

HOLISTIC GARDENING

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESS



A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

MILES TRENCH

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PREFACE

'ALL GARDENS ARE A FORM OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY.'

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN- (1830 – 1897)

Welcome to the five principles of holistic gardening.

I have been a passionate organic gardener for over thirty-five years. My first memories are of my father's fruit orchard in Marden, South Australia. The deep alluvial loam grew magnificent plums, apricots, peaches and nectarines. In fact, everything we planted grew well. And I fondly recall our early morning trips to the East End market in the 1970s, the ute loaded up with half-cases full of ripe, juicy fruit ready to sell.

My grandfather had established an extensive market garden in Uraidla, in the Adelaide Hills. He taught my father about using nature to help grow healthy organic produce. And in turn, I learned from my dad. In fact, most 'green thumbs' of the older generation have a wealth of valuable experience and advice to offer – if we only take the time to ask.

Over the years I have applied these and other techniques I have discovered and was finally inspired to gather all the ideas together into one book. And now I would like to share this knowledge and add my own little bit of 'green to the dream'.

Ho-lis-tic (hō-līs'tīk) *adj.* : *Emphasizing the importance of the whole and the interdependence of its parts.*

This book is about holistic gardening; about having a real connection with the environment and the plants that you grow. A healthy garden is a place of beauty that reflects the personality of its creator and carer. Yet, like a child left to fend for itself, it may run wild or even perish.

But a garden should also be a place to grow wholesome and chemical-free food. After all, there is simply nothing better tasting or more nutritious than produce from the very own food garden you have created at home.

The five principles we use are based on age-old wisdom. They draw on a range of positive natural energies that promote vigorous and healthy plant growth and development. They are:



Gardening holistically prepares us for an understanding that every day we have the opportunity to decide how we interact with our immediate environments. And to realise that we can *choose* to grow and eat organic produce – produce that we have nurtured and grown ourselves in our own garden space and with our own hands.

How to use this book

Firstly, it's important to think about how much time you have and the type of garden you would like to create. The greatest success in all your ventures will only come from what you can manage and maintain. Start small, think big! And nature will provide wonderful rewards daily that will bring a lasting joy.

Each chapter describes a fundamental principle and how it fits into the overall concept of holistic gardening. Together they form a step-by-step guide on improving and maintaining soil fertility and plant vitality, thereby increasing productivity. The more of each principle you adopt, the greater the satisfaction, rewards and success you will find in all of your gardening endeavours.

If you can't wait to begin turn to chapter 6 – Putting it all Together – which is a summary of the five principles and outlines the basic strategies for creating your very own fresh food garden at home.

Good luck and long may your garden grow



CHAPTER ONE



FENG SHUI IN THE GARDEN

Feng Shui is the study of our environment and its influence on our everyday lives. The ancient Chinese discovered that aspects of landform, compass direction, position, placement and time; all impact on our health and prosperity and even the way we think and feel. They believe that *chi*, the basic life-force, acts as an unseen energy that ebbs and flows according to the influence of the natural and man-made features of our environment.

Landform

Centuries ago, Chinese sages noticed that different landforms affected the inhabitants of that region in different ways. They found that certain natural features like mountains, rivers, the ocean and others, all contributed particular energies to a place. They discovered the combined influence of favourable landforms fostered positive energies.

And when homes were built in locations to take advantage of these positive energies, greater prosperity and harmony could be achieved. Today we can access this ancient wisdom by taking a close look at the landforms and structures that surround our gardens, and then assess the type of energies that may therefore be affecting the site.

The first step is to take note of any major landforms or structures that are in close proximity to your garden. Are there large buildings or trees throwing shade across your backyard? Are there high fences creating dark and moist spots or are there dry, barren open areas? Perhaps there are no structures, trees or buildings nearby at all. This may allow the wind to whip in, causing chaos and destruction. The influences of all nearby landforms and structures should be considered in your garden layout and design, or when attempting to fix any problems already present.



