

STROLL DOWN THE GARDEN PATH

Pathways lead not only your feet but your eyes as well and act as the navigating compass for where to go in the garden. Few residential gardens are complete without one. Paths connect different or similar elements of interest together and allow the transition from one point to the next. For example, a path may connect the back door of the house with the garden shed. How you move from one area of interest to the next is a critical factor. The pathway will dictate the number of people that can join you on the garden's journey and set the speed of travel.

The design of the path sets the pace. Slow or fast. Interrupt a path of stone with moss to instantly slow down the pace. The pathway should be designed to let you know where to stop and start again. Stepping stones placed farther apart will cause you to slow down and look down. A two foot wide pathway is ideal for a solitary route and a five foot or greater width is comfortable for two (a similar width to a city sidewalk).

A rough or smooth walking surface will dictate who will venture down the path and how fast the individual will be moving. Pathways with smoother surfaces allow for easier mobility. Fieldstone, flagstone, gravel, mulch, creeping thyme, grass with stepping stones, concrete pavers, brick and cobblestone are just a few examples of materials used for paths. I love the look of pathways built with mixed materials...for interest and variety.

For instance, a layer of smooth pebbles in between concrete pavers with a rough texture or random flagstone with coarse coloured gravel in between. Create a tapestry effect on your garden floor by combining different textures and colours!

Decide whether the path should be straight or winding. Sometimes the pathway should lead from one point to the other using the most direct route possible; typically this means a straight path. Other times the design necessitates a meandering sort of route.

Remember, the point of a pathway is not only to lead to the destination but to create an experience along the way. One may choose to build straight formal paths near the residence while farther away selecting more curvy casual pathways. Typically, the smaller the pathway width the less formal it can be. Cedar mulch is a good example of an informal material for a path.

Where does your pathway lead? Let the garden path take you on your own adventure. Wherever you roam, there are bound to be lots of surprises!

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