

homes & gardens

NOW: the Zen garden experience

The history of garden-making in Japan goes back to the sixth century, when hill and pond gardens were introduced from China and Korea and where aristocrats gathered to enjoy poetry and games alongside a stream. Japanese monks further developed gardens into a high art over hundreds of years of temple gardening. They emptied their minds of worldly distractions and came to know themselves in their gardens.

The world's oldest garden manual is the "Sakuteiki," compiled by Tachibanano Toshitsuna in the eleventh century. It describes how to dig waterways, choose plants and site pavilions, make pond bottoms watertight, and keep shoreline rocks from toppling over.

Yoshihiro Kawasaki, of **Zen Gardens** in Richmond, considers himself fortunate to hail from Kyoto, Japan, where a variety of classical garden styles developed and were shaped over time by the blend of Buddhist, Taoist and Shinto traditions. With the assistance of project manager Dorothy Kennedy, Yoshi will arrange rocks, raise hills or plant trees to create an atmosphere of Kyoto gardens in a Western setting. In an ongoing dialogue with the plants and rocks, he positions them as they would want to be positioned. As a designer, he transforms garden spaces in the West into traditional or contemporary designs that reflect his own personality. (Photos of two beautiful creations, shown right.)

Here are a few of his creative ideas for true far-east garden style:

- **THE ZEN-STYLE GARDEN**

The sand and stone Zen gardens are meant to be seen and contemplated from a single stationary point—a place to meditate and be meditated upon. These gardens were introduced in Japan by Buddhist monks in the 11th century, using mainly rocks and sand, with vegetation such as slow-growing evergreen bushes or moss—never trees or flowers.

- **THE STROLL GARDEN**

Enjoyable all year round, these dynamic compositions fluctuate with the seasons, the growth of foliage, and the passage of years. One of the three major styles of Japanese gardens, they contain all the elements that make up the Japanese garden: streams, ponds and waterfalls, stones and bridges, pathways, and a wide variety of plants.

- **THE JAPANESE DRY LANDSCAPE GARDEN**

"Karesansui" (areas without water) gardens reproduce natural sites without actually using water. These descriptive gardens create landscapes suggested by natural scenery.

- **THE COURTYARD GARDEN**

A courtyard garden ("tsuboniwa" in Japanese) is usually enclosed by walls or hedges, and is an extension of your living space. All the natural elements of light, shadow, wind, sound, colour and scent are enclosed in this space, creating an oasis of beauty and tranquility.

Zen Gardens is a Member of the BCLNA and the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association. Contact the company at 604-271-7724.



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