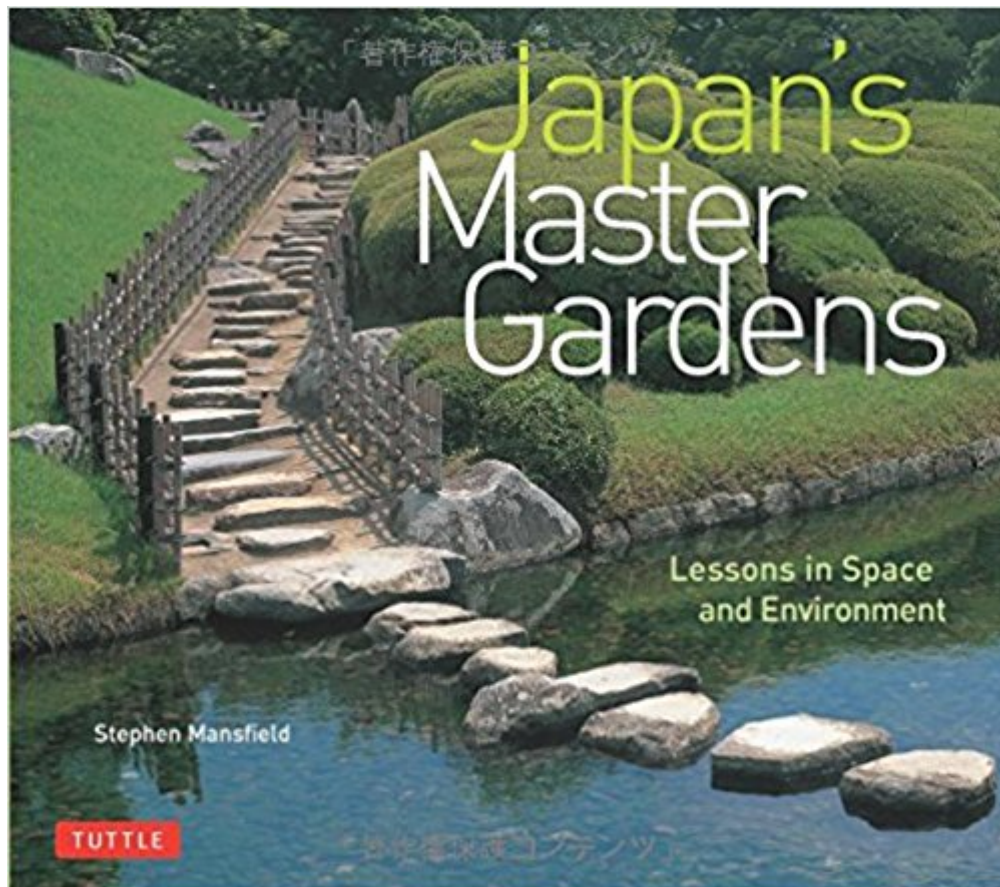




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# Japan's Master Gardens: Lessons In Space And Environment



## Synopsis

Featuring stunning photographs and thoughtful commentary this Japanese gardening book is a must have for any gardening enthusiast. No two Japanese gardens are ever the same. Each is inimitable, yet embodies commonalities of design and aesthetic taste. Each finds the space for innovation within a tradition that benefits from a thousand years of applied knowledge in gardening and landscape architecture. Japan's Master Gardens explores the ingenuity and range of Japanese landscaping, from the self-imposed confines of courtyard designs to the open expanses of the stroll garden. In this beautifully illustrated book, Stephen Mansfield takes readers on an exploration of the outward forms, underlying principles, complex use of metaphor and allusion, and beauty and depth that set the Japanese garden apart. Topics include: A Sense of Nature The Modular Garden Landscape Gardens Requisitioning Space Healing Gardens

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It is probably impossible to view classical Japanese gardens and not feel a sense of tranquility. Valued for their refined simplicity and elegant composition, Japanese master gardens offer a timeless glimpse into ancient worlds and a timely antidote to the modern one. Japan-based photojournalist Mansfield is an authority on Japanese garden culture, and his photographic homage to that nation's finest examples of landscape design offers a suitably understated yet surprisingly comprehensive survey of the elements, materials, techniques, and principles that influence their creation. Within this slim volume, readers are introduced to stunning examples of

healing and temple gardens, urban respites and remote retreats. Mansfield's elegant photographs artfully capture each garden's essence, from the tightly controlled symmetry of dry landscape gardens of the temple at Sekizo-ji to the serene majesty of early-seventeenth-century stroll gardens at Kumamoto. Teeming with historical, cultural, and design insights, Mansfield's treatise succinctly defines the extraordinary variety and beauty of gardens throughout Japan. --Carol Haggas

"Mansfield accompanies his striking photographs with a spare text that combines history, poetry, and thoughtful meditations on each space. It's a wonderful balance of insight and visual delight."   
•Publishers Weekly  
"Mansfield's elegant photographs artfully capture each garden's essence, from the tightly controlled symmetry of dry landscape gardens of the temple at Sekizo-ji to the serene majesty of early-seventeenth-century stroll gardens at Kumamoto. Teeming with historical, cultural, and design insights, Mansfield's treatise succinctly defines the extraordinary variety and beauty of gardens throughout Japan."   
•Booklist  
"While very attractive visually, this is no mere coffee table book. A wealth of knowledge and information is put across in an instructive yet highly readable fashion. The attention to detail is thoughtful, from the map inside the front cover to the font used in the titles. This book offers both intellectual and visual appeal to any reader, whether familiar with Japanese gardens or new to their aesthetic and traditions."   
•Garden Design Magazine

Japan's Master Gardens: Lessons in Space and Environment  
Bought as a gift for my father who is making a Japanese garden adjacent to his house. I did not read from cover to cover but did flip through and skim the text. I am impressed with the number of color pictures. There are up to 3 color pictures on every page. It is a very beautiful book full of inspiration. The content is also full including gardens from around the world, ones in urban settings and healing gardens. This book is just what I had hoped to find for this gift. Mansfield created a lovely compilation of photojournalism and practical written content. Can't wait to share it with my dad!

