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VOCABULARY

Ecosystem - all the living and nonliving things in an area that work together. This includes plants, animals, water, soil, and even sunlight.

Photosynthesis - A process plants use to make their own food using sunlight, water, and carbon dioxide. This creates sugar for energy and releases oxygen into the air.

Population Survey - A method scientists use to count and study the number of living things in a certain area to learn more about how they live and grow.

Species - A group of living things that are the same kind and can reproduce with one another. Members share similar traits and behaviors.

MORE RESOURCES

Learn more about Japanese culture in Fort Worth:



Discover and identify local plants and wildlife:



Japanese Garden Exploration Guide



This journal belongs to:

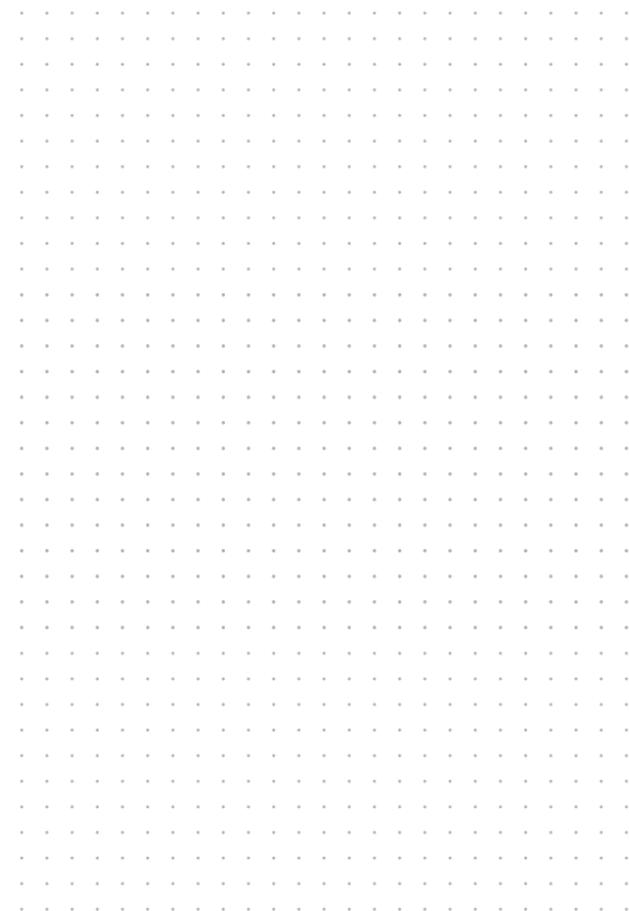
What is an exploration guide?

An exploration guide helps you explore the natural world. This guide helps you identify species and animals, but also lets you take your own notes.

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Notes

A large grid of dotted lines for taking notes, consisting of 20 rows and 40 columns of small dots.

Horticulturalist Spotlight

WHAT IS A HORTICULTURIST?

A horticulturist is a person who studies and takes care of plants, like flowers, fruits, vegetables, and trees. They learn how to help plants grow strong and healthy by giving them the right soil, water, and sunlight. Horticulturists can work in gardens, farms, parks, and even greenhouses to make the world greener and more beautiful!

MEET CHRIS!



Christopher Ransom is the Horticulture Manager for the Japanese Garden and has worked at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden since 2023. His typical day starts with pond maintenance, followed by gardening and any meeting he might have. Although the Japanese Garden has many fascinating plants, Chris'

favorite is the Moon Tree. Outside of work, Chris enjoys spending time with family and friends, staying active, watching sports, and painting Warhammer miniatures

Know Before You Go

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED



Discovery
Guide



Pencil/Pen



Binoculars



Clipboard



Phone/
Camera

OPTIONAL MATERIALS

GARDEN ETIQUETTE

- Stay on paths and keep out of garden beds. Our plant beds are for plants, not feet.
- Let wildlife feel at home—no touching or chasing animals, even insects.
- Leave hoses, tools, and signs alone.
- No climbing on rocks, trees, or structures; no wading in water features.
- Be mindful of other visitors.
- Be kind and use respectful language and volume.

ABOUT THE JAPANESE GARDEN

Completed in 1973, the Fort Worth Japanese Garden is a traditional strolling garden with paths that wind through landscapes and around ponds. This 7.5-acre garden is filled with cherry trees, Japanese maples, magnolias, bamboo, bridges, and ponds full of koi fish.

