



**Japanese
Friendship
Garden**

Self-Guided Tour





RULES & REGULATIONS

- **Stay on paved path to protect the grass, trees, and plants.**
- **Picnic outside the garden only.**
- **Feed the Koi designated food only. Please do not put or catch anything in the ponds.**
- **No bicycle, scooters, skates, or skateboards.**
- **Outside animals are not allowed in the garden.**
- **Adults must accompany children ages 16 years or younger.**
- **Smoking is not permitted in any City of San José park.**
- **Park Rangers are happy to answer any questions or concerns that you have about the garden at (408) 277-5254.**

INTRODUCTION

Note that Japanese words are shown in Romaji and Kanji (representing concepts) or Hiragana (written phonetically).

San José Japanese Friendship Garden was built as a symbol of everlasting friendship between the City of San José and its Sister City of Okayama, Japan in 1965.

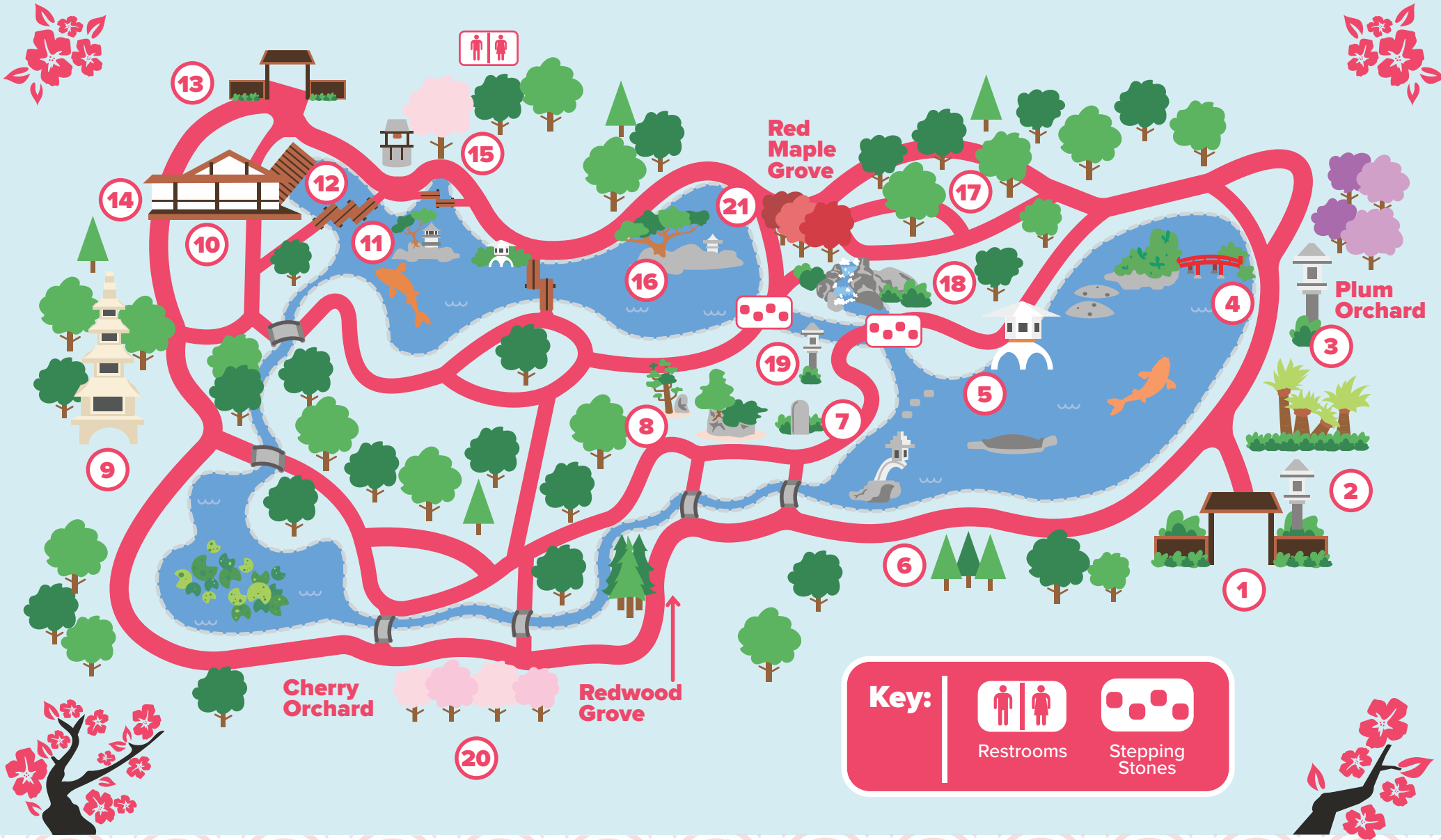
The “Sister City” relationship between the two cities was officially consummated in 1957 as a result of President Eisenhower’s desire to create friendly people-to-people relationships with cities of the United States and those of foreign countries.

