

HEAVENLY GARDENS



**SPIRITUAL-SCIENTIFIC INDICATIONS
FOR LANDSCAPE DESIGN**

by
ENZO NASTATI

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PART ONE

LAYOUT AND TYPE OF THE GARDEN

1) INTRODUCTION

Gardens have always evoked deep inner experiences. “Giardino” in Italian means ‘garden’ but also paradise or Eden. Being in a garden, living in it, sensing its forms, colours, sounds and transformations, lifts us to a heightened heavenly state of soul and spirit. In the same way that ascending to the spiritual world is an individual process so each garden is unique and unrepeatable, given that whoever experiences it is also unique and unrepeatable. That is why there can be no such thing as a standard garden.

In our times the garden has received a purely aesthetic appreciation, but it can still be a bridge between the human at home and the world - either external and mundane or spiritual. This means that the garden must have characteristics which can harmonise people with the being of the house and with the surrounding beings, and all this on many levels. Being a bridge means fulfilling the ‘mercurial’ function of mediating and communicating between a centre (which in this case represents *Salt*)¹ and a periphery (*Sulfur*). Bear in mind that the *mercurial* process also means hygiene and healing.

For these reasons the garden must perform a hygienic function at the very least. In other words it instils a sense of wellbeing and harmony within those who live there. However, its fuller potential is to heal. Not only can a harmonious garden inhibit negativity from getting a foothold but it can bring beings into a greater resonance with

¹ Salt, Mercury and Sulfur are the three base processes or *tria principia* of nature: specifically – salt: the separation from the cosmos, hardening to the point of sclerosis; sulphur: expansion towards the cosmos to the point of hallucination; and mercury: the interchange between the two, the therapeutic process of *solve and coagulo*.

the world of the spirit. It must help life processes flourish at the same time as filtering out aspects which distract the capacity for inner concentration.

When we are born Nature is all around us, offering itself as a divine spatial and temporal gift, which means that Nature is the necessary and sufficient tool for the human to reconnect with God. From this point of view one could say that a garden is – or can be - Nature refined by the human.

A garden should be planned considering both space (layout) and maturation over time (succession of plants), and these two aspects need to be alloyed within a developing artistry. Designing a garden means creating the conditions in which that which is healthy and healing can become evident. This must be developed according to definite spiritual laws which then become manifest in hedges, borders, woods, ponds, lawns and benches, etc.

To achieve this it is not enough to insert certain pre-assigned features, such as plants carrying particular planetary or zodiacal influences. Rather all the features must be integrated in a dialogue across several levels. Depending on the circumstances, therefore, we need to decide whether we are aiming for the garden to make a soul type of connection (if, for example, the people are to experience soul rebalancing processes in the garden) or a spiritual harmony (if the inhabitants intend to enhance their own spiritual elevation). One could also design for the etheric plane, the plane of life. All this is dependant upon understanding how the plants relate to each other on the various levels.

Thus the garden can become an authentic distillate of cosmic laws.

It is worth pointing out that without sufficient understanding of what is effective in terms of subtle forces, or if you do not want to impart a definite direction or purpose to the garden, it is always good to use plants linked to the Sun, namely plants that can balance and generally sustain any location - unless they give a boost that is too concentrated.

Plants linked to the Sun will be identified in the next section of this work.

2) HOW TO BEGIN

If in the design of an agricultural organism it is important to consider what the place is calling for, to recognise the specific need of that place, the *genius loci*, then in garden design this consideration becomes fundamental.

But we must be careful not to be one-sided, because if we focus only on one purpose without introducing any new elements, any regenerative prospects, we end up by closing the door to the possibility of evolution.

Therefore, true artistry is needed to bring in the touches that guide the whole to evolve. For example faced with a perfectly proportioned and symmetrical house, we can easily understand that the most suitable garden is one which is also symmetrical: the classical “italianate” garden. However, if we achieve a perfect italianate garden everything can end up ‘stuck’, unable to develop, to change and bring about further change. So we need to study the laws related to zones, forms, colours, symmetries and asymmetries.

