

Fort Worth's Japanese Gardens



Brilliant colors of fall leaves have appeared at the Japanese Gardens. Photo by Francine West



Moon Bridge surrounded by fall colors. Photo by Francine West

by Francine West

The Fort Worth Botanical Gardens, the oldest botanic garden in Texas, is only a few minutes Southeast of Wise County. There are so many different things to see and enjoy on this lush 109 acre garden.

The Japanese Garden is only one of many gardens at the Botanical Gardens. The Japanese Garden was originally the site of an old gravel pit. Few changes were made to the existing terrain in an effort to capitalize on every stone and tree. Tons of additional stone have been added.



Playful squirrel. Photo by Francine West

When visiting the Japanese Garden you enter a peaceful, serene, mystical place. With winding paths, flowing water and nature at it's best, it takes on a mystical enchantment of another place.

Strolling along the footpaths, you encounter many unique and exquisite types of plants and animals. When you stop and stand on the many bridges and decks extending over the water throughout the garden, the large Imperial Carp (Koi) will beseech your attention to be fed. At one time Koi could only be found in the possession of Japanese nobility.

The Koi come in large schools hopeful that food will soon land on top of the water. Some Koi will accept a gentle caress in exchange for a few pellets of food.

There are feeders placed throughout the garden to purchase food for a few coins to feed the Koi, since no food is allowed in the garden from outside.

The squirrels put on a comedy act all their own. They know where the feeders are and will happily enjoy a snack from your hand or will chase the pellets that you toss out to them around



Turtles basking in the sun under the wonderful shade of fall colored leaves. Photo by Jo Gilbreath

on the ground.

Chameleons, lizards and turtles are among the many animals that are common in the garden. Look closely on trees and rocks for the lizards and chameleons. You can watch them change colors and try to blend in with their surroundings. It's a fascinating thing to watch.

The symbolic Mikoshi which is encased in a glass structure is a gift to the citizens of Fort Worth from the citizens of its Sister City, Nagaoka, Japan. According to Japanese belief, presentation of the Mikoshi to the City of Fort Worth ensures citizens safe and peaceful homes, bountiful harvests and business prosperity.

The Japanese Garden is a seven acre land of wonder, where stone, water, plants and animal seems to have become one. There are marked paths for handicapped access, so everyone can enjoy the wonderful garden, which is open year-round November through March open daily from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; April through October open daily from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

For more information contact the Fort Worth Botanical Gardens at 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard, Fort Worth, TX 76107, (817) 871-7686, or view the web at <http://www.fwbg.org/index2.htm>.



Symbolic Mikoshi Photo by Francine West



Large Koi looking to be fed. Photo by Francine West



A chameleon peeking over the green leaves of summer. Photo by Francine West



One of many different species of birds at the Japanese Garden. Photo by Francine West



A serene place to sit and enjoy the scenery of the Japanese Gardens. Photo by Jo Gilbreath



One of many winding footpaths. Photo by Jo Gilbreath