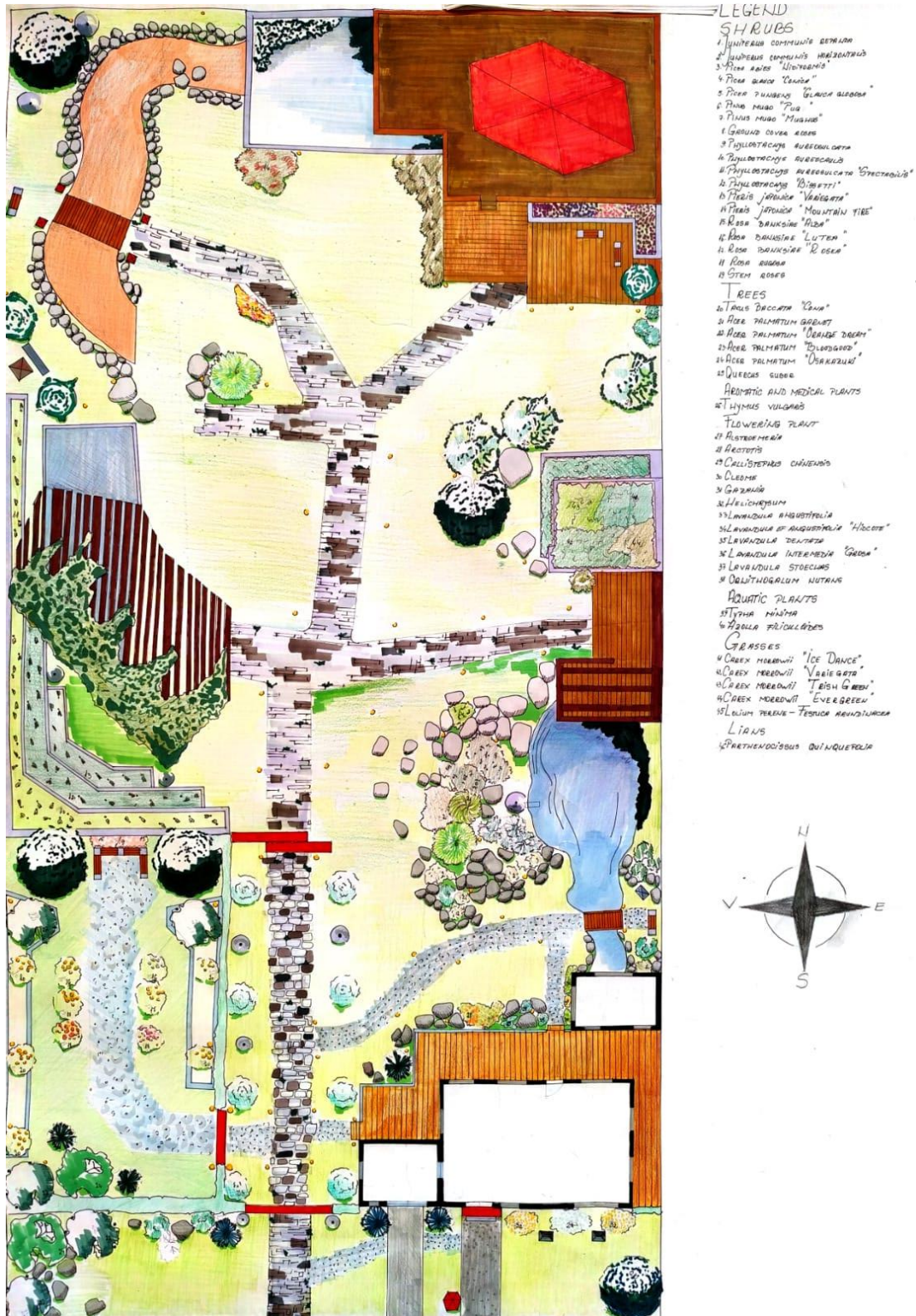


Figure 1. Family garden plan

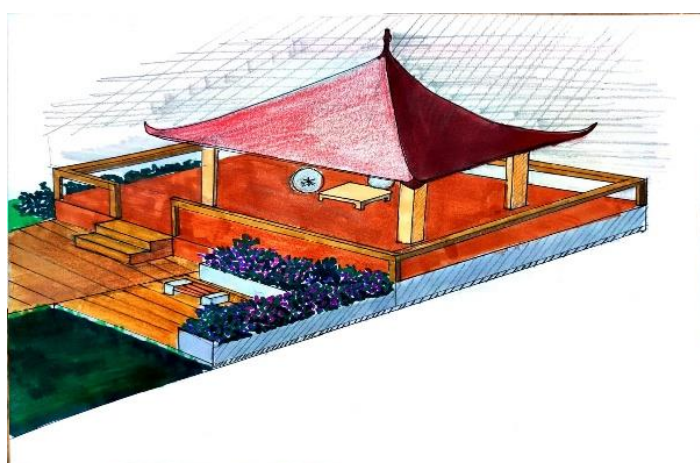


Figure 2. Perspectives and details of the family garden plan

## References

- [1] Barlow, C. (2010). *The Essence of Japanese Gardens*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- [2] Davis, R. (2015). *Feng Shui: A Practical Guide to the Ancient Art of Placement*. New York: HarperCollins.
- [3] D. and Michiko Young, *The art of the Japanese garden*
- [4] Deming, M. Elen, (2015), *Values in Landscape Architecture and Environmental Design*, editura Louisiana St Univ Pr, ISBN 9780-8071-607-87
- [5] Edwards, M. (2012), *The Art of Japanese Garden Design*. Tokyo: Shokokusha Publishing.
- [6] Gunter N, 2007, *Japanese gardens*, editura Taschen
- [7] He, J. (2016), *Principles of Feng Shui in Landscape Architecture*. Beijing: China Architecture & Building Press.
- [8] Kato, H. (2018), *Japanese Garden Design: A Cultural Perspective*. Kyoto: Tuttle Publishing.
- [9] Kurokawa, K. (2015), *The Aesthetics of Japanese Gardens: Nature and Culture in Harmony*. *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, 10(3), 45-58. DOI: 10.1080/18626033.2015.1040243.
- Lee, S. (2014), *The Zen Garden: Creating a Peaceful Outdoor Space*. Boston: Da Capo Press.
- [10] Nakashima, A. (2019), *Landscaping with Japanese Plants*. Tokyo: Kodansha International.
- [11] Natsuni Nonaka, (2008), *The Japanese Garden: The Art of Setting Stone*. *SiteLINES: A Journal of Place*, vol 4, nr. 1, 5-8
- [12] Purinton, H. (2017), *Feng Shui for Modern Living: Balancing Your Environment*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.
- [13] Saito, Y. (2013), *The Philosophy of Japanese Gardening: A Deep Connection with Nature*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- [14] Sue Jeffries, (2022), *Designing, Planting and Using a Therapeutic Garden*, editura The Crowood Press LTD, ISBN 0719841518
