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Garden Design

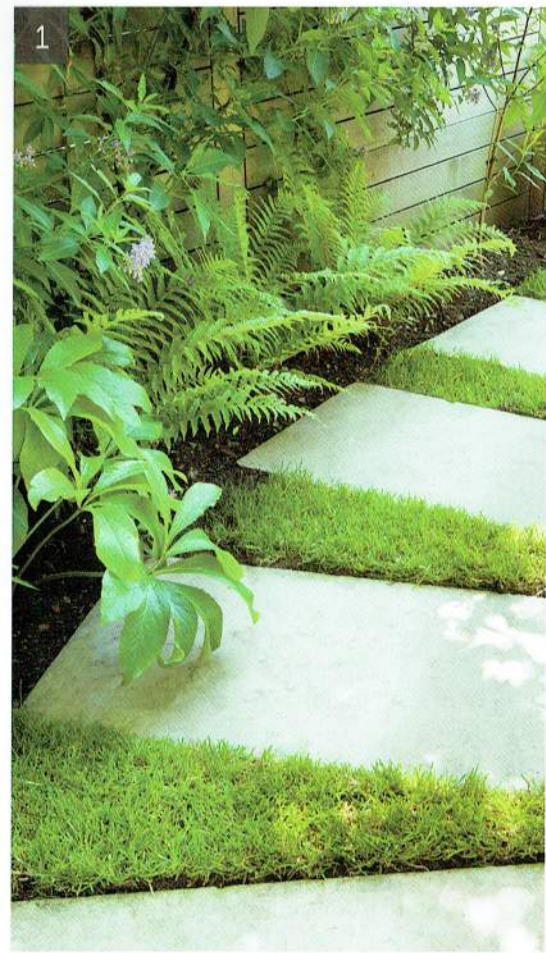
A Book of Ideas



DESIGNS FOR ALL TASTES

How a garden is designed is entirely up to the owner. There is no right or wrong style, just personal choice, but the range of styles – historical, contemporary, country, cottage, naturalistic – can be daunting. The only constraints, which should be checked during the design phase, involve structures requiring planning permission, such as fences and how high they can be, and limits on the use of impermeable surfaces. Visit as many gardens as possible for inspiration.







Matching Paving Materials to Function

There are many different paving materials available, but some are better suited than others to a particular function. Being guided by what will work on a practical level can prevent costly mistakes. Climate, function, and level of skill are key factors to consider.

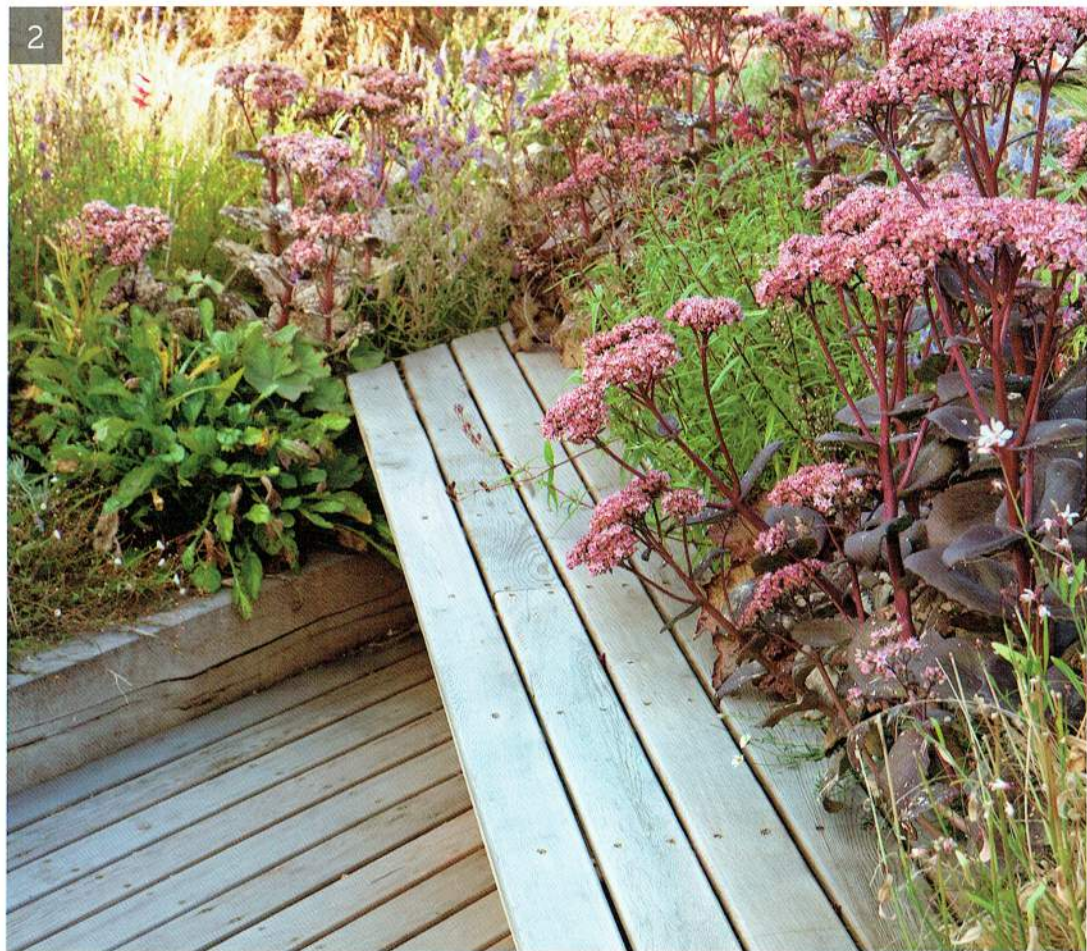
Some materials are better at withstanding frost than others, which is a particular consideration in more northern latitudes. Appreciating the function of a surface is important when selecting the material and the bond (laying pattern). The purpose of hard paving is to provide a clean, even, foot-friendly, stable, and quick-draining surface. Areas that have to support heavy loads and vehicle movement are subject to a different set of design criteria from those used solely by pedestrians. The more a surface is used, the stronger the paving has to be. The strength of unit paving depends on the bond and how well the units – concrete, brick, or natural stone – interlock and carry loads. Correct and appropriate construction is essential.