The organization Pacific Neighbors sponsored the union between San José and Okayama and originally proposed the concept of the Japanese Friendship Garden as tangible evidence of the ties between the two cities.

In May 1960, groundbreaking began on a 6.5-acre parcel in Kelley Park. The design of the garden was patterned after the world famous Kōraku-en Garden in Okayama, taking great detail to traditional and symbolic meaning in the placement of rocks, bridges and other features.

As the garden grew, numerous contributions and gifts from organizations and individuals followed. On October 31, 1965, the dedication of the San José Japanese Friendship Garden was celebrated with the 8th anniversary of the Sister City affiliation.

The Japanese Friendship Garden stands today as a beautiful example of friendship, cooperation and generosity.



GUIDE

The Japanese Friendship Garden maintains its traditional, cultural roots through blending three essential forces: religion, nature and rich symbolism.

1. MAIN ENTRANCE (Seimon, 正門) As one enters the Japanese Friendship Garden, sentry rocks protect those who enter and envelop visitors with a sense of peace and tranquility. The noise and troubles of the modern world are left outside. In 1987, the community built and funded the Kōrakuen Gate. Local artisans modeled after the 300-year-old Lord's Gate in Okayama's Kōraku-en (後樂園) Garden. The gates have roof tiles crafted in Japan and adorned with Shachi (鯨), an animal in Japanese folklore with the head of a tiger and the body of a carp. With its ability to cause rainfall, the sacred creature protects the gate from fire.

2. SAGO PALM GROVE (Sotetsuen, 蘇鉄園) shows the unification of Japan.

3. MAIN WALKWAY LANTERN Kasuga dōrō (春日燈籠) is a stone pedestal lantern originating from at the Kasuga Grand Shrine (Kasuga-taisha, 春日大社) in Nara, Japan. This kasuga dōrō was carved in granite over 450 years ago and gifted to San José from the owners of the San Francisco retail store Gump's. The firebox features a carved deer, which were believed to be sacred messengers of the Shinto gods that inhabit the shrine. The umbrella, firebox, and base are hexagonal in shape. The base is decorated with lotus petals, representing purity of mind and body.

4. MOON BRIDGE Taiko Bashi (たいこ ばし in Hiragana), also known as a drum or moon bridge, is a highly arched pedestrian bridge found in Chinese and Japanese gardens. It is thus named because when reflected on the water, the full circle shape it creates resembles a drum or moon. According to legend, if you see your the reflection over the bridge in clear water underneath the moonlight, you will have good luck.

5. OKAYAMA LANTERN Okayama dōrō (岡山燈籠) is a snow lantern gifted from Okayama, Japan upon the opening of the garden in 1987. The lantern weighs nearly three tons, which is as heavy as the tongue of a blue whale.

6. PINE TREES can be found through the garden. Many of the pines have two needles per bract, which represents the love that can found in a marriage.

7. SENRYU STONE INSCRIPTION Senryū is a Japanese form of short poetry similar to haiku in construction: three lines with 17 morae.

8. FATHER AND SON STONES A large rock placed next to a small one symbolizes a father teaching a lesson to their son. Three pairs of father and son stones are scattered throughout the garden. Can you find all three?

9. THE FIVE-STORIED PAGODA (Gojūnotō, 五重塔) is replica of a Japanese temple. The five tiers represent either the five elements in Japanese Buddhist thought (Godai, 五大): wind, fire, water, and metal; or the five directions: north, south, east, west, and center.

10. TEA HOUSE (Chaya, 茶屋) is where a traditional Japanese tea ceremony is performed.

11. EIGHT BRIDGES (Yatsubashi, 八橋) The wooden zig-zag bridge encourages awareness and mindfulness. The design of the bridge is popularized from "The Tales of Ise," a collection of poems and narratives, dating from the Heian period (794 – 1185 C.E.) in Japan. In the story, a young aristocrat arrives to a place called Yatsubashi, where a river divides into eight different channels each with its own bridge.

