

BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN

A Guide for Teachers

GARDEN EXPLORATIONS

WELCOME TO BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN! This is a living museum. What have we put on display?

Our Garden is described as being “many gardens within a garden” because many of our plants are collected in individual garden spaces. Follow this guide to explore a few of them! Your students will discover what makes the gardens unique as they walk through and look at them.

Questions (?) are provided as entry points to encourage student observations, inquiries, and conversations about what they are observing and feeling.

A garden is a designed space, created by people. It leaves an impression on those who visit, offering an experience they will always remember.

Enjoy your exploration at Brooklyn Botanic Garden today!

What is a garden?

A garden may be planted for one or many purposes. The gardener may choose plants that can be eaten, plants that smell good, plants that provide shade, or plants that are beautiful to look at.

Plants are important parts of gardens, but they are not the only things the gardener includes: Look for water features like fountains and ponds, special gates, or statues. Are there places to sit and rest? The gardener wants you to stay and enjoy being here awhile. Are there many winding paths? You need to walk down them to experience what the gardener has created for you.

Start your garden exploration by asking students these questions:

- ? If it was your job to plant the garden, what sort of plants would you choose?
- ? A garden can be like a room. What is in your room at home that is useful? What is in your room for decoration?
- ? What would you put in your garden besides the plants you choose?

One Garden: One Place

Begin exploring any garden; see map with a list of gardens on back. Ask students these questions in any of the gardens you visit:


- ? How does being in this garden make you feel?
- ? Look around this garden. Find a plant you like. Why did you choose that plant? How many plants like that are there in this garden?
- ? Do you think the garden looks the same all year? What might be different about it in another season?
- ? If you could only use three words to describe this garden, what would they be?

TELL A STORY


Pretend that this garden belongs to you. Tell a story about how you chose the plants and about the other things you put in the garden for people to enjoy and learn about.

Many Gardens to Explore...


Rock Garden

- ? Yes this garden does have a lot of rocks! How are the plants placed around the rocks? 
- ? Are the plants mostly big or mostly small or all different sizes? Are there plants that are taller than you are? Shorter than you are?
- ? What colors do you see in this garden today? What colors are coming from the plants? What colors are the rocks?
- ? Is everything in this garden located on one level? Are there parts of it that are higher or lower?
- ? Is there a place for water? What is it like? Is the water moving or still?

Rose Garden

- ? What special kind of fence and gates does this garden have? 
- ? Are all the roses the same? How are they different from one another? Do all of them smell the same?
- ? There is more than one type of path to walk on: some are made with bricks, and some with grass. How do these types feel different under your feet?
- ? Roses are given very interesting names. Choose one name that you find beautiful, or funny, or curious. Look at the rose that was given that name. Why does the rose have that name?

Fragrance Garden

- ? Find the leaves on the plants. How are they shaped? Are they round or pointy? Do they look like circles or feathers? 
- ? Can you describe the shape of this garden? Hint: Look at the shape of the lawn in the middle.
- ? Is there a fountain in this garden? What do you like about it? Is the sound the water makes loud or soft?
- ? This garden was created to be accessible for people with visual impairments or for people who use wheelchairs. What can you find in this garden that makes it easier for those people to enjoy the plants?

Two Gardens: Two Worlds

Shakespeare Garden and Japanese Hill-and-Pond Garden

Many ideas and experiences influence how a gardener creates a garden. A garden very often reflects the cultural and historic heritage of the person who plants it. These two gardens are steps away from each other but a world apart!

Use the questions below to guide your observations in the gardens individually; afterwards, engage students in a discussion of how the two compare.

The Shakespeare Garden: Welcome to the Writer's Home



William Shakespeare, famous for the plays and poetry he wrote, lived in England 500 years ago. He and his family had a garden like this one just outside the doorway of their home.

- ? Look at all of the different plants. Why do you think the family chose to grow these particular plants? What could these plants be used for?
- ? Are the plants growing close together or far apart? Do you like the way they are grouped?
- ? Look down at the pathway you are walking on. Can you describe the pattern of the bricks? What else in the garden is made of bricks?
- ? Find the fountain in the garden. What is the sculpture on top? Do you think the birds like the fountain?

The Japanese Hill-and-Pond Garden: A Mirror of Nature



Begin your exploration of this garden from the Viewing Pavilion. Then, exit to your left and follow the pathway through the garden.

