

Peace garden

On May 4, 2005 the University welcomed a gift of a sapling from the city of Hiroshima, Japan. So significant was this gift that Rob Scott, head gardener re-designed and created a secluded garden adjacent to the Chapel. The sapling (known on campus as the Peace Tree and the Hiroshima Tree) was grown from seeds from a tree (*Firmiana Platanifolia*) which miraculously survived the Hiroshima holocaust at a point 1.3km north-east of the epicentre at 8:15am on 6 August 1945. The tree was planted in a sheltered location within the Peace Garden outside the Chapel. The tree from the people of Japan was given "in order to pass a love of peace and respect for living things to future generations and share with British people a vision of a world free from nuclear weapons." Sadly the Tree died in 2017 following declining health. It had done remarkably well for a species not well suited to our climate.

Rob Scott quotes the Royal Horticultural Society in their reply to his solicitation for advice in 2005: "The Chinese Parasol Tree [its common name] can only be grown in tropical, frost-free climates..." The RHS advocated a moist, well-drained location in full sun and sheltered. All of those conditions were met but despite the expert care from the gardeners, the tree started failing during the summer of 2016. In the autumn of 2017 the tree was replaced by a cloud pruned *Lonicera nitida*, keeping the theme of the garden.

Further information on Japanese garden design

Stone and gravel

Since ancient times, stones symbolise mountains and hills, set decorative accents. In Japanese rock garden symbolism, the water is represented by gravel or sand, raked in various patterns, creating a design that tends toward perfection: simple parallel lines or concentric circles symbolising a calm sea, deep ditches symbolising stormy waters and even more complex designs, like water drop waves or perfect geometric shapes.

Vegetation

Trees such as the Maple and Magnolia, are often chosen for their seasonal appeal and are placed to emphasise these characteristics. Conversely, bamboos are held in particular esteem for their beauty during the winter months when other plants are dormant. Plants are carefully arranged around the gardens, and great efforts are taken to maintain their beauty.

Water basins

Many gardens contain stone water basins (tsukubai), which are used for ritual cleansing, usually placed on entry to the garden. The basins vary from simple depressions in uncut stone creations (ours is a bird bath), and are usually provided with a bamboo dipper for scooping up water. These days they often appear as a decorative addition more than for a practical purpose.

Paths

Paths became an integral part of Japanese gardens with the introduction of strolling. Strolling gardens feature circular paths constructed of stepping stones and crushed gravel, which are carefully prescribed to lead visitors to the best – albeit controlled – views of the garden. Winding paths also serve to segregate different areas, such as an isolated grove or hidden pond, from each other so that they may be contemplated individually.