Bare open grassland VS Cramped, cityscape

Feng Shui is about recognising the different types of chi and using good chi, or *sheng chi* as it is called, to help improve our quality of life and to encourage worthwhile and beneficial relationships and outcomes. Feng shui is about intuition; it is about feelings and balance. It is about connecting with nature and being aware of the energies and natural systems all around us. We shall learn how we can use these ideas and systems in a positive and rewarding way to enhance our enjoyment of our gardens at home.

In the garden, feng shui offers guidelines for the correct placement of plants and features in order to create an *auspicious* or favourable environment. For example, growing food plants in the most appropriate position improves vitality and increases productivity. Everything in the garden is linked to everything else. All other factors surrounding the garden affect the living things within. Similarly, our gardens have a direct impact on *our* well-being and outlook on life. The vital tool here is intuition; do what seems right, use what seems to fit. If you like flowers, plant flowers; if cacti and succulents are your thing, then grow those. And *do* listen to your heart, as it will always know what's best for you.

Compass Directions

After we have looked at the influences of landforms and adjoining structures in our immediate environment, we next consider the compass directions and their importance in tending the plants we grow. Compass direction plays an essential role in determining the passage and flow of chi, and the types of energies that will affect the different parts of the site.

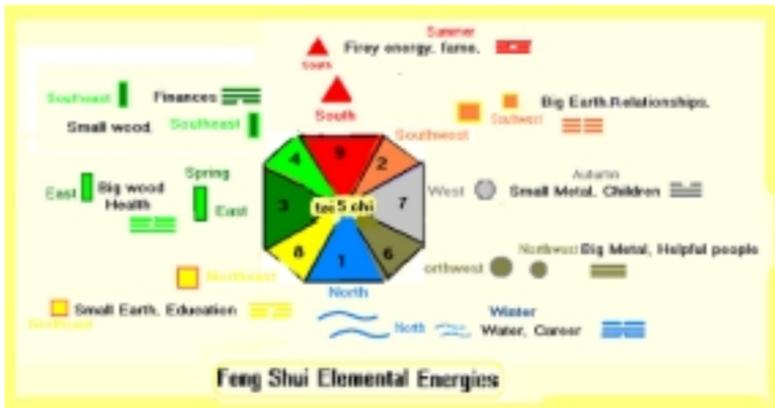
Feng Shui compass colour chart



Note: In feng shui, **south** is always positioned at the top of the compass

Each main compass direction has its own number, its own special properties and particular characteristic energies. By referring to these when planting and in landscape design, we are better able to understand the invisible, natural forces that are at work. We can then plan to use those areas that are supportive to plant growth and development.

In feng shui, there are *five basic elements*. They are: **Fire, Earth, Metal, Water** and **Wood**, and each of the eight main compass directions manifests one of these energies. North is a water energy, south reveals fire, east and south-east are of wood, west and north-west are metal and the north-east and south-west are earth energies.



To determine the influences of the different energies and where they are found in your garden, you will need a pen or pencil, some paper and a compass.

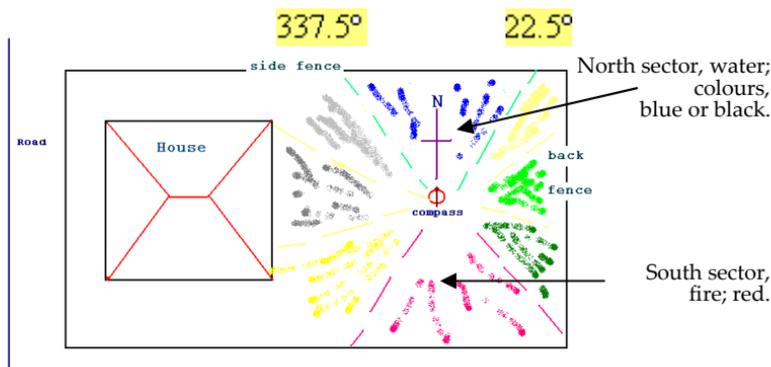
Feng Shui Sectors

- 1 Take your compass (first set it up so that the **red line** points directly to the north (N) and stand (as near as practical) in the middle of your garden.
- 2 Hold the compass out level; rotate until you are facing due north. **Stop.** The space directly in front of you is the north *sector*, or in feng shui terms the north *palace*. Directly behind lies the south palace; to your left is the west sector and on your right, all the way to the boundary, is what's known as the east sector or palace.
- 3 Make a note of where an imaginary line representing the edge of each compass sector would intersect your property boundary – position a rock or stake at these places (against the inside of the fence for example), to temporarily mark these spots.
- 4 From this you can determine the directional energies that influence each part of your garden. For example (when you are facing north), if the entrance to your garden is on your left, then your garden faces west. Alternatively, if (still facing north) your back fence lies ahead, that means the entry to your garden is from the south, and so on.

