

EVERYDAY FENG SHUI

Feng Shui by Maria

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Feng Shui Gardens - Calming Spaces

“Gardening is how I relax. It’s another form of creating and playing with colors.” Oscar de la Renta

In this hectic world, I have learned the importance of having a space that is calm and healing – your garden can be just that space. The recent rains, with following sunshine have blessed my garden with lush, shiny leaves and a multitude of buds. Shortly I will be swept away into a land of beautiful flowers, intoxicating fragrance and an explosion of color. It’s important to have an outlet where the brain can breathe, and your garden can be this natural outlet. After a long day at work or just taking a break from your home routines, a walk through our garden can relax you and help you defuse any stress you may have been dealing with.

In a garden, all the 5 Feng Shui elements are usually represented, allowing you to feel calm and at the same time energized. This is because gardens are living, breathing entities offering us the balance of nature. As your home, gardens reflect your personal energy; they can either serve to deplete your energy, or they can enhance and energize you.

What aspects of your life would you like to see blossom? What dreams do you need to plant in fertile soil? Do you need to weed or dig out anything that's stifling your growth?

If your home is considered the "heart" of your property, the garden is considered the "aura". Your garden is your personal passport into nature. It keeps you connected to the rhythms of life, while replenishing and sustaining the Ch'i that meanders through your home; whether a flower or vegetable garden, vibrant nature in your yard attracts vibrant Ch'i into your home.

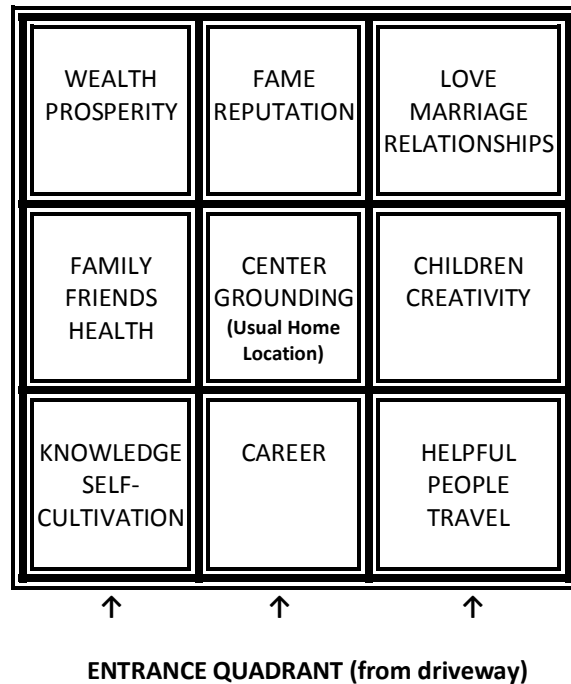
When applicable, use gardens and landscaping to complete the shape of your home. If your home is not a complete square or rectangle anchor the missing areas with a pleasing combination of trees, flowerbeds, garden sculptures, large rocks, decks, patios, fencing, lighting, specialty gardens and/or water features. There is no end to what you can do and the missing area becomes an enhancing outdoor area. Make sure you have an attractive view from every window and door. Be nourished by a lovely view each time you look out; camouflage or screen unsightly views with trees, trellises with climbing vines, and hanging gardens. An inspirational place to rest the eye is a gift you give yourself every day. Basic Feng Shui principles can help you nurture and strengthen your energy and yourself in all aspects of your life.

Here are some Feng Shui basics for nurturing gardens:

- 1) Make the entry beautiful and clutter free
- 2) Place water features in the Career and Wealth areas
- 3) Remove dead plants quickly
- 4) Balance the Yin/Yang of your garden with opposites (short/tall plants, hot/soft colors, etc.)
- 5) Keep all systems working (i.e. watering, lighting – nothing should be broken)

Gardens and the Bagua

The Feng Shui Bagua (Ba-gua) Map, is represented as a grid of nine sectors. The Bagua comes from the Chinese philosophy, "The I Ching," and literally means "eight trigrams", with the center for grounding and centering. Each sector of the Bagua is represented by one of the elements, which can be associated by the shapes and colors of plants and garden art.



Apply the Bagua map on your landscape or garden footprint. When we apply the Bagua to your front door, however for your landscape or garden we use the driveway. The entrance to your garden does not have to be the same direction or angle as your front door. Depending on where your driveway is you will be entering your property from Knowledge, Career or Helpful People. Enhancing the entrance to your home and garden with healthy plants, water features, greeters and curving walkways is one of the most important things you can do to invite energizing Ch'i to your life. Gardens should take on the qualities of the Bagua area they reside in. Here are some examples of using the Bagua to enhance your garden:

Garden Enhancements in Career Area

* Soft colorful plants, reds are particularly auspicious, water features such as 360 degree bubbling fountains or with water flowing toward the house, pots in shiny dark colors, wind chimes, and curved paths or asymmetrical lines

