



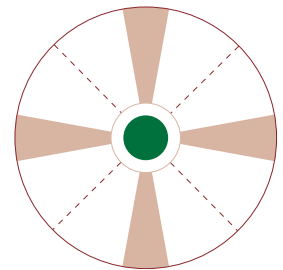
GITIGAAN MASHKIKI

(Ojibwa translation for Medicine Wheel Garden)

There are different medicine wheel gardens created by different first nations communities found throughout the world. Each medicine wheel garden or “GITIGAAN MASHKIKI” is unique and is associated with a variety of symbolisms and teachings. The garden is designed in the shape of a medicine wheel, a circle divided into four sections. Many aboriginal groups regard the shape and the number of sections used in a medicine wheel, sacred. The significance of the circle has long been expressed in ritual practice and in artistic traditions. All living beings are related and the strength of that circle nourishes life.

The Medicine Wheel Garden created at Heart Lake Conservation Area is the “Four Directions Medicine Wheel Garden” envisioned by a male Elder from the Anishnabe Nation. Through this Medicine Wheel Garden, the Elder wanted to honour one of the oldest things we have - the four cardinal directions.

The Four Directions Medicine Wheel Garden is a garden of traditional medicinal plants that were used extensively by the aboriginal community for a variety of purposes.



Vision behind the Garden

The four directions came with creation and according to the Elder, we seek knowledge from these four directions, we get power from these four directions and when we call out to them in prayer, they will bring things to us.

When I look at the Four Directions Medicine Wheel Garden, I see yellow in the east, red in the south, black in the west and white in the north. The sun rises yellow in the east. It's always going to rise in the east, and it's always going to set in the west. So we have yellow in the east and black in the west. And red in the south because we have summer – it indicates the summer sky. The north is white because of the icebergs and snow.

The paths are another component of the Medicine Wheel Garden that represent all the nations of the world. And my thought is that all the peoples of the world could attend. The teachings of the Medicine Wheel Garden and know about the plants, so I am putting the path of all the nations of the world leading into there. These are the white nation, the yellow nation, the red nation and the black nation. They can converge in there and learn about our plants and our sacred spaces.

Each person must find their own Medicine Wheel. The Medicine Wheel Garden is a tool, we start out each day in the east and move through the directions. The seasons move in a circle from spring to summer to fall to winter and life moves in a circle from infant to youth to adults to elders.

This Medicine Wheel Garden has been made possible through a wonderful partnership between the Peel Aboriginal Network, Toronto and Region Conservation, the Heart Lake Community Action Group, the Region of Peel, the City of Brampton and tremendous volunteer support from the local community.