The direction that your garden faces is important, because it is where chi first enters and so will determine the predominant form and character of the energy entering the space within.

- 5 Now draw up a mud-map of your garden showing these compass lines. Divide your garden into sections according to the areas representing each directional sector (this shows the areas of influence).
- 6 For example; north covers the area between 337.5° – 22.5° on the compass. So the area inside (between the two imaginary border lines), encompasses your north sector. The north-east sector lies between 22.5° – 67.5° on the compass dial and so on.
- 7 You can then determine the predominant characteristic energies of each sector according to the nature of their particular influences.

A mud-map showing areas of direction



***The most auspicious sectors for plants are:
the east, south-east, south and north.***

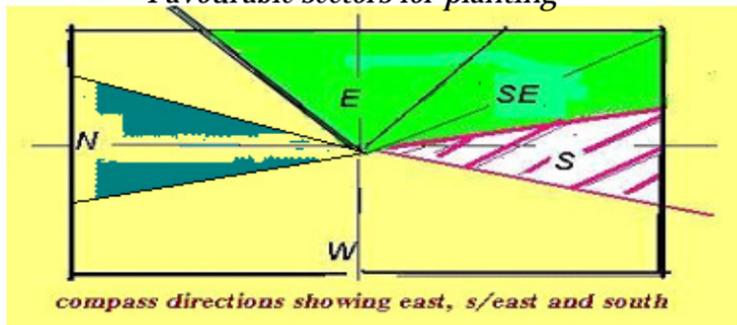
The **eastern** part of the garden is a wood sector. Its colour is green. It represents the health aspect of our lives. This is a very favourable area to plant. It is a good idea, if possible, to set up your veggie patch or fruit trees in the eastern sector of your block.

The **south-east** is also a wood sector. In Feng Shui it represents your finances or wealth. So it is of benefit to keep this area clean and tidy and that healthy, life-sustaining plants become a feature of this sector. Food plants, especially, encourage and attract prosperity; as they embody fruitfulness and abundance.

The **south** is a fiery zone; its colour is red. The natural manifestation of this section is fire. It represents fame and reputation in our lives. Wood feeds fire, and having red flowering shrubs or bushes in the southern part of your garden will foster increased fiery chi and recognition.

The **north** is a water sector; and so it has a natural affinity with wood. Water is vital for growth and so it supports the east and south-east sectors. North is the direction that generates career luck. So it is of benefit to have a water feature, for example, a small pond or fountain there to energise the positive chi in the area and encourage career good fortune.

Favourable sectors for planting

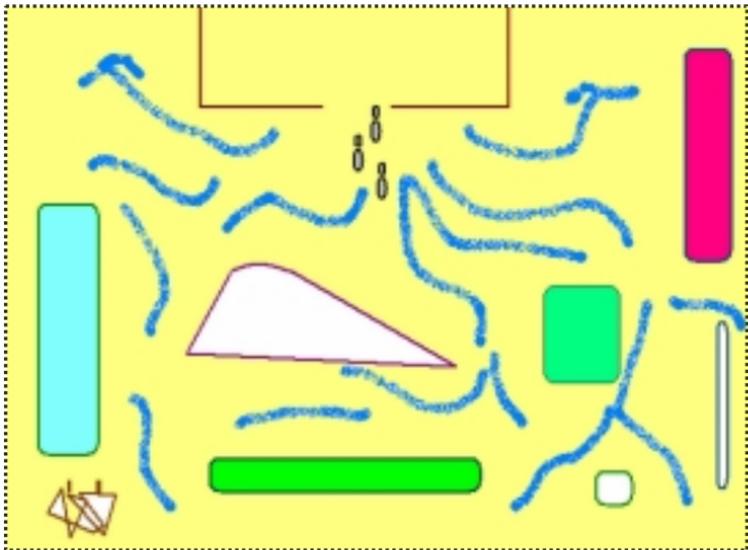


Position

With the idea that: 'A healthy garden supports a healthy house'¹ it is very important to consider the overall layout of your garden.

