

## EVERYDAY FENG SHUI

Feng Shui by Maria

May Column

### Enjoying the Feng Shui of Gardens Relieve Stress

So we're staying home and staying safe, but what about our psyche? How are we nurturing ourselves and keeping our spirits up? Taking my socially distancing walks, I slow down to take in my now more peaceful environment. I am surrounded by nature's beauty; vibrant flowers everywhere. I see many of my friends are also posting pictures of their flourishing gardens, and colorful hikes.

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 leaves and a multitude 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 of being shut in at home just taking a walk through the garden can relax you and help you defuse any stress.

My Feng Shui teacher, Terah Collins, posted a Harper's Bazaar.com article on flowers. It states that having fresh flowers in your home can actually reduce levels of pain and stress. A study performed by the American Horticulture Society found that people exposed to flowers had lower blood pressure and heart rate and lower ratings of pain and anxiety. This is why enhancing your home, patio and/or garden with healthy flowers is so beneficial during dark periods of your life.

There are so many things you can do while being sheltered in place; whether you have a garden, a patio or beautiful pots and vases at home you can use the power of plants and flowers to enhance your life. Some suggestions are: Sow flower seeds to attract bees and beautiful birds, plant a vegetable garden, pull weeds, clean, organize and refresh your yard, or patio. If you have children, you can use this home time to teach them gardening skills and love for nature. Cut your own beautiful fresh flowers and arrange them in stunning floral art, then take pictures of your beautiful arrangements. You can also use this time to take an online flower class or read gardening books. I used this time to create a stunning photo book of all my arrangements created in a Flower Design class. Finally just enjoy your garden by strolling through it, taking a nap, meditating or sitting on a favorite bench. Inhale the fragrance and breathe the stress away.

Feng Shui, which has been practiced for over 3,000 years in China, is the enhancement of health, prosperity, and happiness through a connection with your environment. Your vitality, resources, and loving connections flourish and grow best in harmonious environments. Flowers, with their various shapes and colors represent all of the five Feng Shui Elements. When in balance, these five element displays help to calm and energized you at the same time.

If your home is considered the "heart" of your property, the garden is considered the "aura". Your garden is your personal passport into nature. Whether you plant a flower or vegetable garden, the beauty in your outdoor environment attracts vibrant Ch'i into your home.

Basic Feng Shui principles can help you nurture and strengthen your energy and yourself in all aspects of your life. You can surround yourself with flowers in your home, or use some of these suggestions for creating a Bagua in your garden.

## 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.

<b>WEALTH AND PROSPERITY</b>	<b>FAME AND REPUTATION</b>	<b>LOVE AND RELATIONSHIP</b>
<b>HEALTH, FAMILY AND FRIENDS</b>	<b>CENTER AND GROUNDING</b>	<b>CHILDREN AND CREATIVITY</b>
<b>KNOWLEDGE AND SELF- CULTIVATION</b>	<b>CAREER</b>	<b>HELPFUL PEOPLE AND TRAVEL</b>

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**ENTRANCE QUADRANT**

Apply the Bagua map on your landscape footprint, using the driveway as the entrance. This may not be in the same direction 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:

### 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

### 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

### 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

### Enhancements in Wealth Area

\* Plants in the purple color spectrum, fountains or waterfalls flowing toward the home, flags or whirligigs

### 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

### 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

### 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

### 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

### 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

Because the home and garden are so connected, Feng Shui practitioners usually recommend enhancements for both.

- 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)

### Affirmations and Inner Work:

Remember that in Feng Shui, intent, the inner work which leads to a more harmonious life, plays a significant role in enhancing any area of your garden. That's why all enhancements need to be made with intentionality; written or stated affirmations, which are expressed as if they are already happening, are very important. 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:

When my mother passed away a few years ago, a friend gave me a beautiful statue of a cherub. I placed it in the front of my house in my Knowledge and Self Cultivation area and keep it surrounded with flowers. Being at my entrance it nourishes me with beauty and positive memories each time I return home.

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.

Remember that gardens reflect your personal energy. Look to them to help you relieve the stress and help you create a peaceful space calming your world while being sheltered in place. Please stay safe!

For questions or home consultations email at [mtmccull@aol.com](mailto:mtmccull@aol.com) and put "Feng Shui" on the subject line, or visit my website at [www.fengshuibymaria.com](http://www.fengshuibymaria.com), (where you can read past columns and learn more enhancement ideas), or **Facebook "Feng Shui by Maria"**, where I post pictures as examples to enhancements.

\* Check out my **BLOG** – Just go to the website and click on "Blog": You can view many pictures and, I will respond to your questions quickly.

**Maria McCullough** is the owner / founder of Feng Shui by Maria ([www.fengshuibymaria.com](http://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."