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International Design Challenge

# HEALING GARDENS

Designing Spaces for Wellness and Reflection 2024

First Edition

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## Healing Gardens: Designing Spaces for Wellness and Reflection

## Introduction

In an increasingly fast-paced and often stressful world, the profound impact of nature on health and well-being has never been more critical. Healing gardens, designed as therapeutic landscapes, provide restorative environments that foster physical, mental, and emotional wellness. These gardens serve as sanctuaries where individuals can retreat from the pressures of daily life, reconnect with nature, and engage in reflective practices.

This competition invites architects, landscape designers, and artists to envision healing gardens as transformative spaces that harmoniously blend nature, design, and wellness. Participants are encouraged to explore innovative concepts that not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of these environments but also reflect the cultural narratives and diverse traditions associated with healing practices around the globe. By integrating local flora and fauna, the designs should aim to enhance biodiversity, supporting local ecosystems while promoting a sense of connection to the environment.

Moreover, sustainability is paramount; participants should prioritize eco-friendly practices that minimize environmental impact and promote resilience against climate change. This includes utilizing native plant species, implementing water conservation techniques, and creating spaces that encourage biodiversity.

Ultimately, the goal is to create serene environments that inspire healing, reflection, and community engagement. By fostering spaces where individuals can immerse themselves in nature's beauty and tranquility, we can contribute to a holistic approach to well-being that transcends traditional therapeutic practices. This competition challenges you to push the boundaries of design and redefine the potential of healing gardens in nurturing both body and spirit.

## Objective

The primary objective of this competition is to design a healing garden that transcends conventional landscape architecture, providing a multifaceted environment for restoration and wellness. Participants are challenged to envision spaces that not only enhance individual well-being but also foster community connections. By integrating thoughtful design principles with the therapeutic benefits of nature, the healing garden should serve as a sanctuary that invites visitors to engage with their surroundings and cultivate a sense of peace and mindfulness.

Designers are encouraged to consider the holistic experience of users, addressing both the physical and emotional aspects of healing. The garden should incorporate elements that promote relaxation, sensory engagement, and introspection, creating an environment that caters to diverse needs and encourages exploration. Furthermore, participants should prioritize inclusivity, ensuring that the garden is accessible to all members of the community, regardless of age or ability.

Through this competition, we aim to inspire innovative and sustainable design solutions that celebrate the profound relationship between nature and human well-being. Participants should consider how their designs can educate visitors about the importance of nature in promoting health, while also enhancing biodiversity and fostering environmental stewardship.

## Key Goals

- **Design for Wellness:** Create spaces that promote physical, mental, and emotional healing through thoughtful design.
- **Cultural Reflection:** Integrate local cultural narratives and healing practices to enrich the garden's identity.
- **Biodiversity Enhancement:** Use native and diverse plant species to support local ecosystems and promote ecological health.
- **Sustainability Focus:** Implement eco-friendly practices, including water conservation and sustainable materials, to minimize environmental impact.
- **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** Ensure the garden is accessible to individuals of all ages and abilities, fostering a sense of belonging.
- **Community Engagement:** Encourage community involvement in the garden's design and ongoing maintenance to foster ownership and connection.

## The Building Program

Participants are required to design a healing garden that includes the following key elements:

- **Entry and Gathering Space:** A welcoming area for visitors to orient themselves and engage with the garden.
- **Therapeutic Pathways:** Accessible paths that guide users through various sections of the garden, encouraging exploration and discovery.
- **Meditation and Relaxation Zones:** Spaces equipped with seating, shade, and views that foster tranquility and reflection.
- **Plant Selection:** A diverse array of plants that promote healing properties, seasonal interest, and biodiversity.
- **Water Features:** Optional elements such as ponds or fountains that enhance the sensory experience and contribute to the garden's ecosystem.
- **Educational Components:** Spaces that inform visitors about the healing properties of plants and sustainable practices.

