

Huangshi Chinese Garden Walk

A graceful **Photinia glabra** **1** overhangs the tiled roof entry to this elegant walled garden. This recently developed traditional Chinese style garden uses existing mature trees planted in Queens Gardens to good advantage. Traditional Chinese garden plantings were restrained and limited to a few significant plants that symbolically linked to human traits such as purity, grace, virtue, honesty, uprightness, longevity and antiquity while providing subdued floral interest throughout the seasons. Plants were generally grown for practical reasons, though the added bonus of fragrance, texture, form and colour was prized by the poets. The sounds of rustling foliage or dripping water were appreciated.

A pair of mythical stone lions, or **Foo Dogs**, **2** stand guard outside the entrance. Their job is to ward off evil spirits and watch over the garden. The female cradles a cub with her paw, the male has an orb under his foot. The intricate wrought iron filigree in the gates and balustrades features a magnolia pattern.

Inside the garden, **limestone rocks** **3** are featured. Weathered limestone karst rocks are revered in China. Large rocks with sculptural or whimsical shapes are highly sought after and used throughout this garden to create false mountains and landscapes. Rocks with holes convey the yin yang, sense of mass and space, strength and weakness, body and spirit. The water worn stone implies the virtues of patience, as the determination of soft water can slowly wear away the hard stone.

Underfoot, **handmade pebble mosaic paving** **4** reflects the craftsmanship and detailing required to replicate an authentic Chinese garden. They are designed to massage the unshod feet of visitors as they relax in the garden and create a pleasing visual effect. The distinctive yellow coloured **Dolomite rocks** **5** are significant. The name of the sister city Huangshi translates to Yellow Stone because it was the birthplace of Chinese bronze culture.

The Viewing Deck **6** gives views across the eel pond into Queens Gardens to a large **Camphor tree** **7** planted in the 1880s. These trees are revered in China and are frequently found growing in temple gardens. It is the official street tree in Huangshi. Slow growing **Cycad Palms** **8**, native to Southern China, have been planted in the garden to your right, alongside existing giant Canary Palms and New Zealand native Nikau Palms.

Water is the third essential garden element and **The Pond** **9** mirrors the sky above and the surrounding rocks and plantings, giving ever changing vistas. Water is a life force and is part of the rejuvenating qi energy to be found in a garden where opposites are balanced and in harmony. The **Xie or Poolside Pavilion** **10** provides a space for contemplation while listening to the sound of the hidden waterfall. The large **Cotinus tree** **11** marks the seasons with glorious autumn foliage, winter sculptural form, verdant spring foliage and smoky summer flowers.

The **Zig Zag Bridge** **12** is a commonly used design for water crossings ensuring that evil spirits are left behind, or fall overboard and drown, as they can not negotiate the corners. The design also slows the garden rambler allowing time to take in and enjoy the views.

A **Banana Palm** **13** was a useful addition to the Chinese Scholar's garden. It was a symbol of learning and its leaves provided an inexpensive substitute for silk or parchment to write draft poetry on.

The **Moth window** **14** and **Vase Gate** **15** are examples of the types of typical embellishment of openings using familiar shapes or a delicate filigree. The **Moon Gate** **16** frames the view of the internal garden. Nearby the arched **Rainbow Bridge** **17** leads into the Queens Gardens. The bridge's balustrade panels feature the distinctive magnolia pattern.



Huangshi Chinese Garden Walk

HUANGSHI CHINESE GARDEN was opened in 2007 to celebrate a sister city link with Huangshi in the province of Hubei, China. Built on the eastern boundary of Queens Gardens, this enclosed Scholar's Garden is based on ancient Chinese garden design principles developed as far back as 2000 years ago. Important aesthetic, historic and spiritual aspects are considered in a garden that aims to replicate nature. The formal entrance is from Tasman Street.

An extended audio version of this walk can be downloaded from www.theprow.org.nz. More heritage information, and heritage walks and events can be found on www.nelsoncitycouncil.co.nz including a Queens Gardens Walk.

