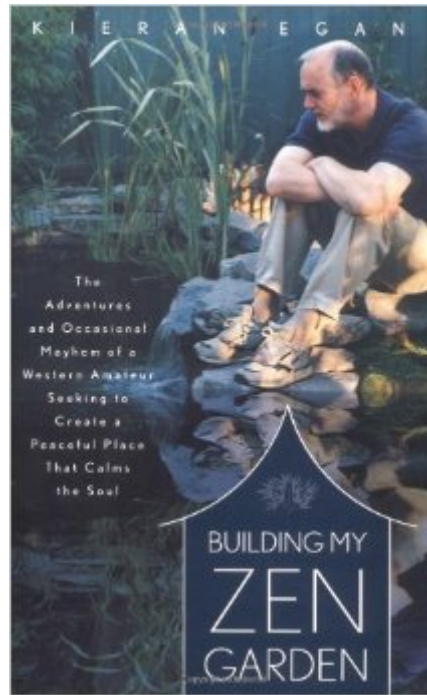


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# Building My Zen Garden



## Synopsis

Kieran Egan had a fantasy. Inspired by a visit to a friend's miniature Zen garden on a balcony in Nagoya, he returned home determined to build his own Japanese garden. Like many men his age, with kids grown up and moved away, he was ready to tackle something new — and tackle was the right word. Even before he began, he had to spend days hacking at the overgrown thicket where his garden would be. At night, dreaming of roots with nothing to do but grow, he thought less about Zen masters than about Dorothy Parker, who observed, "Every year, back comes spring, with nasty little birds yapping their fool heads off and the ground all mucked up with plants." In spite of the running conflict between Zen philosophy and his own rather slapdash methods, he succeeded in creating "a treat for the eye and spirit." Like Michael Pollan's *A PLACE OF MY OWN*, *BUILDING MY ZEN GARDEN* will appeal to men, and to women as a gift for men. In these prosperous times, when men of the baby-boom generation are often looking for something new, building a Zen garden could very well be it — even if, after reading and laughing at the author's adventures, they never build one themselves.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Get this book if you have been suspicious about the hype surrounding the Zen of garden building or if you want a hilarious account of a brave amateur confronting the sham purity of Japanese garden design. But this is also a serious and wryly understated account of how to confront the task armed with the basic philosophy of the design of a garden and teahouse, and as well, a humorous introduction to the kind of characters you might meet if you go past the DIY stores to meet the

suppliers.

More philosophical and a bit less illustrative than I was really looking for, but a pretty good book of process nonetheless. At the moment, I am more project oriented. A good read for the "trying to decide what you're going to do" part of zen garden planning, with some good information.

While this isn't an all inclusive guide to japanese gardening, its a fun and inspiring read. After reading this book I set about building my own japansese style garden; and while I didn't find myself referring to it for specifics of actually building the garden - I did find myself referring to it for motivation. Egan's self-effacing sense of humour is particularly enjoyable, as he struggles with such tribulations as moving a large rock, or dealing with a leaking pond (problems that I also found myself dealing with). I would highly recommend this book to any do-it-yourselfer thinking about building a japansese style garden.

I enjoyed the author's witty and honest tale of what turned out to be like most of my "how-hard-can-it-be?" projects. He is a great story teller and I like the photos of the progress. I did feel that, near then end, he lost some of his early enthusiasm in writing it and perhaps was just trying to get the book finished, as his project segued from into a book deal with a deadline. Or perhaps, like some of my own projects, he was tired and just looking forward to finally getting it finished so he could sit back enjoy the results of his labors. But he did a beautiful job both building the garden and writing the book; it was worth the cover price and it's a book I have kept.

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