I bought this book mainly for the photos since I am looking for inspiration for my own garden. The photos definitely don't disappoint (so many gorgeous photos!) but the book is also a great read. The author does not romanticize the facts, as so many others do, when writing about the country and its history (hard not to with these amazing gardens). Instead He writes with an honest approach. Very refreshing after reading so many books in this genre and never reading something so

straightforward. I especially love the depth he goes into when describing the importance of different elements in the garden. This information may be even more valuable than the pictures themselves, once I start designing my own garden. This information is accompanied by many wonderful pictures that give the reader a visual with the text. I highly recommend this book.

I was looking more for a design book than lots of pictures.

Not quite as good as Zen Gardens but a good book showing examples of Asian gardening.

Excellent. Fast delivery!

Good!

Pretty good.

In his newest book, author and photographer Stephen Mansfield takes us on a tour of 25 gardens in Kyoto, Nara, and Kamakura, including gardens in less-touristed regions such as Okayama, Shizuoka, Kagoshima, Kumamoto, Kagawa, Shiga and Okinawa. A variety of gardens are covered, from the modular to the traditional, and in settings ranging from residential, temple, pond, teahouse, landscape to rock and dry gardens. When I first discovered this book, I admit I was skeptical. I wondered if we really needed another book on Japanese gardens. But you won't find any of the "usual suspects" of Japanese gardenry like Ryoanji, Katsura Rikkyu, and other "National Treasures" which have already been given plenty of ink elsewhere. Here, you'll find inspiration and, if you're like me, you'll discover "new" gardens to revitalize your interest in the subject. In poetic text that is never precious and often illuminating, Mansfield offers detailed descriptions of the outer forms and inner meanings of these varied spaces. He artfully delves into each garden's history, landscaping features and elements, literary and artistic significance, cultural relevance and metaphorical meanings. The book is smartly divided into five sections that help the reader understand and appreciate the gardens they cover: 1. A Sense of Nature, 2. The Modular Garden, 3. Landscape Gardens, 4. Requisitioning Space, 5. Healing Gardens. It also includes a helpful list of historical periods and a comprehensive glossary for those who might be new to the art of the Japanese garden. Though it could profitably be used by landscape designers, gardeners and architects, this is way more than a possible how-to book if making a Japanese garden is something you aspire to.

And, though it is beautiful and could very well be used as a travel guide, it is far more than that as well. Rather, due to its more contemplative approach, this book is akin to a classic like Gouverneur Moshier's "Kyoto: A Contemplative Guide" (Tuttle, 1964), but with the addition of stunning photographs, also taken by Mansfield. The photographs are a revelation--these are not slick, manipulated digital images, but rather, Mansfield deliberately used only 50mm and 124mm lenses so that the camera could record the garden scene much as the human eye would view it. While countryside and temple gardens are show-stoppingly gorgeous, the somewhat overlooked gardens of Tokyo bloom under Mansfield's insightful eye as well. In an age of hyperconsumption, overcrowding, pollution and waste, Japan's Master Gardens shows us that urban gardens offer precious refuge where time can stand still and humans can become revitalized within the simplicity and artistry of nature, even when on a small scale. Particularly compelling are the entries on such Tokyo gardens as the Canadian Embassy garden and Shinjuku Gyoen, offering vastly different and often contrasting approaches to landscaping and use of space, light, terrain and materials. I especially appreciated this section as I live in Tokyo, and have often taken its gardens for granted. When the fast pace of the city wears on me, I visit a garden or a shrine with space and greenery and immediately feel at ease. Because of Mansfield's book, I have an even deeper appreciation of these sanctuaries and plan to make a visit to a garden soon with out-of-town visitors. I'll have them read Mansfield's entry on the garden first. Happily, this book is not a romanticized vision of Japanese gardens and their traditions. Mansfield, a long-term resident of Japan, admits that "Japanese cities can be a shock to the visual senses, with their wastelands of uncoordinated structures and poorly maintained surfaces. Streets, balefully devoid of greenery, disfigured by cobwebs or high-tension wires, often look unfinished. Visual distraction, over-crowding, noise and chemical pollution add to the sense of degradation. Where you might expect to find cities that embody a discreet prosperity, they speak of a poverty of taste. How can gardens survive in such traumatized environments?' This is an excellent question, one not before asked in such a book. To Mansfield's mind, it is exactly in such environments that gardens can, and must, survive. The challenge is for today's Japanese gardens (indeed, gardens in urban locations around the world) to restore a degree of serenity to the urban landscape. Mansfield shows us that Japan's resourceful landscape designers are well equipped to work with whatever they might have, building on tradition and also departing from it in exciting and innovative ways. He reminds us that the garden is not a final destination, but rather a point of departure for the spirit. This is something Japanese master gardeners understood ages ago, and which today's master gardeners embrace. When I can't make it to an actual garden to unwind, I'm lucky to be able to open Mansfield's book and be transported just the same.

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