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# A First Look at the Garden

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## Materials Needed

**For each adult:** Leader Sheet: "A First Look at the Garden"  
Map: "A First Look at the Garden"

**For each student:** Shapes cut out of construction paper  
Student Data Sheet: "First Look Search Sheet"

## Preparation

Cut out enough triangles, circles, rectangles and squares for each child to have one (make plenty so children don't have to wait for a free shape). Add oval and heart shapes if you wish. Divide students into groups with an adult helper for the first half of the lesson. For teachers of pre-readers, consider marking the student data sheets with colors to facilitate student use.

## Pre-visit Activity

Make a color wheel using tempera or watercolor paints. Begin with the primary colors (red, yellow, blue) and allow students to blend colors to create the rest of the wheel. They may bring the color wheel to the garden and use it as they study floral colors and shapes. Most children in this age group are familiar with the basic geometric shapes (triangle, circle, rectangle, square). Letting students cut out these shapes for use in the first activity of this lesson will enhance their sense of preparation and participation in the field trip.

## Background Information

This lesson is designed to stimulate the observational skills of the students. Though they are probably already familiar with common shapes and colors, children may not know that shapes and colors are essential to garden design. Horticulturists carefully blend colors of plants and use design patterns in order to delight the eye. Contrasting colors or plant textures are often key to an eye-catching display. Students will be able to see how garden design is an art form and understand the basic artistic elements used.

## Post-visit Activity

Use the pre-cut shapes to create a garden mural. Encourage students to use design elements seen at the garden (bridges, buildings, ponds) and crayons to fill in the colors using their "First Look Search Sheet" as a guide. You can also go on a shape and color search in your school or schoolyard.

# 1 LESSON

## Topic

Shapes and Colors at the Garden

## Grade Level

PK - K

## Student Outcomes

- ✿ identify shapes in plants and garden design.
- ✿ recognize colors and patterns in the Garden.
- ✿ increase observation skills.

## Time Frame

Year-round  
60 minutes

## Location

Start at Spoehrer Plaza. Walk through the Perennial Garden, Linnean House, English Woodland Garden, and Japanese Garden.

## Missouri State Standards

### K-4

SC I.A.3.a  
I.A.7  
VII.C.1  
VII.C.1.a  
VII.C.1.b  
VII.E.1  
VII.A.1

# A First Look at the Garden

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## 1 Begin at Spoehrer Plaza

Today we're going to explore the Garden and see what shapes and colors we can find. Let's practice right here...(Have students look for shapes in the area, then colors). It looks like you are ready to go, so let's start our exploration.

## 2 Swift Family Garden/ Linnean House

*Hand out different paper shapes. When children have found all four shapes, they may start again.*

There will be a "shape search" and each of you will look for your shape in this area. When you find something that matches your shape, raise your hand and an adult will check it and hand you a new shape to find. Don't forget to look at the shape of the pools, the design of the Linnean House, parts of plants, etc.

It looks like your doing great on your shape search!

- Which shapes were the hardest to find?
- Which shapes were easiest?
- Do plants seem to have more round or square parts?
- Do buildings have more round or square parts?

*For additional challenges, add the following:*

Look for a heart-shaped, oval, pointed leaf, etc.

- What was the smallest leaf you found?
- The largest?
- What shape were these leaves?
- What other shapes did you see?

## 3 English Woodland Garden

*As you walk, encourage the children to point out shapes they see.*

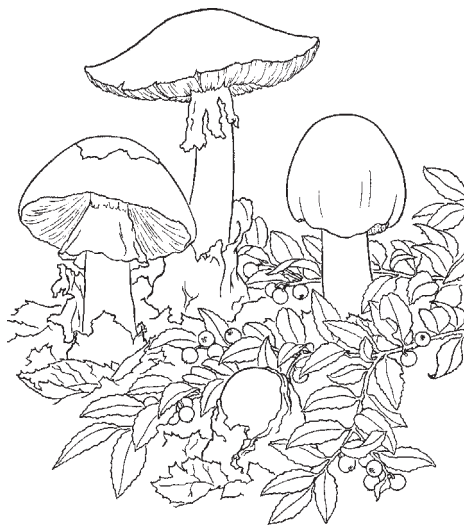
Now we'll look for colors here in the Woodland Garden. Let's find out how the colors of trees, flowers, and even grass can make a garden bright and beautiful.

*In autumn, look for leaves.*

Take your search sheet and make an X every time that you see a different plant of a particular color. For example, this azalea (choose any example) is red so I make an X in my red square! Ask your parent/adult leader if you need any help.

Good luck!

*To add a little math to the lesson: Have students count the number of petals on a flower or flowering tree, such as dogwood.*



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## **4** Japanese Garden

Now we're going to look at how colors and shapes are put together to make a beautiful garden design.

Very simple shapes and colors are traditionally used in Japanese gardens. This can help you feel peaceful and happy. We'll make three stops to look at interesting ways that shape and color are used here. Then we'll mark some information on our search sheet.

### **1. Arbor of the Plum Wind**

*Record observations*

- What shapes do you see on this little building?
- What shape are the rocks?
- What colors are here? (*point to several places*)
- What colors do you see out in the lake?
- How do these colors and shapes make you feel?

### **2. Carp (Koi) Bridge**

*Record observations*

- What colors are the koi (fish)?
- How many different colors of koi do you see?
- What shapes are used in the bridge?
- Are there many flowers nearby?
- Trees?
- How do you feel here?

*Exit the Japanese Garden by returning to the Woodland Garden and following any of the paths to the Ridgway Center.*

We've seen how colors and shapes are used in three very different gardens. All of them are beautiful in their own way.

Now as we go back to the Ridgway Center, let's count the colors of flowers that we pass.

*In autumn, look at leaf colors. In spring, look at either azaleas or the rose garden.*

## TEACHER'S NOTES



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

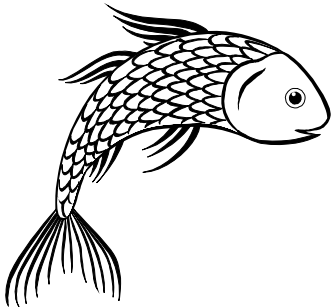
## Student Data Sheet

# First Look Search Sheet

Make an **X** each time a color is seen in the English Woodland Garden



White	Red
Yellow	Green



Draw or write shapes and colors seen in the Japanese Garden.

Arbor of the Plum Wind	Carp Bridge
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## Map: A First Look at the Garden



### Garden Map Key

1. Spoehrer Plaza
2. Swift Family Garden
3. Linnean House
4. English Woodland Garden
5. Japanese Garden (*see detailed map on next page*)



## Map: A First Look at the Garden



### Japanese Garden Map Key

1. Arbor of the Plum Wind
2. Carp Bridge
3. Zig Zag Bridge