- [15] Tanaka, Y. (2020), *Integrating Nature and Humanity: Principles of Japanese Garden Design and Feng Shui*. Osaka: Japan House.
- [16] Takeuchi, S. (2018), *Cultural Significance of Japanese Garden Design: Principles and Practices*. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 15(9), 1873. DOI: 10.3390/ijerph15091873.
- [17] Tenche-Constantinescu, A.-M.; Lalescu, D.V.; Popescu, S.; Sarac, I.; Petolescu, C.; Camen, D.; Horablaga, A.; Popescu, C.A.; Herbei, M.V.; Dragomir, L.; et al. (2024), *Juglans regia as Urban Trees: Genetic Diversity and Walnut Kernel Quality Assessment*. *Horticulturae* 10, 1027. <https://doi.org/10.3390/horticulturae10101027>
- [18] Tenche-Constantinescu, A.-M.; Lalescu, D.V.; Popescu, S.; Sarac, I.; Petrescu, I.; Petolescu, C.; Camen, D.; Horablaga, A.; Popescu, C.A.; Berar, C.; et al. (2024) *Exploring the Genetic Landscape of Tilia Spp. with Molecular and Statistical Tools*. *Horticulturae* 10, 596. <https://doi.org/10.3390/horticulturae10060596>
- [19] Yoshida, T. (2020), *Feng Shui Principles in Japanese Garden Design: A Study of Spatial Harmony*. *Landscape Research*, 45(2), 123-137. DOI: 10.1080/01426397.2019.1657842.
- [20] <https://topingrediente.com/blog-ro/casa-si-gradina-ro/elementele-unei-gradini-japoneze/?srsltid=AfmBOoovzmMv2Tu4DaHZhCmbP9tE9Q1C54wy6QkaoRuvdliWnFRzd8p5#accept>
- [21] <https://www.spatiuconstruit.ro/articol/gradini-japoneze-stiluri-si-simboluri/14263>
- [22] [https://www.gradinamea.ro/principiile\\_zen\\_si\\_gradina\\_japoneza\\_\\_niwa\\_\\_3458\\_537\\_1.htm](https://www.gradinamea.ro/principiile_zen_si_gradina_japoneza__niwa__3458_537_1.htm)
- [23] <https://www.libertatea.ro/lifestyle/-faci-gradina-in-stil-japonez-4472606>
- [24] <https://www.piatraonline.ro/elemente-din-gradina-japoneza>