

KEY PLANTINGS



This black locust towers over the rock garden in full chartreuse glory!



Hinoki cypress, originating in Japan, frames the Torii gates in a clipped pyramidal shape.



Japanese maples are kept carefully pruned to maintain their delicate shape.



Among the many types of ferns in the Japanese Garden is a Washington native, the Deer fern



DID YOU KNOW?

When the Reserve was still a private residence, the grassy lawn around the Japanese Garden and the Mid Pond was used as a 5-hole golf course.

The Sand and Stone Garden was originally used as a swimming pool for guests of the Bloedels. This space was transformed in 1980 and again in 1986.

MEET OUR TEAM



Bob Braid has been working at the Reserve since its inception. Superintendent of Horticulture for a period of time, he is now the Caretaker and Japanese Garden Specialist.



Philip Bloomquist has worked at the Reserve since 2014, the last 6 as the Nursery and Propagation Specialist.



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JAPANESE GARDEN

1955 - 1957

The original Japanese Garden was designed, and installation was overseen by Fujitaro Kubota. The Mid Pond, which had been recently completed, was reshaped and a dam created to divide the concrete lined Japanese Pond from the rest of the water.

1960 - 1964

Architect Paul Hayden Kirk fused Japanese and Northwest Coast Native American influences to design the Guest House which was built to the north of the existing Japanese Garden. The garden was expanded to surround the structure.

A swimming pool and concrete patio were included in the construction. Torii gates and Japanese-inspired fences connected the house to parking along the road.

1976-1985

By this time, much of the original tightly pruned shaping and planting of the Japanese Garden had been lost. Newly hired Curator Richard Brown and Seattle garden designer Richard Yamasaki collaborated to reclaim the design intent of the garden area. Small scale elements such as the shishi-odoshi were restored. Others, such as a ceremonial fountain, were added.

Large earthen mounds were created north of the pool to screen the surrounding fields.

1976-1979

Landscape Architect Richard Haag was hired to help unify the Japanese Garden with the rest of the landscape. Circulation around the garden was reworked and expanded to ease pedestrian access.

In 1979 Haag and Bloedel worked together to create a new, larger mound to the North of the pool and patio, further screening the surrounding meadow. It was planted with blue fescue and small shrubs.



THE EXPERIENCE

Designed using traditional concepts, the Japanese Garden showcases idealized natural features. Small scenes, carefully composed, surround the pond while a sinuous path winds along the water's edge, leading visitors through the space.

Decorative elements, such as the shishi-odoshi (or "deer scare"), artfully pruned trees, and the basalt columns of the rock garden create this unique space at the Reserve.

1980s

Richard Haag proposed and built a "Garden of Planes" to replace the swimming pool. Aluminum framed, with white gravel on the surfaces, the installation took the shape of two pyramids (one inverted, one upright) and remained on site for several years.

1986 - 1994

Environmental Planning and Design (EPD) were hired to oversee the Reserve. They recommended the hiring of Dr. Koichi Kawana from UCLA Landscape Architecture program.

Dr. Kawana designed the Zen Garden to replace the Garden of Planes. Using basalt column pedestals, and directing installation in person, the rock garden took on its current shape.

Additionally, Dr. Kawana provided guidance on the removal of the parking area along the road, and designed a new torii gate and fence that were installed by Reserve staff in 1988.

2010 - Today

A funded "restoration" led by Reserve Staff, revamped the garden area and addressed issues brought on by increased visitation.

The work included replacement of pea gravel paths with crushed granite, regrading of the pond banks, and planting of native shrubs to replace areas of lawn. Unhealthy trees were removed, hardscape near the torii gates was redesigned and a Japanese Dwarf pine was transplanted just inside the garden.

Mounds have continued to be regraded and replanted and fences replaced as needed.

A GARDEN OF DETAIL AND DESIGN