



Garden Feng Shui

By Jini Rayne

Now that those tantalizing warm winter days are past and spring is really arriving it is time to get serious about making our outside spaces as attractive and useful as possible. Many people think of feng shui only in relationship to interior spaces, but the site and situation of your dwelling are actually the foundation of feng shui. If the energy of your home site is askew, then nothing that you do inside can completely make up for it. So let us turn our attention outside and see what insights feng shui can give us.

In a previous article for this publication (Feng Shui Design and Your Home's Entrance, Winter 2016) I dealt with the feng shui of the approach to your home. An article by Laura Esculcas (Creating Sacred space in Your Home or Garden, Spring 2016) might also be of interest. Both are available at www.FineHomesofWNC.com.

There are several signs to look for to determine if the chi of the land surrounding your home is positive. Is there healthy wildlife such as songbirds and perhaps deer or other friendly animals? (Insect infestation, unhealthy or dead birds or animals or scavengers are all negative signs.) Is the vegetation lush and of desirable species? (Scrawny, deformed, diseased, discolored, or scrub

species as well as a barren area are all negative.) If there is a waterway, is it clean and clear, meandering and with healthy fish and vegetation? (Pollution, stagnation, mudiness or a torrential flow are all undesirable.) If there is an issue with the health of any of the previous questions, deal with that first. If all is in order with respect to the health of the chi, we are ready to move on.

It is helpful to make a simple site plan before spending energy and money on your garden. Sketch a drawing of the basics of your home and landscape: the road in front, and the position of your house on the lot. Include the driveway, outbuildings and any pathways as well. Make a copy to use later for planning your dream garden. Go outside and walk around noting on your drawing potential problems such as utility poles and lines. Also note the houses, landscape and businesses that surround your lot. Take some pictures from different angles of problem areas and areas with which you are especially pleased.

There are so many possibilities for garden and yard spaces. Many people want a space to entertain. Does that include a deck or patio, outdoor kitchen or grill, pool, fire pit or something else for you? Do you need a

place for children (or adults) to play? What does that include? Do you want a kitchen or herb garden, a place for perennials or roses? How about a space for quiet and contemplation or perhaps a labyrinth? Make a list of all the important functions your yard needs to perform and see if there is an obvious place for each.

Some people like to clip pictures of plants, arrangements, colors, and features they would ideally like to see in their garden. If you have done this over a period of time it gives you an idea of the look and mood you will like and perhaps some ways to approach your design.

Many people actually have several yards or gardens to consider. The front yard is the most public space, the one that welcomes your guests and gives the first impression as people approach. Keeping it clean and neat shows that you value your home. The back yard may be enclosed and is a more private space. It represents the future, symbolizing what might happen in your future so you want it to be lush and abundant. In feng shui, the left side yard as you face the house from the street is auspicious for a healthy family.

To foster good family relationships it is especially vital to have healthy plants in this area as the wood element is prevalent here. The right side yard is associated with children and creativity so keep it free of clutter. This might be a good place for something fun in your garden.

As you are planning, remember that your home should be the center of the garden. It is ideal if you can easily enter and exit the garden from your home. You want the view from your windows to be attractive and, if you sometimes have your windows open, be aware of the scent of what you plant outside them. A pleasant scent wafting in enhances a beautiful view.

Now look back at your site plan and photos and identify any problems or areas that you need to change for either feng shui or practical reasons. Cutting down a dying tree has both practical and feng shui benefits for example. Crowded plants will need to be thinned; eyesores will need to be disguised or relocated. If the footprint of your house is an irregular shape you will want to plan to fill in any missing areas to complete

the geometry with a deck or garden.

When you are ready, use your second site plan to sketch out your ideal yard and garden plan. Consider how you will enter each section as entrances are inlets for chi in a space. A gate, arbor, archway, trellis or doorway of any kind establishes a bridge to each garden, setting it apart so that it can be dedicated to the purpose you intend. A path that meanders or winds encourages gently flowing nourishing chi rather than a rushing torrent. Judicious use of straight pathways can bring chi to out of the way or hidden areas that lack sufficient energy.

Feng shui has looked to nature for many centuries to use what works best for humans in their interactions with nature. The aim is to foster harmony and balance and to reflect healthy nature in man-made environments. Therefore we wish to echo the shapes, contours and indigenous vegetation of our surroundings. Thus more formal, angular or boxed in gardens which are not found in nature and inhibit the flow of chi are replaced with curves and flowing forms.



Nature consists of contrasts: tall and short plants; rough and smooth, hard and soft textures; long and short views; so use mixtures of shapes, sizes, colors, textures and perspectives. Balance out hotter colors (reds and yellows) with cooler ones (blues and purples), keeping the desired activity level of that part of the garden in mind. Metallic colors (silvers and golds) stimulate prosperity. Be careful not to crowd your plants, honoring each one and allowing room for its mature size. Keep thorny plants away from paths and doorways so as not to snag anyone.

Remember that your garden is not an outdoor area separate from your house. It can be a fertile area for representing symbolically and helping to manifest your goals and desires. By working in harmony with nature in planning and cultivating this space you can establish and maintain a continuous flow of good energy and facilitate creativity, health, joy, opportunity, connection and opportunity for your whole family.

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