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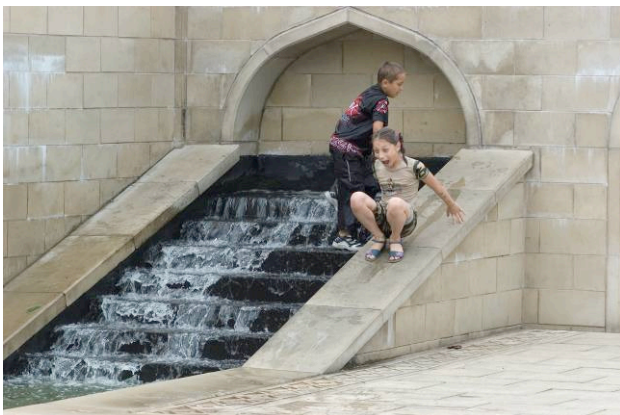
Garden designer specialising in Islamic Gardens

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IFEES founder and Director

For more information  
about BGCI and its work please visit  
[www.bgci.org](http://www.bgci.org)



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A research project on

# ISLAMIC GARDENS



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# IN THE UK

dynamics of conservation  
culture and communities

*The sun and the moon follow their calculated courses; the plants  
and the trees submit to His designs; He has raised up the sky. He  
has set the balance so that you may not exceed in the balance:  
weigh with justice and do not fall short in the balance.  
(Qur'an 55: 5-9)*



2009 - 2010



Plants for the Planet

# ISLAMIC GARDENS IN THE UK

## DYNAMICS OF CONSERVATION CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES

There is a long tradition within the Islamic world of creating gardens. These are often designed as a reflection of the heavenly realm as described in the Qur'an. Such 'paradise gardens' incorporate elements of shade and water within an enclosed space, attesting to the desert environment from where Islam emerged and where such elements hold a particular significance. As Islam spread, Islamic garden design began to incorporate elements which reflected the cultural diversity of the Muslim world. This project aims to explore how and to what extent Islamic gardening traditions might develop to actively encourage biodiversity conservation and environmental sustainability, drawing upon the sources of Islam.

The Qur'an states that human beings have been chosen as 'stewards' of the earth and that we have a duty to manage and care for our environment.

*Thus We have made you to succeed one another as stewards on the earth, that we might behold how you acquit yourselves. (Qur'an 10:14)*

*Corruption has flourished on land and sea as a result of people's actions and He will make them taste the consequences of some of their own actions so that they may turn back. (Qur'an 30:41)*

This duty of environmental care is further emphasised by sayings of the Prophet Mohammed which clearly encourage sharing of the earth's resources and discourage activities which are wasteful. For example he is reported to have said:

*"If anyone plants a tree or sows a field and humans, beasts or birds eat from it, he should consider it a charity on his part".  
"Whoever plants a tree and looks after it with care until it matures and becomes productive, will be rewarded in the hereafter".*

Botanic Gardens Conservation International represents over 700 botanic gardens worldwide in 118 countries. Through policy, publications, training, education and on-the-ground conservation work, BGCI supports and empowers its members and the wider conservation community to reverse the threat of the extinction crisis, that faces one third of all plants. BGCI has been established for over 20 years and has its head office in London. It has worked with partners in the Middle East for many years and has developed an interest in the question of whether and how Islamic gardens which have sustainability and biodiversity conservation at their heart, could be developed within the UK.

### Aims

The aim of this project is to investigate the need, value and viability of establishing Islamic Gardens in the UK, based on Islamic ecological principles.

The research will offer recommendations for ways in which these gardens could incorporate ideas of environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation.

We hope to assess how, and to what extent Islamic gardens that reflect these principles might engage the attention and engagement of British Muslims.

As a result of the project, we hope to provide evidence for ways in which gardens built on Islamic principles can enhance integration and inter-faith co-operation within communities.

### Outcomes

The findings of the research will be disseminated to a wide variety of audiences and via a range of media. This includes academic journal articles, and a presentation at the World Botanic Gardens Congress in Dublin, Ireland, in June 2010.

We will also disseminate findings to British Muslim environmental groups, and to all those who have participated in our research.

A summary report will be placed on the web sites of the BGCI and the Islam-UK Centre.

We hope that the outcomes of the project will be beneficial to British Muslim communities, by giving them a sense of pride in their heritage and religious tradition in its UK setting.

### Methods

This study will employ a range of qualitative research methods to gather data from a variety of perspectives.

Methods include:

**Interviews:** with members of British Muslim environmental groups, directors of botanic gardens, and local authority officers responsible for parks and gardens.

**Online Survey:** distributed to members of British Muslim environmental groups, contacts of the Islam-UK Centre, and BGCI contacts, such as Botanic Gardens Education Network (BGEN) and Plant Network.

**Focus Groups:** with British Muslim environmental groups.

**Consultation:** with key specialists in Islamic Gardens and Islamic environmentalism.

*It is he who produces both trellised and untrellised gardens, date palms, crops of diverse flavours, the olive and the pomegranate, alike yet different. So when they bear fruit, eat some of it, paying what is due on the day of harvest, but do not be wasteful: God does not like wasteful people (Qur'an 6:141)*