

# Miyazu Gardens Walk

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Enter through the **Welcome Gate** **1**. The Yukimi gata lantern came from the Nelson Harbour Board, gifted to them by the Tokai Pulp Co, in 1971 to mark first visit of the woodchip carrier *Nelson Maru*. The gate is largely constructed from old timber recycled from the port.

Step across the Dragon pond on the solid square **stepping stones** or Sawatari-ishi **2**. These were once the granite foundation stones of the old Trafalgar Street Bank of New Zealand. The bonsai pine that leans out over the water by the stepping stones was donated by Jim Sharland. It grew in a large saucer for 30 years before it was planted here.

The **Wisteria Arbour** **3** is a mass of lilac blossom in October and either side of the pathway are camellias. Both plants often feature in traditional Japanese gardens. A plaque at your left celebrates progress on the garden in 1993. A number of plaques can be found around the garden celebrating many landmark moments in its history.

The **Karesansui** **4**, a waterless rock and sand garden, also known as the Zen Garden, has large limestone rocks placed carefully within a coarse sandy area. In the sanzon group of three rocks the tallest of the group represents heaven, mid-size is man and flat lower rock represents earth.

The **Yin Yang lawn** **5** contrasts golden gravel with green soft lawn. Through the peasant gateway beyond are shakkei or views of borrowed landscape. In the distance Japanese pines cover man-made mounds and glimpses of the Haven and Boulder Bank can be seen. Pines are numerous in Miyazu on the legendary

Amanohashidate, a narrow sandbar which extends 3.6km across Miyazu Bay, said to be the “bridge to heaven”. It is known as one of the three great natural wonders of Japan.

Rest at the **gazebo** **6** and view the pond. Traditional turtle and crane islands can be seen. The animals are ancient symbols of longevity and immortality linked with the Japanese legends of the Mystic Isles. Turtle Island by the zig zag **yatsu hashi bridge** **7** has a head stone and tail stone and horizontally-laid rocks to suggest its legs and carapace. The miniature pine planted on the island strengthens its connection with immortality.

The **seven story pagoda** **8** was built by the garden’s designer Peter Coubrough. Look to the skyline above Wakapuaka Cemetery to see the four witches which are massive yew trees at nearby Wakapuaka cemetery.

The **red arched bridge** **9** crosses to Crane Island where two large rocks represent crane wings. The **ancient camellia** **10** by the low arch bridge bears both red and white blooms and was over a hundred years old in 1991, when it was transplanted from Nile Street to Miyazu.

The **Tea House pavilion** **11** has a large shoe removing stone at the opening by the wooden step. A graceful stone basin, or tsukubai, has running water to be used for ritual cleaning prior to participating in tea ceremonies. The circular moon window frames a view of the **Oki gata lantern** **12**. It is on a stone peninsula that symbolises Nelson’s Boulder Bank, a landscape feature similar to Miyazu’s Amanohashidate.



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Miyazu Garden was opened in October 1995 to celebrate a sister city link with Miyazu in Japan. The design is based on the traditional principles of the Shinto and Buddhist religions. Important aesthetic, historic and spiritual aspects are considered in this garden that aims to replicate nature, with features that specifically reference Nelson and sister city Miyazu.

An extended audio version of this walk can be downloaded from [www.theprow.org.nz](http://www.theprow.org.nz). More heritage information, and heritage walks and events can be found on [www.nelsoncitycouncil.co.nz](http://www.nelsoncitycouncil.co.nz) including other garden walks.