12. IRIS FLOWER FIELD (Hanashobu Batake, 花菖蒲畑) The iris flower with its sword-like leaves stands for purity, innocence and chastity. In "The Tales of Ise," beautiful irises close to the bridge enthrall the young aristocrat traveling in Yatushashi. He then composes a simple poem of five lines, each line beginning with the Japanese word for iris (hanashōbu, 花菖蒲). This immortalized the association of irises with yatsubashi bridges.

13. ROOFED GATE AT THE LOWER ENTERANCE (Kabuki Mon, 歌舞伎紋)

Those who pass under this gate are cleansed of their worries and cares of the outside world. Built in 2004, the Kabuki Mon Gate was funded from the 40th anniversary gift to the City of San José from Okayama, Japan.

14. Kabuki (歌舞伎) is a classical form of Japanese dance-drama. Kabuki actors would adopt Mon (紋), emblems used to decorate and identify an individual, a family, or institutions. Mon were originally used among the samurai to identify their possessions and accouterments.

15. AMBASSADOR'S CHERRY TREE (Sakura, 桜) In 2012, the Japan Ambassador to San José gifted a historical cherry tree to the garden. Marking 100 years of friendship, this tree comes from a grove of 3,020 cherry trees planted in Washington DC in 1912. The grove was a gift of friendship to the People of the United States from the People of Japan. First Lady Helen Herron Taft and the Viscountess Chinda, wife of the Japanese Ambassador, were the first to plant two cherry trees out of the 3,020. The sakura bring renewed life each spring after the long winter months, echoing this longstanding spirit of friendship.

16. TURTLE ISLAND (Kamejima, 亀島) Can you see how this island got its name? The turtle is a symbol of longevity.

17. THREE DEITIES STONES (Sanzonsei, 三尊石) This stone arrangement is composed of a large stone in the center and two smaller ones to its right and left. The central one represents the main figure of a Buddhist trinity, and the side ones the attendants. The triad stones are described in Sakuteiki (作庭記), the oldest textbook on the secrets of gardening in Japan. Sanzonsei in a garden symbolizes protection from curses and malevolent spirits.

18. WATERFALL (Taki, 滝) A waterfall is said to represent a wise deity. In listening to the rushing water, their wisdom will be revealed.

19. FLOWER LANTERN (Hana dōrō, 花燈籠) is a type of pedestal walkway lantern.

20. CHERRY ORCHARD (Sakura No Namiki, 桜の並木) is a symbol of loyalty to country, family and friends. It is said that an individual blossom is insignificant but the entire tree is complete and beautiful.

21. HEART, MIND AND SOUL LAKES (Shinji Ike, 心字池) The garden lakes are symbolic of the human heart since the design resembles the Kanji character for “heart” (kokoro, 心). The red maple grove near the waterfall symbolizes the heart’s blood, which is essential for health and vigor. Because the lakes of this shape cannot be seen in their entirety from any one vantage point, they emphasize a sense of depth.



KOI FACTS

The koi (鯉), specifically nishikigoi (錦鯉, literally translates to “brocaded carp”), are an ornamental variety of the Amur carp, scientifically known as *Cyprinus rubrofuscus*.

Koi belong to the family of fish known as the Cyprinidae, which includes the sucker, minnow and goldfish. Cyprinidae characteristically have a special auditory mechanism allowing them to “hear” with their whole body.

Originally bred as a food source, the first selective breeding for distinctive color characteristics occurred in Japan during the Heian period (794-1185 C.E.).

Referred to as “living jewels,” the koi have an emotional and cultural significance to the Japanese people. Koi is a homophone for another word that means “affection” or “love” in Japanese (koi, 恋).

Also known as samurai (侍) or warrior fish, the koi epitomize strength and masculinity because of their reputation as strong, determined swimmers. Every May 5 in Japan, households fly koi kites (Koinobori, 鯉のぼり) on Children’s Day (Kodomo no Hi, こどもの日, or Tango no sekku, 端午の節句), a holiday to celebrate the health and happiness of children. This is based on a Chinese legend that a carp that swims upstream becomes a dragon and flies to Heaven and the way the windsock blows in the wind looks like they are swimming.



The lifespan of Koi, which varies with environmental conditions, usually ranges between 35-40 years. Maximum length attained is generally around 30 inches. Several factors determine the health and quality of a koi, including the number and clarity of colors, symmetry of color patterns, scale types, size and overall fitness.

Spawning begins in the spring after the first period of warm weather. Female koi, who reach reproduction maturity after three growing seasons, can lay eggs numbering in the thousands. The eggs which are laid in masses are attached to submerged vegetation. The eggs can hatch anywhere from 6 to 15 days after fertilization, depending on water temperature.



This guide has been updated by the City of San José Department of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services (PRNS).

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