The entrance to your garden represents your 'public face' or how others see you. It is advantageous to have an open, inviting entrance; one that welcomes the visitor and leads them to a pleasant, agreeable area. The flow of chi should meander in, following a gently curving and unobstructed path. Refrain from using spiky plants or thorny bushes to line the path or entry to your garden.

Flow of chi



Because the entry pathway is the 'mouth' of chi entering your garden, it should be free of snags or dips and be made of natural material. A dead-straight, concrete or hard-surfaced path leading directly into your garden will encourage *sha chi* which is a destructive and forceful negative energy. Try to match the path materials with the source energy of the compass direction. For example, if your entrance is from the east (which is a wood energy), use bark chips or sleepers laid flat as the base material for your path. Thus the wood energy is enhanced and increases the flow of positive energy.

'If it catches your eye, ears, nose or any of your senses, it alters chi.'² If you are designing a new garden or entrance, keep in mind the effect you would like to create.

Good garden Feng Shui incorporates aspects from each of the five elemental energies together in a harmonious setting.

Divide your garden into sections or 'rooms'. In each room, include a representation of each of the energies: earth, metal, water, wood, and fire. Let each room have a theme or 'feel'; include: 'Any reference which speaks to you.'³ also consider these important influences: Seasons, Energies, Colours, Balance.





Seasons

The path of the sun is very important in planning where to place your veggie patch. Does your spot receive full sun all day, or perhaps just in the morning or late afternoon? To grow strong vegetables you need plenty of sunlight every day. Generally speaking, the greater the amount of sunlight (exposure to the sun) the healthier the crop will be. Have a careful look at your site. Are there overhanging tree branches that may be causing excessive shade? Is there a high fence that may prevent the morning or afternoon sun from shining through? Maybe the actual space is too narrow to allow enough light to enter?

Aim for sun most of the day. If that's not possible, try for most of the morning and early afternoon sun. Remember that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west: so that a plot running north-south will receive a more even exposure. Remember also that there are seasonal differences, as the sun's path and where it ultimately sets is slightly different during each season. Check out the areas in your garden that are always damp or where the soil stays dry. Is this due to a lack of, or maybe too much sun?

* See the following web sites for more information:

<http://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/mathstatmodels/examples/SunPath.html>

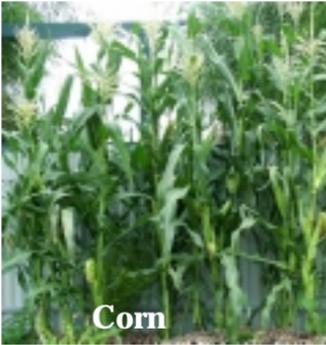
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daytime_\(astronomy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daytime_(astronomy))



Seasonal Differences

Allowing for seasonal differences means planting crops and flowers at the appropriate time and season. Spring and summer plantings include all the sun-loving veggies – tomatoes, capsicums, pumpkin, squash, corn, beans and melons. While in autumn or winter, plan to grow cauliflowers, cabbages, leeks, onions, peas and beetroot.

A bountiful harvest



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W I N T E R

Cold, always cold, she-dock
waits anticipating a new day.
Pale sun creeps like a lead
balloon over the rim of sky.

Petalled power of one, all
seeing, never forgiven, lying alone
on a bed of sand – rasp and slough
the pattern over and over.

Too late? Warm humanity expunges,
laying down a cold hard hand to
remove beauty as a dry spittle;
Over all frigid time nods and wavers.

Where to in this forest of uncertainty?
Nymph and Dryad nibble and tear, the
soft undergrowth caught between teeth
clenched sharp,
like a memory, bitter piercing and final.



