

# Concept and Constituent Elements of the Persian Garden

The fundamental layout of all Persian architecture is the division of space into four quadrants, a form originating in the Fifth Century B.C. First found in the Parthian constructions of Tchahâr-tagh, linking the square plan of the Zoroastrian temple to the circular form at the base of the cupola via the use of the architectural device known as the pendentive. This four-part archetypal element can be found transposed into other fields of artistic expression as well.

Similarly, the classic garden is formed by the Tchahâr-bâgh, a rectangular plane crossed by two major axes which incorporate the principal canals dividing the garden into four sectors. The oldest remains of the first garden arrangements on the Iranian plateau date back to the Second Millenium B.C. These gardens seek to join the terrestrial Paradise garden with the mythological idea of a Celestial garden. The etymology of the word “paradise” is found in the ancient Persian words pairi-daeza, which translates to “the place of god” in the book of Zoroaster.

The other constituent elements of the Persian garden are situated around the cruciform arrangement of the tchahâr-bâgh. These consist of pools reflecting the image of the sky and the garden, fountains and channels supplying water to the pools, alignments of trees between the planted beds, the arboreal volumes of high, middle, and low-stemmed plantings, and floral arrangements. Also present are small buildings, pavilions and kiosks with their aîwans and terraces, the surrounding walls with their gateways and nooks, the service and outbuildings. The garden offers the passer-by a series of spaces ideally suited to solitary meditation, while pleasing the senses. It offers the warmth of the sun and the freshness of its shade, the whispering of breezes in the leaves and the murmur of running water in the channels, the song of birds, the perfume of flowers, the bursts of colour. The garden can be easily converted into a place of conviviality when the occasion arises, and can accomodate musicians and dancers.

The Persian garden is situated on a slight slope, largely oriented north-south, and open onto the surrounding landscape. As the original source of the oriental garden, this model inspired the garden-palaces of central Asia, spreading as far as the Iberian peninsula. In return, it was influenced by European garden culture of the 19th Century, as well as adapting to the urban modernity of the 20th Century.



# Persian Garden Project

## Geneva, Switzerland

ILLA is a Geneva based Iranian-Swiss association free of any political or religious ties, founded by Mojgan Endjavi-Barbé in May 2005 to promote Iranian art, artists and culture. One of its main goals is to offer a Persian garden to the city of Geneva.

### **Persian Paradise Garden Initiative**

No other symbols are more universal than peace and love. Embedded in "Pairi-Daeza" (enclosed space in old Persian), these symbols have crossed all cultural and political boundaries through centuries to become the representation of paradise on earth. Today, lovers of Iranian culture across the world are once again following the path of ancient Persians by offering this symbol of peace to the community of nations. Hundreds of people of diverse cultural backgrounds are coming together to realize this millenary dream in the city of the United Nations — Geneva. The Persian Paradise Garden's goal is to spread the message of peace and love from the very centre of the world's global governance of environmental affairs. In an era of uncertainty and environmental degradation, the Persian Garden will help revive respect for the environment that ancient Persians had mastered and transmitted to other world cultures. The Persian Paradise Garden of the 21st century will benefit from modern techniques and amenities bringing together the aesthetics of bags and pairi-daeza with our eternal duty to protect and respect the environment. You too can be a part of it.

### **I A project in 3 Phases:**

**Phase one 2007-2009:** The final Plan was handed to city of Geneva and we have construction permission since end of November 2007. The permission lasts for 2 year with an extension if needed.

**Phase two 2009- 2010:** This is the most delicate and important part of the project that needs more attention. This phase is dedicated to the execution of existing plans by Geneva-based architects and landscapers. Further, with the goal of involving junior architects in Iran, we have decided to involve Iranian architecture students in the design of the details of the Persian garden. The students of the University of Tehran School of Architecture have already worked on a competition for the Pavilion design. Their work will be exhibited once the garden is built. Finally a virtual clip of the Persian garden initiative in Geneva is being prepared so as to enable anyone anywhere in the world to experience a stroll in the garden of paradise.

**Phase three 2010- 2015:** Extension of the project to hubs of the Iranian Diaspora in the rest of Europe, North America and Australia.

**II Fund raising:** Starting September 2008, letters of promise will be sent out to those who have seen the project and shown interest. We aim to achieve the target by March 20th, 2009 which is the Persian new year and would like to start the Persian garden construction from April 2009. A symbolic date since it is the beginning of season and rebirth of the plants and trees. The city of Geneva allocated 1900 square meters to our association in the "Parc de franchise" on the right bank of Lake Geneva, on condition that we find the resources to construct the garden. The city will ensure the upkeep of the garden, which is a considerable amount. The estimated cost for this project is 1,000,000 US dollars which is to be raised partly by dedicating lots in the names of people who make donations based to their contribution (from 500\$ per M2 to 100,000 \$). A scientific committee including professors of UCLA and University of Geneva guide us on the eco friendly and sustainable aspect of the project. The involvement of the Iranian community in North America is vital to the Persian Paradise Garden project due to its political, social and cultural activism and economic affluence it will provide this project solid wings to fly, higher bringing it closer to your community.

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