



MUSEUMkids

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

THE
GARDEN
ISSUE

Summer
1999

T H E

During the summer, everything's in bloom—even in the Museum. This issue of *Museum Kids* will take you to gardens all through the building; you'll even get a chance to design a garden of your own.

Start your garden tour in The Astor Court. It's in the Chinese galleries on the second floor. When you walk in, what is your immediate impression? Do you feel like you're outside or inside? Now close your eyes and listen. What do you hear?

This garden was inspired by a courtyard in a scholar's garden in the city of Suzhou, near Shanghai, China. What do you think it was used for? How does it make you feel?



Can you find this detail in The Astor Court?

Gardens such as these usually were designed as places where scholars—people who spend their time studying, writing, and thinking—could take a break from city life. They might use this kind of space to meditate, visit with friends, or simply enjoy nature.

The rocks and plants in this garden are changed seasonally. Along with the architectural elements and the pool of water, they were designed to demonstrate the principles of *yin* and *yang*. Yin is represented by such qualities as dark, cold, and wet, and is thought to be feminine;

yang is just the opposite—bright, hot, and dry—and is masculine. Can you find examples of these opposites in the garden? Look, for example, at the running water and the hard rocks; many other examples are present as well.

The layout of the garden showcases a tradition in Chinese domestic architecture: rooms built around a central courtyard. What are some

materials that were used in the courtyard? How many different ones can you find? The Ming Room at the opposite end of the courtyard is a scholar's study; it's filled with traditional furniture and decorative objects.

Chinese craftsmen, working with an American crew, used traditional techniques and tools to assemble The Astor Court from materials made in China.

GARDEN FACT:

The Museum's goal for their gardens is authenticity—making the gardens as realistic as possible. Each garden reflects its location in the Museum (a plant in The Astor Court, for example, would closely resemble one that grows in China).

GARD

Why do you visit The Metropolitan Museum of Art?

The Metropolitan Museum is one of our City's finest cultural institutions. Visiting the Museum, with its great collection of art and artifacts, is like taking a historical tour around the world. Every visitor and resident should take that wonderful trip at least once. —Rudolph W. Giuliani, Mayor

Now it's your turn to design an "opposites" garden with the elements that are included here. Think about what purpose your garden would serve and what would be in it. You can use ideas from this garden or others in the Museum, or make up your own. When you are done, send us your creation and we'll send you a Museum giveaway. The address is:

I Made a Garden!

Education/STP

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

1000 Fifth Avenue

New York, NY 10028

PLANT FACT:

Over 3,000 ground cover plants grow in the American Wing courtyard.

GARDENS ON THE GO

Each of the details here comes from a garden somewhere in the Museum. The garden may be part of a work of art, or it may be an actual garden. We have given some hints for each one to get you started. In case you get really stumped, just turn this page upside down for the answers.

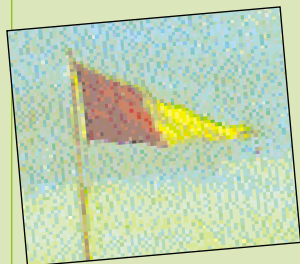
1. Find this work in the Nineteenth-Century European Paintings and Sculpture Galleries on the second floor.

Entering from the Greek galleries, walk down the B. Gerald Cantor Sculpture Gallery, make a left, and go through the last doorway. The answer to the first clue is either in this gallery or the one to your left as you enter.

Flags flutter and sway in the breeze.

Flowers in bloom—where are the trees?

Some of the people look out to sea. Which painting can it be?



In what work of art does this flag flutter?

E N I S

2. Find this work in the Lila Acheson Wallace Galleries of Egyptian Art on the first floor. **HINT:** Take the corridor to the right of The Tomb of Perneb. Make a right and enter the first doorway you see.



Where is this garden blooming?

*Thirteen detailed models.
Each one complete.
To build so many was surely a feat.
Boats? There are many. But a garden?
Only one.
If the wood wasn't protected, would
there now be none?*

3. Find this work somewhere between the Modern Art galleries and the Carroll and Milton Petrie European Sculpture Court. **HINT:** You have to take an elevator.

*The view from here is citywide.
Buildings and park seen up high.
Four floors up In the open air.
Can the sculptures touch the sky?*



Where is this sky-high view?

PHOTO BY SARA CEDER MILLER

1. Claude Monet, French, 1840-1926. *Garden at Sainte-Adresse*. Oil on canvas; 38 5/8 in. (98.1 x 129.9 cm). Purchase, special contributions and funds given or bequeathed by Friends of the Museum, 1967, 67.241.
2. Model of a Garden. Thebes, early Dynasty 12, ca. 1990-1985 B.C. Gessoed and painted wood and copper; l. 33 in. (84cm). Rogers Fund and Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1920, 20.3.13
3. The Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Roof Garden

GARDEN ANSWERS

SOME QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AS YOU LOOK AT THE GARDENS IN THE MUSEUM:

- ❁ What makes a garden? ❁ How are the gardens in the Museum similar?
- ❁ How are they different? ❁ If you saw some of the gardens in different seasons, how do you think they would change? ❁ How do the gardens in the Museum resemble ones you have seen in other places?

S U E

Q and A

Ben Fieman is the Assistant Building Manager for Horticulture in the Museum. He is responsible for taking care of the Museum's indoor gardens and outdoor grounds. The indoor gardens include The Astor Court, The Charles Engelhard Court, and the Carroll and Milton Petrie European Sculpture Court. The outdoor grounds consist of the landscape along Fifth Avenue, which includes the sixty-four London plane trees that are planted on the paved plaza between Fifth Avenue and the Museum's façade.

Q: What are some of your responsibilities?

A: Along with the curators, I'm part of a team that helps set the design and 'theme' of a garden. The curators tell us what they want. They might say, "We want a deciduous tree [a tree that sheds its leaves] here." Given the location, amount of light, the temperature, and so on, I would suggest a tree. For example, in The Astor Court, the curators wanted a deciduous tree to remind people of some of the screens in the Chinese galleries. The black olive tree, which has little green leaves, was selected.

Q: Where do the plants come from?

A: We conduct a thorough search for the 'perfect' plant. Most of the plants come from the tri-state area [New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut], but some plants are shipped from around the world. Some nurseries even grow plants just for the Museum.

Q: Do you take care of the plants all by yourself?

A: No. Four gardeners from the Buildings Department help with maintenance and upkeep of the gardens.

Q: How often do you water and feed the plants?

A: Plants are best fed in the spring, when there is new growth, not when they are dormant in the winter. During warm weather, when the ground dries out quickly, plants need more water. We use warm water that is comfortable to the touch so we don't shock the plant.

Q: What is your background?

A: I have a college degree in landscape architecture.

Q: What is your favorite part of your job?

A: Seeing visitors admire the displays.



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