Energies

The diagrams below show Feng Shui 'Elemental Cycles'



Feng Shui Elemental Cycle

Elemental Cycles

These diagrams represent the directional energy flow of the five basic energies, from one element to the next. On the support side, the elements flow in a sustaining pattern and provide power and vigour to enhance the next energy in the cycle. So that wood 'feeds' fire, and fire 'creates' earth, and earth 'generates' metal; while metal 'engenders' water, and so on. Conversely, in the 'destructive cycle' the elements react negatively; serving to break down and hamper the next element in the series: metal 'cuts' wood; water 'quenches' fire; fire 'destroys' metal, and so on.

If we incorporate supportive elements in the right locations, we serve to enhance and increase the innate positive energies of that part in the garden.

Enhancing an elemental energy by introducing a supportive element is a fundamental principle in Feng Shui.

If you would like to enhance a wood sector in your garden and thereby augment your health (in the east) or finances (the south-east sector), then add some water energy. If an earth sector (the north-east or south-west part of your garden) needs a lift, then fire in some red, purple or orange-coloured flowering plants; or add a triangle, chevron or pyramid-shaped object to help energise the area. If, for example, a part of your garden is full of big, ugly rocks – then adding wood energy, in the form of trees or shrubs or an outdoor bamboo screen or similar would help to reduce the excessive earth (yang) energy that is present because of the rocks.



Colours

Colour plays a vital role in feng shui. Each sector's energy is represented by a range of different colours:

Feng shui 'colour spectrum' chart

Fire: Red, orange, purple; the 'reddish' tones.



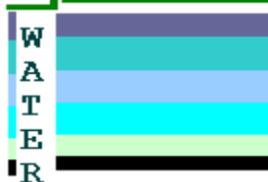
Earth: Ochre, brown, tan, yellows, all the 'earth' shades and hues



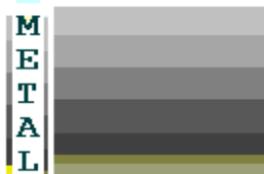
Wood: Green and shades of green.



Water: Blue, black and shades of blue.



Metal: White, metallic colours; iron, copper, bronze, silver, gold...



C O L O U R S – When planning, setting out or changing your garden, have a thought for the colour scheme and the relationships between the colours relative to the innate properties of that sector. For example, in the southern sector, consider red or orange flowering bushes and shrubs to match and enhance the natural energies of the fiery south. But don't forget to provide a balance of other colours too, so that the fire energy doesn't totally burn up the good sheng chi.

Earth colours – ochre, yellows, tan – support and promote the metal sector. Whites, from the metal sector, nurture water – which is next in the cycle, and so on. In this way it is possible to enhance the natural energies of each sector by clever use of 'supportive colours'.

Some examples of **red**-flowering plants include geranium, cordyline, begonia, poinsettia, aspidistra, callistemon, grivellia, and the sweet quandong (with its succulent red fruit). **Pink**: dianthus, bethel, sage. **Purple**: common sage, violets, Savoy and red cabbage. Some more examples are to be found in the list below:

Red flowering:

- Anigozanthos manglesii, 'Kangaroo paw', becoming increasingly popular for home gardens, drought tolerant once established, available in a range of lovely colours from crimson reds through to muted yellows.
- Callistemons, the ubiquitous bottlebrush, plant in your garden to attract nectar-seeking birdlife.
- Correa genus, hardy evergreen shrubs that do well with little maintenance – striking, red and various – bell-shaped flowers, new cultivars are now available.

Reds cont:

- Grevilleas, e.g. 'Mason's Hybrid', are great plants that attract native birds; can survive with little water.
- Hakeas, e.g. 'Hakea purpurea' are fantastic hardy shrubs/small trees; adapt well to dry areas/poor soils.
- *Nelumbo nucifera* or 'Sacred water lily', some cultivars have a lovely red flower (others are pink or pale lavender). They have the added bonus of edible rhizome (roots), leaves and seeds – will need a pond or similar water habitat in which to grow.
- *Swainsona formosa*, 'Sturt's Desert Pea'; a prostrate ground cover with distinctly-shaped bright red florets, (dark centres). A bit difficult to propagate (mark the seed with a sharp knife first). It is SA's floral emblem.
- *Syzygium moorei*; a threatened species in NSW, belonging to the Myrtle family. Includes; *Syzygium hodgkinsoniae* (Red lilly pilly), *Syzygium luehmannii* (Riberry, Cherry Satinash) and *Syzygium oleosum* (Blue lilly pilly) which has red globular flowers).



