

Garden Design with a Feng Shui Eye

Feng Shui, the art of enhancing your life through design, observes that gardens do much more than beautify your home. Gardens promote a general sense of health and well being by bringing the beauty of Nature into your personal space. Here are 9 Feng Shui guidelines to get your started:

1. To enhance serenity and assuage a hectic lifestyle, make privacy a priority. Create a protective garden embrace around the sides and back of your home by choosing plants, walls, and fencing that tuck you into your own intimate “green belt.” Focus on aesthetic ways to privatize even the smallest spaces. Ornamental trees and flowering vines on balconies or decks, or evergreen plants placed just so in the yard can turn any space into a private sanctuary. Pay special attention to also designing a protective landscape that buffers the front of a home located on a busy street, cul-de-sac, or T-junction.
2. Create a beautiful view from every window and door. Place garden statuary and embellishments specifically so that you enjoy them from the house. Garden lighting allows you to also enjoy them at night.
3. Include a water feature in your front yard. Water, symbol of the abundant flow of resources, can be introduced via birdbaths, fountains, urns, ponds, streams, and waterfalls. Choose one that you or a professional service can easily maintain in peak condition.
4. Design the path to your front door that’s at least four feet wide. The generous width symbolizes good fortune, and graciously invites people to approach your home side-by-side, not single-file. Ideally, all entrances into your home have a welcoming appeal. Balance angular architecture with meandering pathways, patios, and garden walls.
5. Include the 5 elements of Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water in your garden design. (See *Five Elements, Nature’s Design* article) Your garden takes on a deeply healing and rejuvenating quality when these elements are all present.

Obviously, most gardens begin with an abundance of the Wood element represented by plants and wooden or rattan furnishings. The Fire element, which enhances conversation and social interaction, is

expressed in lighting, fireplaces, barbeques, garden art depicting people and animals, triangular shapes, and the color red. The Earth element adds a reassuring solidity to the garden and is found in brick, tile, earthenware items, square shapes, earth tones, and the color yellow. The Metal element encourages mental clarity, and is expressed in metal furniture and statuary, rocks, stones, and cement, circular or arched shapes, and white and pastels. The Water element, which brings a spiritual quality into a garden, is present in water features, reflective surfaces, such as glass, crystal, and mirrors, asymmetrical or free form shapes, and black and dark tones.

Combine the 5 elements according to your own tastes to create a one-of-a-kind Feng Shui garden.

6. Consider adding an outdoor fireplace, extending a roofline, or defining an outdoor area to be another “room” in your home. Choose inviting comfortable furnishings that encourage people to spend time in Nature. Check out the many weatherproof containers you can use to conveniently store pillows, pads, and throws outside.
7. When applicable, install gates or open up side yard fences so that you’re not blocked from walking all the way around the house. This enhances a healthy circulation of energy around your property.
8. In Feng Shui, *all* areas of the house and garden are considered of equal importance. Design highly functional, aesthetically pleasing storage areas for trash containers, lumber, tools, and garden supplies.
9. A garden can always be brought indoors. If you live in a condo or a home with immature landscaping, consider creating a room with a garden-like atmosphere. Well-placed arrangements of houseplants can capture the garden theme while softening corners and camouflaging unsightly views.

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