

The Eniwa Project was a once in a lifetime opportunity, which I could not refuse. For the scheme I have tried to create many contrasting gardens so that there is an element of surprise and interest for people to walk around and enjoy. The idea behind the design is to link the gardens together in a cohesive framework that does not look out of place in its location. To achieve this we have planted thousands of trees and hedging plants, so the individual gardens will in time become oases set amongst more natural open woodland, threaded with paths to entice the visitor on to the next revelation.

When I first saw the site, it had been used for extraction of gravel. Around two sides there were very steep, almost vertical sides of exposed, bare soil, with a huge level change of 15m from top to bottom. These were big, unnatural scars in the landscape. However, the dramatic height difference enabled me to create spectacular views over the site, and as there were big mounds of bare soil left around, I had the chance to use these to build terraced gardens up that would both take advantage of the height and soften the unnatural, steep man made slopes left over from the mineral working.

The site had varied landscape elements around its edge: a river with mature vegetation on one side, a marshy area with a few mature trees bordering another. Both contrasted with the very flat, open, central space. I decided that by creating a lake it would add interest to the flat plain. This also provided extra soil to reduce the steep slopes.

To take advantage of the different types of landscape, I planned the gardens predominantly around the edge of the space, so that the main linking path led the visitor first besides the marshy area, then around the base of the raised gardens and finally to the more natural gardens nearer the river. In addition, I also wanted to incorporate gardens with strong styles – some would be more traditional English such as the Rose Garden, The Parterre and The Walled Kitchen Garden, whereas others would be more modern in feel, such as The Black and White Garden and The Snake Garden. Other gardens were inspired for totally different reasons: The Purple and Gold Garden and the Shoji Walk by Mr. Shoji, (they are his favorite colors) who conceived and brought into being the whole dream. The Boat Race Garden, The Tree houses along the Board Walk, the Wind in the Willows Garden, The Tropical Garden, The Dragon Garden were all based on similar projects I have created in London for The Chelsea Flower Show. The Bear Garden was because of my fascination with bears, which Mr. Shoji introduced me to.

During my years working in Europe I have really enjoyed working with various designers and craftsman, and I have been lucky enough to work with the best of these in Japan to create garden artifacts that bring the spaces to life.

In any garden plants are a vital ingredient, we have used some quite unusual ones to add

horticultural diversity and interest, as well as many native ones to give a lush, natural feel to many of the gardens and the surrounding spaces. It has been fascinating discovering the opulent, rich nature of Japanese plants and plantings.

The whole project has been an amazing opportunity and very enjoyable to work on, but the garden is just in its embryonic stage. Hopefully it is going to become even more exciting to see it develop and mature, and I hope many people get as much pleasure from seeing it as we have all had from creating it.

Bunny Swanson