Flaming-red hibiscus

Pink flowering:

- Alyogyne genus; evergreen shrubs, specifically, *A. huegelii* (looks like a hibiscus), paper-thin, bell-shaped flowers, spiky green leaves, benefits from a light pruning after flowering.
- Boronia: this genus of evergreen shrubs has many species with fragrant flowers, e.g. *Bossiaea walkeri* – sporting plain looking grey-green foliage on a small shrub but with a redeeming display of pale-pink flowers in spring and early summer; needs sheltered position.
- Crowea, 'Festival', a native of Victoria; lovely 5 petalled star-shaped flowers, vivid to shocking pink, needs similar conditions to Boronia in order to thrive.
- Epacris longflora, a favourite of nectar-seeking birds, profuse, long, tubular flowers, needs sheltered position.
- Leptospermum scoparium, (New Zealand tea-tree) – shrub to small tree, spiky leaves, frost tolerant.

Orange flowering:

- Banksia ashbyi, compact small shrub with silver-backed serrated leaves typical of the banksia sp. Distinctive spring display in rounded globes of bright orange floescence.
- Banksia ericifolia; 'Heath-leaved banksia', a compact small bush (up to 5 metres) – has long flowering spikes in spectacular cones of tangerine; flowers in autumn and will do well in sandy soils.



**Bright orange
nasturtiums**

Purple flowering:

- *Agrostocrinum scabrum*, 'blue grass lily', from W.A., tufted long-leaved bush, to 1 metre, suitable for coastal planting.
- *Ajuga australis*; 'Australian bugle'; deep purple flower spikes, grows in semi-shade to full sun.
- *Calytrix existulata/depressa*; both forms present attractive purple/white and yellow flowers – requires a dry, sheltered position in the garden.
- *Hardenbergia*, 'purple coral-pea' or 'happy wanderer'; a climbing epiphyte that will grow up any trellis or nearby trees and form a trailing vine with clusters of lightly-scented purple flowers in spring.



A striking (clove-scented) chyrsthanemum

Yellow flowering:

- *Callocephalus* genus, annual and perennial herb bushes – from the Greek meaning *beautiful head*.
- *Conostylis setigera*, spiky-leaved small bush with hairy, bright-yellow flowers in the spring.

Yellows

cont:

- *Glischrocaryon behrii*, 'Coastal daisy bush', actually a perennial herb; easy-care, low water requirements.
- *Goodenia* genus; yellow flowering, minute in some species through to large, showy displays in the larger bushes. Hardy, very adaptable, will tolerate a range of soils and conditions.
- *Ozothamnus obcordatus*, called the 'rice flower' – an erect shrub to 1.5 metres; beautiful, small, long-lasting cut flowers.
- Wattles, wattles and more wattles! Yes, the magnificent Golden Wattle (Australia's floral emblem) reins supreme for that splash of golden spring and summer colour. *Acacia* species also 'fix' nitrogen in the soil.
- *Xerochrysum bractetum* 'Golden Everlasting Daisy'. From the *Asteraceae* family (daisy means sun's eye). This 'paper' daisy has a delightful open flower; also drought-hardy.



The iconic gladioli

White flowering:

- *Acacia myrtefolia*, 'myrtle wattle'; tiny, ball-shaped white florets on red stalks, nitrogen-fixing.
- *Acmena smithii*, medium tree to 8 metres, white flowers through to pink with dark, plum coloured fruits (edible but rather tasteless), that provide a valuable food source for native birds.
- *Actinotus helianthi*, 'flannel flower': a low-lying shrub flowering through spring – summer – will self-sow as seeds disperse and fly away on the wind.
- *Diplarrena latiflora*, also called 'Amethyst fairy' because of the purple, gold and azure markings at the centre of the flower's soft, cream petals.
- *Leptospernum*s – 'tea-trees' have beautiful tiny white florets that surprise with their bright winter colour.
- Smoky bushes, *Conospermum* genus; compact small shrubs to medium bushes, needs open aspect, full sun.