1 Flagstones need to be of a certain thickness to be viable outdoors. A useful rule of thumb is that the larger the surface area of the flagstone, the thicker it should be. Like all paving, stepping stones or lengths of paving with wide grass joints should be bedded correctly if they are not to tilt and crack. Sedimentary stone, like the sandstone used in this London garden by Sara Jane Rothwell, might, depending on its provenance, be more susceptible to frost damage than dense natural stone such as granite (see also page 85).

2 Naturalistic country gardens call for a different type of paving from formal or contemporary gardens. Timber decking is really the only choice for boggy areas, where other paving would disappear.

3 Garden paths are usually constructed solely for pedestrian use and so can be paved in a variety of ways. Here, bricks in a diagonal herringbone pattern are contained by a row of the same bricks laid on edge.

4 Organic flowing forms or amorphous shapes are difficult to pave with unit paving. Loose material such as gravel, shown along the drive in Bryan's Ground, Herefordshire, is ideal for such situations.





Outdoor Staircases

Long flights of steps have a special quality and, by virtue of their sheer mass, can be a major feature of the garden. Ideally, they should be interrupted by landings, for a chance to catch one's breath and take in the view, but they should not appear daunting to climb. Steps in historic gardens are a great source of inspiration.

1 Links between the house and the garden are important. In this design by Sara Jane Rothwell, a flight of steps leads from the basement to the garden. Light colours enhance what could potentially have been a dark space, and vertical planting provides an optical link to the garden.

2 Timber steps can have their own elegance. These long, wide steps, by Anthony Paul Landscape Design, are staggered across the slope, making a change from the usual straight runs.

3 By using the same stone – honed basalt – for the coping as for the paving and the treads, Charlotte Rowe has created a sense of unity in this sleek design. Dark grey, almost black, mirrors have been added to the risers, giving a transparent quality to the steps.

4 Treads and stringers (the retaining edges that hold and support steps) can be opportunities for colour statements. Stuart Craine has paved these treads in natural stone, while the risers and surrounds are rendered and painted in a striking fuchsia-pink, a colour picked up in the planting.

5 Cantilevered steps have an undeniable elegance. The chunky timber treads in this design by Christopher Bradley-Hole appear to be floating, casting a deep shadow that masks the concrete supports.

6 Solid concrete block steps lead up to the front door. The plants on either side have substantially narrowed the width of the steps and at the same time softened the harsh nature of the concrete.

7 The walls, paving, and steps are all constructed from the same material, giving a wonderful coherence to the design.