- ? What parts of the garden can you see when you look out at it from the Viewing Pavilion? Describe them.
- ? How does the water make you feel?
- ? What colors do you see in this garden today? Is there one color you see more than any other?

- ? Do you see a lot of flowers in this garden? Are there a lot of trees and shrubs?
- ? As you walk through this garden, your view of the garden changes. Which part of this garden is your favorite?
- ? There are lanterns in this garden made of stone and wood. Each one has its own special shape and decoration. There are several bridges in this garden, each one designed in its own unique way. What do you like about the lanterns and bridges? Did you find other structures and sculptures in the garden? Describe them.

Compare and Contrast:

- ? How are the choices Shakespeare made when deciding which plants to grow in his garden different from the plant choices made by Takeo Shiota, the person who created this Japanese garden?
- ? Can you see all the parts of the Shakespeare Garden by standing in one place? Can you see all of the Japanese Hill-and-Pond Garden by standing in one place?
- ? Which garden is planted with more flowers? Which garden is planted with more trees and shrubs?
- ? These two gardens were created by different gardeners for different reasons. What do you think the two gardeners were imagining when they planned and planted these gardens? What do you think they wanted visitors to enjoy about their gardens?



Garden Design Activities

Take a Picture



Did you bring a camera to the Garden today? Even if you didn't, you can still take a picture with your imaginary camera! When we use an imaginary camera we save the picture in our minds instead of on film. Demonstrate for students how to use their hands to make a frame. Students can frame their favorite view of each garden they visit. Encourage them to experiment with their finger frames: do they frame a larger scene if the frame is closer to their face or farther away? How do they include or exclude parts of the garden by shifting their frames?

Create a Postcard



During your visit, students took imaginary pictures, framing their favorite views of each garden. Now, they can use those images to create a postcard with a view of their favorite garden. Each student needs a piece of heavy paper, such as oaktag (file folders are suitable), cut to a postcard size, 4 x 6 inches. On one side of the card, students should write a brief note to someone in their family or a friend about their visit to the garden, and draw a picture on the other side of the card. They should include a description of something special they saw in the garden, such as a bird or a statue or a flower.

Read Some Books

THE GARDENER by Sarah Stewart, Illustrated by David Small. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997

A child sent to live in NYC with her uncle and homesick for the plants of her countryside home creates a garden in a secret place.

MISS RUMPHIUS story and pictures by Barbara Cooney. New York: Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, 1982

Miss Rumphius travels the world to come home to do one more thing... make the world more beautiful


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Brooklyn Botanic Garden

 **OSBORNE GARDEN** When the gardener planned the places in this garden for the plants to grow and for people to walk, did the gardener use a lot of straight lines or curvy lines? What is the shape of the big lawn in the middle? Which plants help to keep the pathways on either side of the lawn shaded?

 **NATIVE FLORA GARDEN** Have you ever seen any of the plants in this garden? Before Brooklyn had streets and a lot of buildings, this is what the land looked like! Where else can you see trees in Brooklyn?

 **ROSE GARDEN** See inside


 **CHERRY ESPLANADE** The lawn in this garden is special because visitors can sit on it. What do you see when you lean back and look up at the sky?


 **HERB GARDEN** The two square beds in the center of this garden are planted in a pattern called a knot. What is knot-like about this pattern? What shapes can you find in it?

 **JAPANESE HILL-AND-POND GARDEN**
See inside

 **SHAKESPEARE GARDEN** See inside


 **FRAGRANCE GARDEN** See inside


 **MONOCOT BORDER** Plants from all over the world are growing in our Garden. Find the places where these plants came from on the labels in front of them. How did these plants get here?

 **LILY POOL TERRACE** What are the colors of the flowers that you see planted around the lily pools? What are the shapes of the flowers?

What colors are the flowers and leaves of the water-lilies? How do you think it would feel to be floating on top of the water as they do?

 **ROCK GARDEN** See inside

 **CHILDREN'S GARDEN** The gardeners who created this garden were between the ages of three and seventeen. If you had your own space in this garden, what would you choose to plant?

 **DISCOVERY GARDEN** Can you find a place in this garden where you can see your friends and your teacher but they can't see you?

For more information about using the Garden as an extension of your classroom, contact our Teacher Education Coordinator at 718.623.7235. Take a virtual tour of the many gardens of Brooklyn Botanic Garden on the web at bbg.org