Blue flowering:

- *Scaevola* genus, mostly prostrate (low-lying) shrubs and bushes with a variety of fan-shaped blue flowers in this group, must have good drainage in order to thrive.

Of course, there are hundreds more species and varieties to choose from. To add interest, try for a layered effect, with plantings of similar colours but different heights and textures. And consider your climate and soil types.



Balance

Attaining balance is a major goal in Feng Shui. An excessive amount of one element creates an imbalance that causes a disruption to the flow of chi. The *Tai Ji* (above) is the Chinese symbol for ying and yang. It shows that there should be a little bit of black where white seems to dominate, and vice-versa. This wisdom signifies that too much energy of one kind leads to an imbalance in our environment, which is then reflected as problems in our lives.

An example from the plant kingdom is an area of kikuyu or buffalo grass that is overgrown and is strangling other plants. This is a case of green energy gone mad. Conversely, a large area of bare, flat concrete is a lifeless expanse that has no living things to soften the harsh setting. This situation is devoid of life-sustaining green energy and people living nearby would no doubt sense the negative sha chi generated – like in those endless steel and concrete jungles we call cities. The secrets to achieving balance are:

1. Incorporating plants, objects and structures that serve to represent the five basic elemental energies.
2. Incorporating appropriate shapes or designs that add an elemental energy that may be lacking or missing. These should be useful, decorative or have some meaning or value to you.

Examine each ‘room’ of your garden to see if all of the five elements are represented and don’t be afraid to experiment or try something new.

Some Feng Shui 'cures'

If there is too much green energy – try placing a small brass statue or sculpture to represent the element of metal.

A splash of supportive colour in an area lacking energy may be just the thing to enliven a dull or lifeless spot.

Moving objects create energy in stale areas. Light, too, can be used to energise and uplift dark or shadowy spaces. (Solar-powered garden lights are a great eco-friendly option.)

A couple of pointy-leaved plants, suitably positioned, are another way to help cure an imbalance of excessive metal energy in a particular spot.

Wave shapes or a flowing pattern on a bare brick wall (representing water energy) will help subdue excessive earth energies that may be present.

Intuition is the key. Listen to your inner voice. Have a good look at where your garden may need enlivening. What would make it brighter, or darker; less bare or maybe roomier? Does it require more shade or perhaps less sun? Only *you* know what will feel right and remember one thing, we have the power to make changes to our immediate environment so that we feel more comfortable and 'at home' in the places that we spend so much of our time.

Summary

Plant in favourable sectors – the east, south-east, south or north

Use supportive elements in each sector – colour, shapes and materials.

Ensure balance by incorporating objects, plants, structures or designs, so that each of the five basic elements is suitably represented.

Placement

Planning the height and layout of vegetation to create a layered effect is an effective way to produce a visually pleasing outcome. Good design in garden feng shui suggests the size and height of foreground plants should gradually segue towards the taller foliage positioned at the rear. This creates an attractive view with the larger trees or shrubs ‘framing’ the scene and helps to enhance and focus the aesthetic qualities and beauty of the prospect.

Compare the relative merits of evergreen versus deciduous species; and consider their appropriateness when planning and in planting. Evergreens provide a year-round ‘freshness’, generally with low maintenance – but there are many beautiful deciduous trees and shrubs that can supply that russet blaze of autumn glory. These may drop their leaves in winter, but recycling leaf-fall into compost and mulch is an eco-savvy way to help reduce our carbon footprint and return some goodness back into the soil.

'Go native'; by planting *endemic* Australian species; plants that are indigenous to your district. These have the added advantage of being naturally adapted to the soils, climate and rainfall of your particular area. This is especially relevant as further water restrictions are expected in our changing climate.



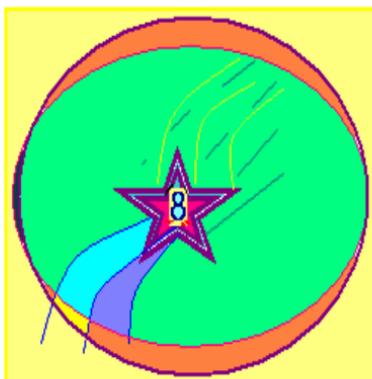
Caution! Do consider the final height of any shrub or tree that you may plan to grow. Be wary of roots invading foundations or pipes; and of branches or leaves creating a hazard as the tree or shrub reaches full maturity.