Exploration Observations

Date: _____ Time: _____ AM/PM (Circle one)

Who are you exploring with? (select all that apply)

Myself Family Friends Classmates

What is the temperature? _____ °F



Cold



Cool



Warm



Hot

What is the weather like? (select all that apply)



Sunny



Partly Cloudy



Cloudy



Windy



Rainy

What season is it?



Spring



Summer



Fall/Autumn



Winter

Senses Scavenger Hunt

Explore the Japanese Garden using your five senses! Look, listen, touch, and smell as you walk through. Use the table below to write down what you experience along the way.

 See	
 Hear	
 Smell	
 Touch	
 Taste	Find something an animal might eat or think about the snack or lunch you enjoyed at the garden.

Wildlife Wonders

A **population survey** is a way to count and learn about living things in a certain area. Scientists and nature explorers use surveys to find out how many animals or plants live in a place and how they are doing.

Pick two spots in the Japanese Garden and count how many koi fish you see in each color.

Koi Color	Location 1	Location 2	Total Individuals Counted
Red	Ex: IIII		
Orange			
White			
Yellow			
Black			

Budding Botanist

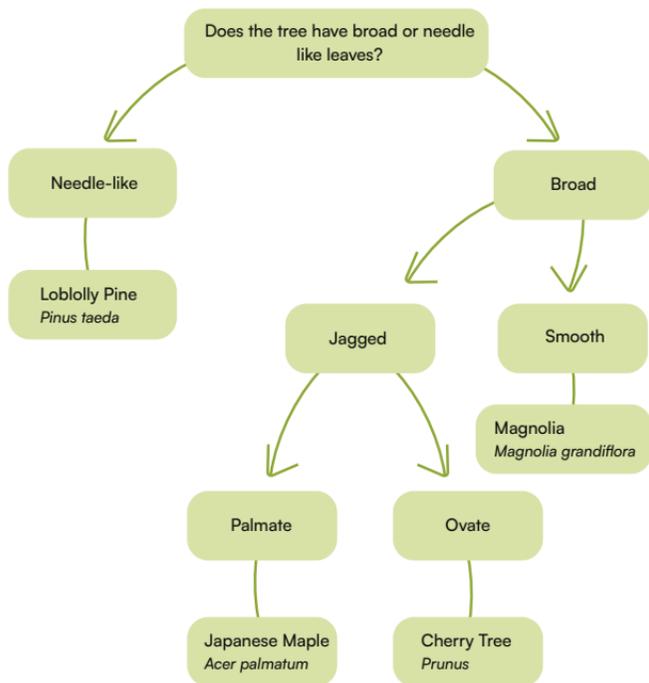
Leaves are very important for **photosynthesis**, which helps plants make their own food. Their shapes are designed to fit their environment. Some leaves are single (simple), while others are made up of smaller leaflets (compound). The table below shows different types of leaves you might see in the Garden.

Compound	Simple	
	Edge	Shape
 Pinnately Compound	 Smooth	 Ovate
	 Jagged	 Palmate
 Palmately Compound	 Lobbed	 Heart
		 Round

Bonus: Can you find a leaf that isn't shown here? If you do, draw it in your notes section!

Budding Botanist

Did you know you can figure out a tree's **species** by observing its different parts? Use the dichotomous key below to identify the trees in the Japanese Garden.

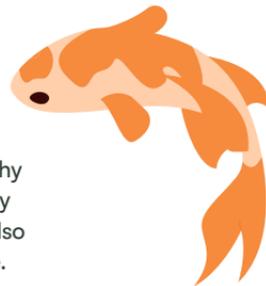


Wildlife Wonders

Learn more about the animals that call the Garden their home.

KOI FISH

Koi fish are a type of carp known for their beauty, longevity, and symbolic meaning. They can live for 50-70 years and grow up to three feet long. These intelligent fish can recognize their owners, communicate through body language, and help maintain healthy pond **ecosystems**. Koi are not only cherished for their elegance but also for their deep cultural significance.



LEGEND OF THE KOI

According to legend, a school of golden koi fish once swam upstream in the Yellow River in China. As they swam, they reached a powerful waterfall known as the Dragon Gate. Many of the koi turned back, discouraged by the rushing waters, but one determined koi refused to give up.

For 100 years, the koi leaped and fought against the current, trying to reach the top of the waterfall. The gods, impressed by its determination and resilience, rewarded the koi by transforming it into a majestic golden dragon, a symbol of strength, wisdom, and power.