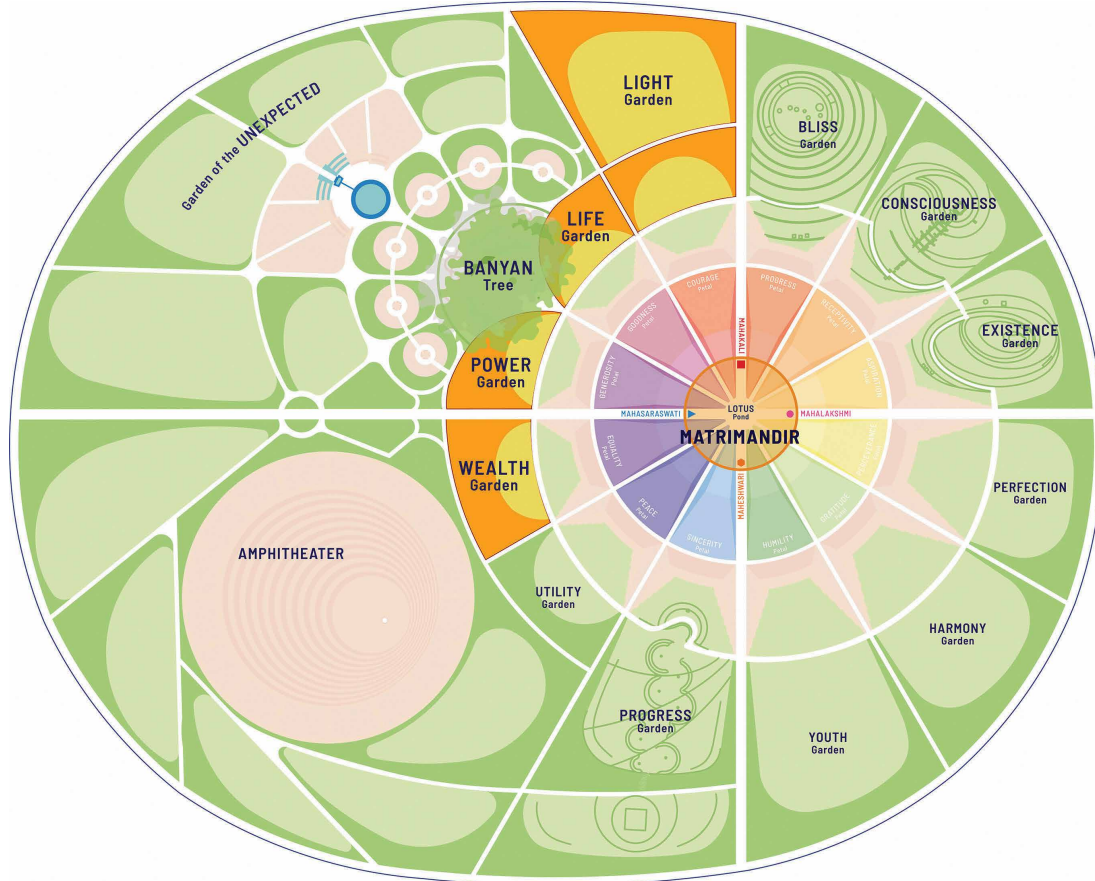


Matrimandir

November 2019



The four gardens included in the design call are Light, Life, Power and Wealth, shown here just to the west of the Matrimandir.

The Open Call for Designs of the Gardens of Light, Life, Power and Wealth

One of the very active areas of work at Matrimandir in the last months has been the preparation of the design brief and the organization of the process to launch a worldwide call for design proposals for the next four of the Matrimandir's main gardens.

To the west of the Matrimandir, near the Banyan Tree, are the gardens of Light, Life, Power and Wealth.

Beginning in early October the design call was mailed out to noted landscape designers around the world. Experienced garden designers from Auroville and the Sri Aurobindo Ashram too are invited to participate in the design exercise.

In its basic form this new design call is similar to the call that went out last year to a more restricted field for the design of the Garden of the Unexpected, – a

garden for children, – which is located on the western edge of the Matrimandir Oval.

That earlier call, in its process and results, was harmonious and satisfied a need for fresh design input for the Matrimandir gardens.

That process has now been adapted and refined for this new larger call for the next four of the main gardens.

