



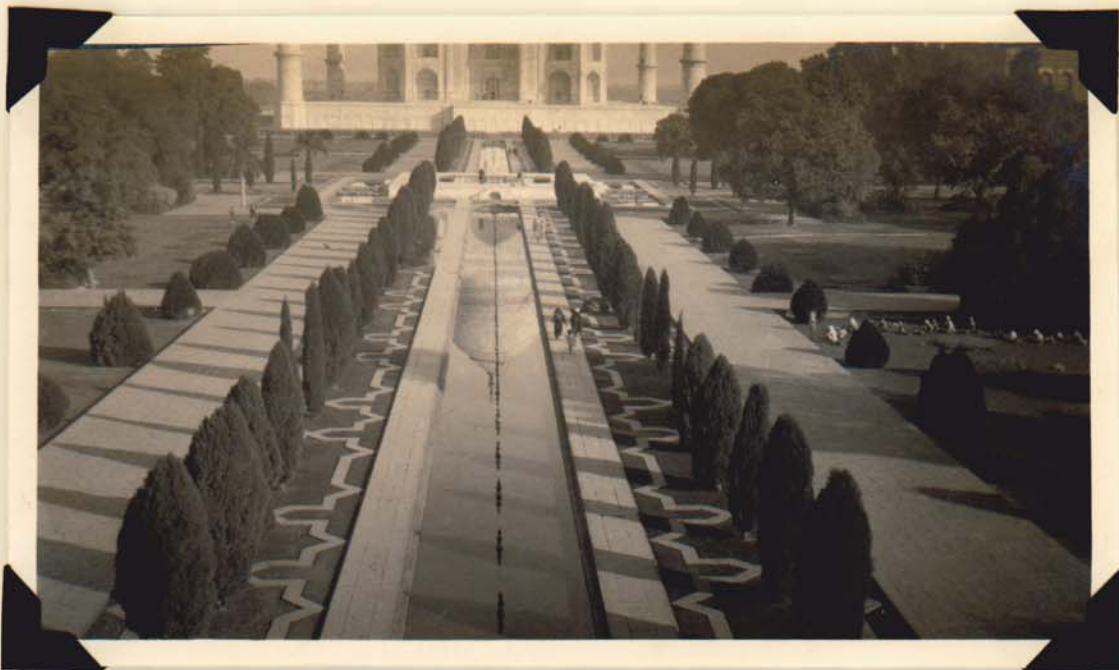
"Fishing Pavilion," with the water channel, here bordered with beds, arranged in geometric shape. The planting is of Phlox in yellow and red varieties.

# THE GARDENS OF INDIA

*Potted plants of every description, from orange and jessamine trees to low-growing flowers, were placed in the corners and around the pools. The benches and sometimes the floors were covered with carpets, and often canopies of silk were erected to keep off the sun.*

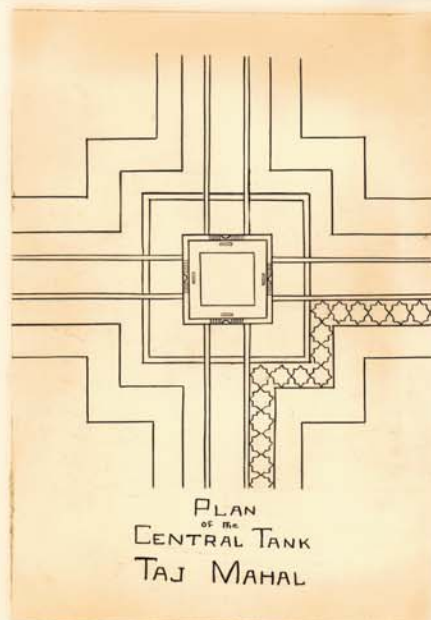
ELIZABETH K. ROYS, 1927

**G**arden in India describes all spaces surrounding a building. So writes Elizabeth Roys, whose account of Indian gardens is architecturally rather than horticulturally focused. Roys leads us on a tour of outdoor rooms both majestic and modest and judiciously centers her survey on temple, tomb, and palace gardens. She refuses to consider so-called public gardens, arguing that they were laid out in a British style and that Indians are usually forbidden entry.



The plan of the garden of the Taj Mahal can be seen quite clearly from the top of the entrance gate. Here one can see the main water channel, flanked by paths and crossed by a secondary water channel, with a square tank at the point of intersection.

**M**ost Indians are able, however, to enjoy the gardens surrounding tombs and temple courtyards. Roys contrasts the spare paved courtyards of India's mosques to their tree-filled Hindu counterparts and provides a fascinating list of sacred trees found in Hindu temples, including the asok, *Jonesia asoca*, under which the Buddha was born, and the snake-tree or neem, *Melia azadirachta*.



**T**urning to classic gardens of the Mughal period, Roys emphasizes the paramount importance of water and notes the ubiquitous quartered plan. A square water tank in the center of an enclosed court is essential, as are fragrant, flowering plants in pots. Flowers are rare outside such courtyards, as vibrant green lawns and large reflecting pools are considered a more elegant background for the white marble and red sandstone of the architecture. Nowhere was this use of green and white more effective than at the Taj Mahal. However, Roys reserves her most captivating depiction for the ruined island garden of the Palace at Amber in Jaipur, a mere ghost of a once enchanting landscape.



A very good example of a "Snake-bite tree," one that stood in the main street in Miraj. It will be remembered that a leaf from this tree, applied to a snake bite, will cure it. When cured, the rag that held the leaf on is tied around the tree as a sign of the recovery.



Looking down from the Palace walls onto the "Island Gardens" at Amber one can see quite plainly the original plan of it. Unfortunately it is now in a state of almost absolute ruin, and one has some difficulty in tracing it through-out.