

Getting started

1. Choose a location for your sculpture so that you can conveniently enjoy it regularly. Plants are selected for the sculpture that can tolerate moist soil and indirect light, though many will do well in partial sun, too.
2. Take care in moving your sculpture. Complete sculptures weigh up to 40 lbs., and the rocks may shift or fall if unsupported in the tray. The figurines are very fragile - if they are not permanently affixed to the stone, set them aside in a safe place first. The rocks are **very abrasive - use gloves** when handling them.
3. If the sculpture is located on a finished wood surface, a protective placemat or a sheet of clear plastic can be used beneath the tray to protect the finish. Use an adequate size so that there is at least a 2" protected margin on all sides of the tray. Handle the ShanChuan tray carefully to avoid scratching the surface.
4. With the tray in position, place the rocks using the photo and the outlines on the tray bottom (if provided). A bit of petroleum jelly (Vaseline) will make it easier to route the electrical cables through the slot in the tray, as well as prevent seeping of water along the cable. Finally, set any figurine(s) in place.
5. Add tap water to just below the slot where the pump cord exits the tray (mineral-free water can cause foggers to fail). If your landscape includes a boat or standing water bird, the water level should meet them realistically.
6. Plug in the fountain and fogger (if included in your sculpture). Depending on the humidity and air currents in your room, the fog may condense on the edge of the tray or on the surrounding surface; a placemat or sheet of plastic beneath the tray will protect the surface.
7. Check the water level again after the pump has started circulating and the rocks have begun to soak up water. Whenever the water level is too low, the fogger will shut off, or gurgling from the fountain pump will let you know it's time to add water. If little water seems to be circulating, the pump may need to be primed – simply start and stop it a few times. When you add water or touch the pump or fogger, unplug the power first.

Maintenance

As long as the proper water level is maintained, it is not necessary to water the plants. Even when the pump is left off for a few days, the porous rocks will naturally draw water to the plants; some sculptures also include wicks to help keep soil moist. Avoid running the pump or fogger longer than 8 hours per day. An inexpensive plug-in lamp timer or motion-detector switch can help preserve the components and save energy. Periodically turning the pump on for a few minutes throughout the day is also an excellent way to prevent splashing, which may occur when the rocks are dry.

If the pump is run regularly, the water may not require changing more than once every month. A common turkey baster or hand siphon helps to remove the water without disturbing the sculpture. When empty, wipe the bottom of the tray free of deposits.

The fountain and fogger will run well without much attention, but they suffer when the water level gets too low – check the level regularly. If the pump is turned off for prolonged periods, the water may tend to develop algae and may require changing more frequently. Occasionally, the pump may require disassembly and rinsing to clear debris from the internal components.

If leaving the sculpture unattended for a week or two, fill the tray with water to a level just below to the cord slot, and loosely drape a thin plastic sheet (dry-cleaning bags work well) over the entire sculpture to retain moisture until you return.

Over time, mineral deposits may form inside and along the edges of the tray. If a dry towel won't remove them, take out the rocks and figurines, empty the tray of water, and use ordinary vinegar and a cloth to rub off the deposits. A kitchen scrubbing pad designed for non-stick pans can help with heavier deposits. Be sure to rinse the tray thoroughly with clean water before replacing the rocks and plants. Remember to ***wear gloves whenever you handle the rocks.***

If your local water is especially hard (with lots of minerals), distilled water can reduce the amount of deposits, but can also cause foggers to fail. Tap water is also more effective than distilled or spring water in controlling the growth of algae.

Adding aroma

The porous rock of ShanChuan Islands™ is an ideal medium for essential oils, to add another dimension to the experience. These are just a few of the many oils used in aromatherapy that you can try by simply adding a few drops on a bare, dry area of the rock:

- Basil – spicy, licorice aroma
- Birch tar – strong campfire aroma
- Cade – strong woody aroma
- Cedar - like the inside of a cedar chest
- Choya ral – smoky forest aroma
- Fir, juniper berry, pine, spruce - evergreen aromas
- Jasmine – sweet, intense floral aroma
- Lavender - sweet, floral aroma, repels insects
- Lemongrass - lemony, grassy aroma, repels insects
- Oak Moss – heavy, earthy bark aroma
- Ravensara - strong, tree-resin aroma
- Vetiver - very strong earthy aroma

Adding music

For an especially soothing experience, try some of this background music while you enjoy your sculpture:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7apji-hg5j4>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ir4-vRunIe8>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XbcnQCHpdmE>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GxNJImzqz4>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xb3dOy6SUKU>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xb3dOy6SUKU>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6HbU9Mpcmw>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6UITRjhijI>

Enjoying the changing landscape

One of the unique pleasures of these sculptures is that they are constantly changing, inviting you to simply observe, or take part by pruning and shaping each plant. You can also change the landscape of your sculpture with a variety of tropical and sub-tropical plants. Most plants of this size retail for about \$5 each and are available from your local greenhouse, so feel free to experiment.

The plants listed below are some of those that have been grown successfully in ShanChuan Islands:

- Alternanthera, e.g., Thin Gold, Red Threads
- *Asparagus fern (asparagus densiflorus 'sprengerii')***
- Baby's Tears (soleirolia soleirolii)
- *Buddhist pine (podocarpus macrophyllus)***

- Dwarf Boston fern (*nephrolepis exaltata*)
- *Dwarf boxwood (buxus microphylla compacta)***
- Dwarf brush cherry (*Eugenia myrtifolia nana*)
- *Dwarf creeping fig (figus pumila minima) ***
- *Dwarf cyperus (cyperus alternifolius gracilla, cyperus isocladus)***
- *Dwarf English ivy (hedera helix), e.g., "Itsy Bitsy", "Spetchley", "Feen Fingers, "Duck Foot", "Needlepoint", "Green Globe" ***
- Dwarf Kenilworth ivy (*cymbalaria aequatriloba*)
- *Dwarf myrtle (myrtus communis minima)***
- Dwarf natal plum (*axylia buxifolia*)
- Dwarf pomegranate (*punica granatum nana*)
- Dwarf violet (*viola "Yokushimana nana"*)
- Dwarf weeping Barbados cherry (*malpighia pendiculata compacta*)
- Fujian tea (*carmine microphylla*); flowering
- *Ming Aralia (Polyscias fruticosa)***
- Nea (*nea buxifolia*)
- Neanthe Bella Palm (*chamaedorea elegans*)
- *Oakleaf fig (figus pumila quercifolia)***
- String of Turtles (*Peperomia prostrata*)
- Perennial Centaury (*centaurium scilloides*)
- Psuederanthemum (*psuederanthemum sinuatum*)
- Red Stem (or Blue) Pilea (*pilea glauca*)
- Singapore holly (*malpighia coccigera*); flowering
- *South African Boxwood (myrsine africana)***
- *Willow leaf fig (figus salicifolia)***

*** may cause allergic or toxic reactions if chewed or eaten by pets or humans*

When replanting your sculpture, shake or soak off most of the soil in the original nursery containers. Mix this soil with course sand or aquatic media, and reuse it to fill in around the roots. This will help your plants drain well.

Feeding your plants about every two weeks with a fertilizer balanced for indoor tropical plants helps to replace the nutrients flushed out by the constantly running water.

Enjoy ShanChuan Islands!

ShanChuan Islands™ are based on ancient arts developed over centuries, which you are continuing to develop today – thank you!

Enjoy yours as it grows and changes, and please share your comments, questions, and suggestions.