Time

*'Luck changes over time, and feng shui therefore, has a time dimension.'*⁴

Feng Shui has many layers. It begins with the basic study of landform, compass direction, environmental influences and how these affect the people living nearby. Then it moves to more complex examinations, deeper levels: such as 'Nine Palaces' feng shui and the 'Bagua' or 'Black Hat' schools of thought. There is also 'Five Elements in Healing', a philosophy that we touched on earlier. And becoming increasingly popular is '*Flying Star*' feng shui, and its interpretation of the natural flow of energy.





Flying Star Feng Shui incorporates the dimension of time, as well as that of space, in order to define and categorise influential energies. Taking a holistic approach accepts the basic premise that time is significant in good garden function and design.

Flying Star feng shui explains that there are specific (time) cycles. The basic period is a twenty year cycle. Each twenty year period has been allocated a special, designated number (from 1 – 9) and that number has predictable and distinctive cosmic influences.

The present sphere of influence is the number 8 ‘star’; which covers the period from 2004 through to 2023.

What does the number 8 ‘star’ mean?

“Each star is not really a physical star, but a representation of the energetic qualities or influences of nature.”⁵

So between 2004 and 2023, the characteristic energies of this star influence our opportunities, finances, relationships, even our general health and well-being.



How can we use this knowledge to advantage?

The 8 star is an earth star; it fosters family cohesiveness, increased spiritual awareness, and a focus on money and success. Not such a bad star after all! In fact, traditional Chinese beliefs rate the number 8 as a very auspicious number, and one that can bring luck and prosperity to our everyday lives. To energise this luck, it is suggested that we look closely at the north-east and south-west sectors of our homes and garden. During this next twenty year cycle – up until the year 2023 – take special care of these areas by keeping them free of clutter and negative energies.

As we have learned, the north-east is an earth sector, and in this period the positive 8 energies can be enhanced by adding a ‘mountain’ or earth-type feature to the area. In the garden, this may take the form of a small rockery or landscaped feature, or perhaps a number of square-shaped, terracotta pots (remember the representative shape of the earth element is square) that contain broad-leafed plants. In fact anything that ‘speaks to you’ of the earth or earth-like features will be effective. Use your intuition and it is best to use natural forms that inspire or make you feel at ease.

As in all feng shui conceptions, the idea of balance is very important: This means keeping all additions or changes to a garden room or sector in proportion to the overall effect, and to consider the size and dimensions of any existing plants, structures, objects or features. The aim is to subtly encourage the

prosperous facing 8 star – not to overpower it completely!

Summary



Feng shui shows us ways to live in harmony with our environment. It holds guidelines to improve our quality of life through a positive interaction with nature and the forces and energies that make up our world. This is achieved by:

- Closely observing our immediate surroundings; the landforms, structures and natural features that affect our homes and gardens
- Understanding the role of compass direction in planning and garden design
- Making changes to the position of plants, objects and structures to enhance the positive energies around us
- Considering the role of the sun, seasons, colours, shapes and materials, and the way they can be used to augment the energetic qualities of our environment
- Understanding the dynamics of the five basic elements and their influences
- Appreciating the need for balance and harmony in our daily life and choices



Recommendations

1. Plant in the east, south-east, north or south sections
2. Plant in full sun
3. Use supportive elements
4. Ensure entry path is clear, level and welcoming
5. Divide your garden into 'rooms' – each with a special theme
6. Balance the five elements in each room

Footnotes

1 – From conversation with Hermann von Essen, Feng Shui Master, 2006.

2 & 3 – Ibid.

4 – Skinner Stephen, 2003, Flying Star Feng Shui, Tuttle Publishing, Mass, USA, p.15.

5 – Twicken, David, 2002, Flying Star Feng Shui Made Easy, Writers Club Press, USA, p. 65.

An attractive fountain water feature – note the supportive metal (round) shape of the bowls