The present process will involve the interaction of three bodies to receive and evaluate the incoming designs: an Observing Committee to facilitate the process, the community of Auroville and an international panel of Experts.

There is a management and observing committee comprised of the Matrimandir executives plus one member each, of the Auroville Working Committee,

the Auroville Council and the Residents' Assembly Service. This group will monitor the process and maintain its transparency and smooth flowing.

Secondly there is the Auroville community which has already given feedback on the design brief. The community will also be invited to give feedback on the design proposals through various avenues including a "public panel" at a later stage.

The third element is an international panel of experts on gardens and design who will shortlist the incoming proposals and also rate them according to their suitability for Matrimandir.

The combined evaluations of the Auroville community and the panel of experts will yield the final design choice for each of the four gardens.

We are very hopeful that this process will bring forth inspiring designs for the gardens of Light, Life, Power and Wealth.

We will keep you updated on the progress of this design event over the next months.

For further information or registration please visit www.matrimandir.org. The last date for conceptual design submission is 12th December 2019.

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The Garden of the Unexpected

This new garden is under steady development. We have shown you some of the highlights in the last two newsletters, starting with its inaugural collective tree planting on February 21st 2019. Currently, work continues to be focused in the second section of this four part garden. This section highlights a large rock garden, an artist's corner, and a fascinating arrangement of large boulders. Children love boulders! This has already become a favorite spot for children to explore in the evenings.

New materials have been brought in for this construction work, such as cut blocks of lateritic stone sourced from the low lands of Kerala. This

reddish brown stone with its many textured white inclusions has been used to create the border walls of the central stone garden.

A bird bath has been carved from a local granite boulder. Bird baths are a wonderful attractor for the many species of birds that populate the forests of Auroville. This section of the gardens has also been planted with a group of "butterfly trees" (*Caesalpinia coriaria*) with the Mother's significance: "Intuitive Knowledge". When flowering, the trees are known to attract large numbers of butterflies. This will be a delight for the children exploring this part of the garden.



Creating the base layer for the "rock garden" in the Garden of the Unexpected on October 10th 2019.

Day by day this section of the garden takes its shape. The development is steady and fascinating.

In the adjacent section of this garden a shallow pond has been excavated under the shade of a large

“Wisdom” tree (*Albizia Lebbeck*). The pond will be lined with waterproofing materials and then planted with a lush array of greenery.

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The Cobblestone Road around the Gardens

The outer border of all the gardens within the 22 acre Matrimandir oval is a service road which runs continuously for a distance of 1100 meters. The road is to be 3.5 meters wide and during the last month we have begun to lay the cobblestone surface of the first 100 meters of the road.

The design of the pattern of the cobbles has been laid out to follow the overall rectangular pattern of the granite and sandstone slabs which make up the pathways running inside the gardens towards the Matrimandir.

In Europe one would see cobblestones arranged perhaps in artistic circular arcs or floral patterns, but here we have kept to the mosaic like pattern of our internal gardens pathways.

The central 10 lines of cobbles are in red granite and are rectangular, while the bands of stones running alongside this central strip are made from gray granite and are square.

Laying the cobbles is a meticulous work as the masons position them one by one and tamp them down on the compacted base layers made of granite chips.

The final step after positioning the cobbles will be to fill all the joints with a flexible cement grout to make a reasonably smooth surface for pedestrians and wheel chairs.

One can easily imagine the generations to come who will stroll along this narrow road viewing the Matrimandir on one side and, on the other, the water body which is to surround the whole of this island. There will be greenery and benches, places to be quiet and to contemplate. There will be trees here and there to offer shade while one soaks in the beauty and serenity of the Matrimandir gardens. It is delightful to imagine the future beauty of this walkway.



Masons laying granite cobblestones on a first portion of the Oval Road which surrounds the Matrimandir gardens.

The Rainwater Harvesting Channel around the Gardens

Just beyond the roadway which has been described earlier, will be the beginning of the future water body which the Mother envisaged as surrounding the Matrimandir gardens.

One project which has been very much in focus over the last months has been to define in more detail the location and shape of the shore line of this future lake. This shore will follow the oval road at the edge of the gardens. As it happens, a number of large trees, mostly majestic native Neems, have grown up naturally over the years along the border of the gardens. The shore line, therefore, has been given some curves and bends to allow it to pass around the trees so as not to disturb them. Their shade will be much appreciated in the future by those moving along this shoreline.