Garden Enhancements in Knowledge and Self Cultivation Area

* Colors of blues, greens, wooden benches, symbols of mountains or large rocks, statues representing spiritual guides, healthy plants with rounded soft leaves, gazing balls, and items that create a quiet meditative feeling

Garden Enhancements in Friends/Family/Health Area

* An abundance of healthy flowers in any color with upright growth (blooming flowers represent perfect health), sitting areas for entertaining, symbols of family, vegetable gardens, herbs, orchard

Garden Enhancements in Wealth Area

* Healthy plants in the purple color spectrum such as Salvia, Lavender, lavender Trumpet Vines or Roses, fountains or waterfalls flowing toward the home, flags or whirligigs to call in the Ch'i

Garden Enhancements in Fame Area

* Plants in colors red, up lighting or twinkle lights, BBQs, fire pits, garden art representing suns, stars, triangles and sculptures of people or animals

Garden Enhancements in Love and Marriage Area

* Pairs of items depicting romance, including bistro tables with two chairs, two lounge chairs, loveseat or sculptures in pairs (avoid single or lonely items), plants in colors of reds, pinks and white

Garden Enhancements in Children and Creativity Area

* Items in metal and plants in colors of white and pastels, whimsical garden art, children's playground or personal garden, workbench, garden bench, fairies, butterflies, nature spirit

Garden Enhancements in Helpful People and Travel Area

* Garden art representing spiritual guides, or desired travel locations (We have a colorful pole with signs pointing to all the places we've traveled), birds, sundials

* Items in metal and white plants

Garden Enhancements in Center Area

* Houses usually occupy the center of the landscape Bagua, but if they don't this is an auspicious area for ceramics, plants in the color yellow, earth tones, rectangle shapes, patios, bricks/pavers, table and chairs

Remember that gardens reflect your personal energy. Look to your garden to see what's shifting in your life, and create a peaceful space to help calm your world.

Affirmations and Inner Work:

This is a perfect time to plant your inner garden. Visualize yourself planting seeds and plants that represent what is important to you. Then tend your inner garden by watering and nurture it with intention and purpose. Then enjoy the fruits of your inner work. Remember that in Feng Shui, intent plays a significant role in enhancing any area of your garden. Intent is the inner work that leads you to a more harmonious life. That's why all enhancements need to be made with intentionality; written or stated affirmations are very important. It is also important for them to be expressed as if they are already happening. Examples of affirmations for the garden are: *"I have clarity of mind", "I am calm and centered", "I take time to relax and breathe."*

Feng Shui at Work:

A client was experiencing active chaos in her garden when I visited. She was preparing for her son's wedding reception which was going to be in her garden. We saw this as an excellent opportunity to apply Feng Shui principles to enhance the Wealth, Fame and Love areas of her garden. She removed tons of clutter, planted numerous purple flowering plants in the left wealth corner, reds in the center fame area and pinks and reds in the right back love area. She further enhanced the wealth area with a soothing bubbling fountain. The love area was where the seating for the bride and groom would be, with beautiful mauve cushions. The crowning touch was the strings of twinkle lights that adorned the trees in the entire back fame area, creating a magical glow over the entire garden. Not only did they have a perfect wedding venue, but now their garden continues to be a calming nurturing space in their lives.

Gardens can evoke friendly memories. When I began planting my garden I asked all my friends and family members what their favorite flower was. I then planted all these in the corresponding areas related to the Bagua. I created a few cozy seating areas, and as each plant blooms I take time to sit and reflect on that person and give thanks for their connection to my life. This is just another way your garden can work to nourish you.

Feng Shui on a Shoestring:

Feng Shui enhancements do not have to cost a great deal. Clearing your property of dead or diseased plants will halt negative energy from coming into your life. Having a place for all tools and garden supplies will help declutter your garden and allow new energy to flow in. Plant just one beautiful, healthy blooming plant, make you affirmations and watch the shift occur.

For questions or home consultations email at mtmccull@aol.com and put "Feng Shui" on the subject line, or visit my website at www.fengshuibymaria.com, or Facebook "Feng Shui by Maria".

Classes:

Learn more about the Bagua and the 5 Elements in my next series of 4 classes through Acalanes Adult Ed:

Thurs. evenings 6:30-8:30 p.m., April 14-May 5. Go to www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/adulted to register.

(Participants will receive \$40 off a home consultation.)

Until then...Blessings!

Maria McCullough - Bio

Maria McCullough, is the owner/founder of **Feng Shui by Maria** (www.fengshuibymaria.com) and is a speaker and educator with over 20 years of experience. She specializes in residential, landscape and business consultations. She is a graduate of the Western School of Feng Shui and has personally trained with Terah Kathryn Collins, founder of the Western School of Feng Shui, specializing in Essential Feng Shui® and author of numerous books including "The Western Guide to Feng Shui."