

Using Dowsing to Create a Zen Garden

My daughter and her partner decided to make a Japanese inspired Zen Garden at their home in Bristol, given the size and shape of their back garden, and a large patio area which resembled the third runway at Filton airport. To start the project they wanted to create a “karesansui” (dry landscape garden) using rocks and gravel, with woodland inspired planting in the surrounding borders. This involved lifting a long patio area and clearing away the underlying sand and cement. Tree spirits were the guardians of the garden so we asked for their co-operation, which was given. The very nature of a “karesansui” is that it should look natural and harmonious in a minimalist way. Images of other gardens were available but there was no blue print to create a new one to our knowledge. Inspiration needed to come from intuition and the universe so we thought we would dowsing for answers.



I stood in the middle of the cleared patio space and asked how many rocks the garden required to achieve balance and beauty. The answer of five was received. I then asked to be shown the location of the first (key) stone. The rod searched and set on a direction which I followed until the rod closed indicating this was the spot. We then dowsed for its height, width and depth as well as its orientation. My daughter took notes and drew a map of the dowsing results. We dowsed in the same way for the next four rocks. We then dowsed for the number of azaleas and their location within the space. The answer we received was three.

Next we needed to source the gravel and rocks, so we searched online and located a nearby gravel merchant and asked if they had any rocks we could buy. We were shown a large pile of yellow limestone and told to help ourselves. The pile had come from Bath where it had been uncovered by a building contractor in a hole in the ground. We then climbed the pile with tape measure in hand and gradually located the right sized rocks, asking each one if they were happy to become part of the garden, wishing to respect the Rock spirits. They all agreed and after paying a very reasonable price, into the car they went.

Before constructing the dry garden a boarder needed planting up and trees and bamboo needed planting within the wider garden. Following some research some weeks before, my daughter had purchased around thirty plants, which included acers, ferns of various varieties, hostas, Japanese grass, hydrangeas, bamboo, arum lilies and various other exotic plants. 22 bags of horse manure were dug in thanks to the generosity of the neighbour's mare.

Once again we were faced with the dilemma of what the optimum position of each plant would be for it to thrive and add beauty to the garden. Neither my daughter or her partner had any preconceived ideas as to where the plants should go so they suggested that the plants should decide for themselves.

All plants and trees were in pots so I held each pot in turn in my left hand and asked to be shown the place within the garden where it would thrive in all seasons and weather, and enhance the beauty of the garden whilst holding one rod in my right hand. The rod would search, set on a direction and as I walked in that direction so the rod would close indicating the place to plant it. We did this for each plant. At one point a small bed had become full so my daughter moved the pots back to dig in more

manure at the same time that I was dowsing for the next plant, which chose the newly emptied bed. I apologised as this bed was full and asked for a second choice to be made, at which point the rod swung around hitting me on the head, indicating a bed directly behind me. I could not help smiling at the possibility of having been on the receiving end of a miffed plant!

The acer trees also chose their spot in the garden by dowsing in the same way, but I also asked a second question which was the direction they wished to be oriented. This was achieved by slowly moving the pot around in an anticlockwise direction whilst holding a rod in my right hand. As the plant moved to its desired orientation the rod would slowly close until its closure indicated which direction it wished to face.



Four of the six acers wished to be planted in the lawn. My daughter's partner noticed a bright patch of grass as we were doing this which I recognised as a possible blind spring. I dowsed for this and found two blind springs crossing at this point at a dowsed depth of 40 and 55 feet down. I showed him how to find the direction of flow and in doing so identified where the springs were flowing from and where they were heading to under the garden. To our astonishment every acer had chosen a position directly above the blind springs.

My daughter was a little worried that one acer was out on its own and could be exposed to winds, another was under the overhanging branches of a neighbour's tree and yet another was in the shade of a fence. She carefully read the label of each acer and noted their recommended environment. She then checked out where each one was. The acer which was on its own liked to be on its own and could cope with full sun, the one in the shade of the six foot panel fence preferred a shady position and the one under the neighbours overhanging tree preferred to be under a canopy of trees. None of this information was known to us when we had dowsed. Once again, each acer had chosen the best position for itself within the garden.

A month on and all the plants are thriving with new growth appearing. I found this whole dowsing experience completely humbling. My dowsing tells me, that it is possible to consciously communicate with plants through dowsing. Tuning into the energy of each plant and being completely unattached to the outcome felt important factors.

When we stood back and looked around the garden we smiled at how the plants had created their own balance and design. Laying the gravel and placing the rocks and azaleas will be phase two. We thanked the universe and the watchful tree spirits and went in for a cup of tea.

Gwynn and Alex Paulett 2016