As a preliminary phase in the creation of this water body, we will make a fairly narrow channel, 7 meters

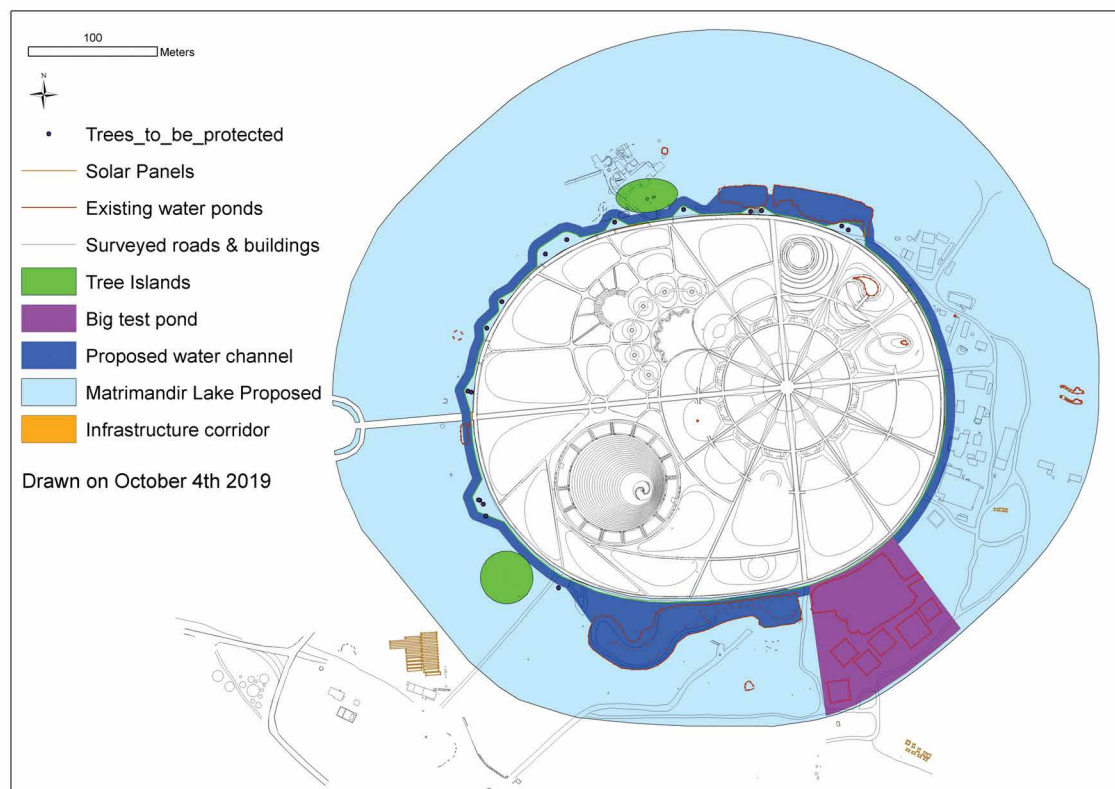
wide on average, to act as water harvesting body all around the gardens oval. It will collect runoff storm water from the entire 22 acres of the Matrimandir gardens.

This channel is about 1100 meters long, and will feed into a large storage pond on the south eastern edge of the gardens. The pond will be a first phase of the full scale future lake, which would be built in sections over the years to fully surround the entire gardens oval, creating an island.

Soon the work of excavating and shaping this first 7 meter wide water channel will begin.

It is to be lined with an HDPE foil, 2 millimetres thick to create a long lasting water proof sealing layer.

The map below depicts this rainwater harvesting channel in deep blue, while the 100 meter wide band known as the future “isolating zone” around Matrimandir is shown in light blue. The rainwater storage pond, to be built next year, is shown in purple at the lower right.



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Important information on sending your offerings: Contributions to Matrimandir are exempt under sec. 80G of the Indian Income Tax Act. You can send us by post your offering by DD/Cheque payable to “Matrimandir”. You may also give your offering in cash/cheque/DD at the Matrimandir Office during your visit for meditation.