Symmetry acts to enhance the etheric plane, the plane of life, while *asymmetry* stimulates the soul plane, the astral world². It is particularly important to pay attention to the quality of the soul forces that are at work in a garden.

A garden with a strong contrast between *light and shade* works between the conscious and subconscious, and the interface between these two realms corresponds to the human diaphragm. In a pergola we can experience the dynamics between the human conscious and subconscious. That is why it is important to place something nearby that elevates, so that the person passing through it experiences the triumph of the conscious over the subconscious. We can use a column, a cypress tree or a statue for this purpose. Naturally the choice of plants to use is by no means trivial and we will talk about this later. *Wisteria pergolas*, for example, have a very distinct effect, which can be inferred from the fact that the flowers with their inebriating perfume hang down and the plant grows in a spiral. Its tendrils also twist as they grow, an image of a distortion of the thinking faculty. The intense perfume of wisteria confuses the senses, and the twisted trunk distorts the soul in its self-determination. For these reasons this plant must be considered strongly luciferic³. On the other hand, if the pergola is made with rambling roses, this negativity is purified as the rose represents Mary’s purification from blood-related, luciferic desires and passions. What we said in other words is that the pergola acts on the metabolism, so it works on the lower

² By astral world we mean our lower sphere linked to the wandering stars, the planets. This corresponds principally to the Moon, Mercury and Venus, whereas the outer planets are linked to the spiritual plane. The seven planets together constitute the complete world of the soul. In this writing the two terms are treated the same.

³ Lucifer is the obstructive entity who works by seduction and distortion, preventing a conscious and correct entry into the spiritual worlds.

human. From this we learn that the same plant, placed in different locations, performs different functions.

We mentioned above that the first thing to do when designing a garden is therefore to appreciate the *genius loci*, the spiritual entity that lives in that environment. The *genius loci* is all of the elemental beings⁴ and other entities that thrive in a given place. Previous human settlements and buildings often lead to environmental imbalance, a disequilibrium which has an impact on these beings causing disturbance and disharmony. The least we can do, when designing a garden, is to try to mitigate such damage, restoring the lost harmony and creating the conditions for Nature's beings to stick around and work with life.

To assess the *genius loci* and so understand the purpose of a place, the ancient Latins used to observe the movements of a flock of sheep for a whole year in the area where they planned to build their settlement.

To understand any place we need to take time to observe it, doing this in such a way that our own thoughts don't influence our impressions in any way. A moment will come in which an impression of what is outside will converse with its image inside us, because everything is originally One and the impact of this unity is still in us. This is the so-called Goethean method of observation.

When making a garden we may find ourselves in the situation of starting from scratch or renovating an existing one. When renovating we have the advantage that we are often surrounded by mature trees. These must be treated with the greatest respect because they symbolise the I principle in the garden⁵. The dominant plants are the memory of the place and keep its continuity: they are like old respected sages.

We often find ourselves in situations where the structures and buildings are already in place and it is very hard to establish a garden in the space that is left, especially when it needs to play a healing role and help the imbalances manifested in the existing layout.

Modern buildings usually have a lot of hard edges. Such perfectly straight edges are representative of the power of thought. The more pervasive such lines are, the