## Site

Participants will have the creative freedom to select a site for their healing garden design. This choice allows for the exploration of various contexts—urban, suburban, or rural—that may influence the garden's character and function. The site should be carefully chosen to enhance the therapeutic qualities of the garden and should ideally possess the following attributes:

- **Accessibility:** The site should be easily reachable by foot, bicycle, or public transportation, ensuring that it is accessible to a diverse range of users, including those with mobility challenges.
- **Environmental Context:** Consideration of the local ecosystem, including existing flora and fauna, soil conditions, and topography, is essential. Participants should strive to create designs that integrate seamlessly with the natural environment and utilize the site's inherent features.
- **Community Relevance:** The chosen site should be situated in a location that serves a community in need of such a healing space, whether near healthcare facilities, educational institutions, or densely populated areas with limited access to green spaces.
- **Potential for Engagement:** The site should offer opportunities for community interaction and participation, encouraging users to connect not only with nature but also with one another.

By selecting their sites, participants can tailor their designs to address the specific needs and characteristics of the location, fostering a deeper connection between the healing garden and its surrounding community. This flexibility also encourages innovative solutions that respond to local conditions and cultural contexts, ultimately enhancing the garden's impact as a space for wellness and reflection.

## Sustainability

Sustainability is a core principle of the healing garden design. Participants should incorporate:

- Native and drought-tolerant plant species.
- Rainwater harvesting and efficient irrigation systems.
- Materials that are sustainable, recyclable, and non-toxic.
- Techniques for reducing heat island effects and enhancing biodiversity.

## Project Proposal Requirements

Participants must submit a project proposal that includes:

- A clear and compelling design narrative explaining the concept.
- Detailed floor plans, elevations, and sections that illustrate the spatial organization and functional layout.
- Renderings or visualizations that convey the aesthetic quality and experience.
- A site plan.

## Timeline

- Registration Deadline: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2026
- Submission Deadline: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2026
- Winners Announcement: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026

## Submission Requirements

### File Format:

- All entries must be submitted as a single PDF document.

### Sheets:

- Minimum of 3 sheets, maximum of 6 sheets.
- Each sheet should include designs, drawings, and views that effectively communicate the project concept.

### Text Explanation:

- Each sheet must contain explanatory text that describes and supports your design decisions.
- Text should be clear and concise, highlighting the main ideas and features of the project.

### Content to Include (per sheet):

- Design Concepts: Conceptual drawings, diagrams, and sketches.
- Plans, Elevations, and Sections: Architectural plans, cross-sections, and elevations.
- Views and Renderings: 3D views, perspectives, or rendered images of the project.
- Diagrams: Illustrations explaining circulation, spatial relationships, environmental or structural concepts.

### Resolution and Quality:

- All sheets should be high-quality, legible, and visually clear.

### File Size:

- The total file size should not exceed 20 MB.

### Naming Convention:

- The file should be named as: CompetitionName\_ParticipationCode.pdf

### Anonymity:

- No names, logos, or identifying marks should appear on any of the submitted sheets to ensure anonymity during judging.

## Submission Guidelines

### Sign in to Your Account:

- Visit the Archiol website and sign in to your account.

### Access Your Competition Submissions:

- In the header, click on the arrow beside your profile picture. Select the option labeled "My Competition Submissions."

### Submit Your Entry:

- Click on the "Submit My Entry" button.

### Select Competition:

- Choose the competition name for which you wish to submit your entry.

### Enter Participation Code:

- Input the participation code that was generated during your registration.

### Title Your Submission:

- Provide a title for your submission.

### Upload Title Image:

- Upload the image that will represent your project.

### Upload Design PDF:

- Submit your project in PDF format (ensure it meets the competition's requirements).

### Consent:

- Check the box to agree to the competition terms and conditions.

### Submit:

- After filling in all required fields, click "Submit."

### Confirmation:

- Your submission will appear in "My Competition Submissions" within 24 hours.

## Eligibility

The competition is open to all architects, designers, students, and creative individuals globally. There are no restrictions on age or nationality.

## Contact Details

For any inquiries or further information, please contact us at:

- Email: [info@archiolcompetitions.com](mailto:info@archiolcompetitions.com)
- Website: [www.archiolcompetitions.com](http://www.archiolcompetitions.com)