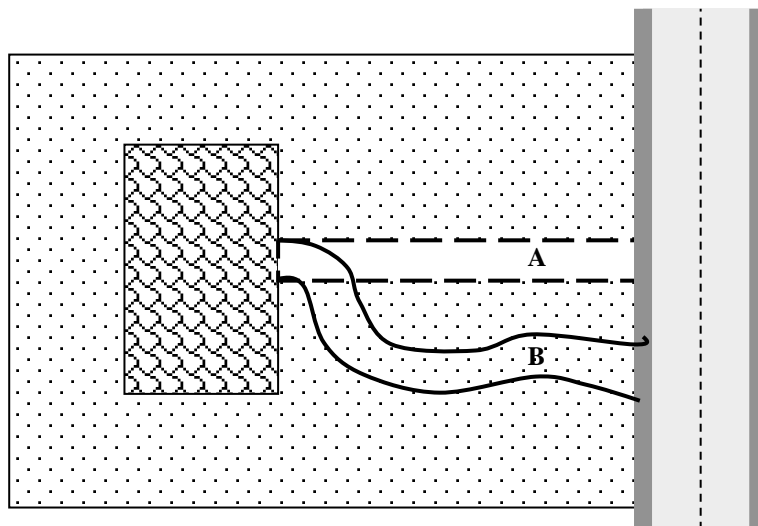
⁴ Elemental beings are etheric-soul beings who, in their work of service to their superiors, "construct" nature and make visible its processes. They are linked to the four philosophical Elements: beings of Earth, Water, Air and Fire. See the author's book, "*Elemental Beings. Their Origin, Activities Transformation, and the Role of Man.*"

⁵ The I principle of spiritual individuality is what makes us specifically human. It manifests in the self and answers the three ancient questions: Who am I? Where am I going? What am I doing?

more it stimulates abstract, mechanistic, inert thinking, so it needs to be balanced by a very “ethereal” garden. Let us remember that in Nature there are no straight lines (apart from rays of sunlight). They are a human abstraction.

Even a *driveway* to the house can offer several options. In the example depicted below we can assess the different impacts of two different types of driveways to the house. Choosing a straight path like example “A” has an effect on the physical-etheric plane, while a type “B” path works on the soul plane. Path B consists of three curves, representing the three soul faculties of Thinking, Feeling and Willing⁶, and can create a tension between these three soul faculties, by way of the different radii of the curves.

If three rising steps are placed at the end of the path at the entrance to the house, these will symbolise the elevation of the spirit as it also has its threefold expression⁷.



2 different types of driveways

3) SMALL (BUT IMPORTANT) THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND

A garden should invite one to enter and explore it. It is best if the structures and paths echo the building materials of the house. The “inert” fittings, the physical part,

⁶ These three soul faculties are its threefold expression. Thought is related to the brain, feeling to the chest and will to the limbs.

⁷ This threefold division is between is between the entities of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost that correspond to our spiritual parts (to be developed): Spirit Man, Life Spirit and Spirit Self (or Higher Self).

should correspond to the style of the house. If the house is built of concrete the walkways should also be in cement. This rule of thumb should be tempered by giving a “touch” of something new and dynamic that allows the whole to evolve. In the example above, concrete blocks can be laid out in different geometric forms, appropriately arranged.

When designing a garden the different environmental factors must be kept in mind: climate (rain, wind, temperature), the landscape (plains, mountains), aspect of the hillsides and so forth.

We also must be careful not to neglect the nature of neighbouring gardens because, however harmonious it may be in itself and although everyone has the right to plant the garden they want, if this garden clashes with its immediate neighbours it will strike a discordant note in the area as a whole. If you really dislike the style of the neighbouring gardens you can at least make sure there is a transition, the most harmonious “crossover” possible between the different styles. This can also be applied to the transition between gardens and fields.

It is fundamental that before planning a garden we really be clear “who” will be using it. If it is a private garden it must take account of the temperament, aspirations and ideals of the owners so that the garden resonates with and stimulates their higher processes. On the other hand if it is a public garden we must think of the needs of the casual stroller. If the garden is for a general hospital it must promote healing, but if it is for a children’s nursery it must be laid out noting that children have not yet developed the principle of the self.

Furthermore, we need to observe the garden from at least three or four different viewpoints. The view should be harmonious from all points and for this to happen we need to thoroughly investigate the zones and views and aspects.

How can one mitigate the one-sidedness of a totally symmetrical house, as in the following example? How can we give it movement to allow it to evolve?

Mark Moodie Publications

Telephone - UK: 0207 1934697 Email: mark@moodie.biz

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Mark