

Routes and navigation

The location, width, pattern, and choice of materials of your path network will affect the way the garden is used. The routes determine how the area is navigated, as well as revealing views and framing spaces. Not all paths have the same role:

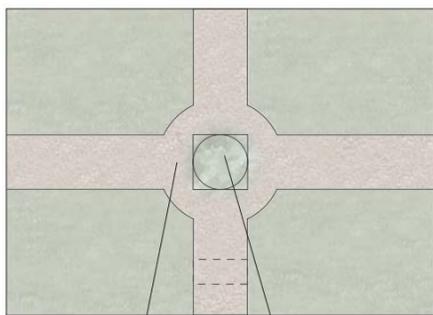
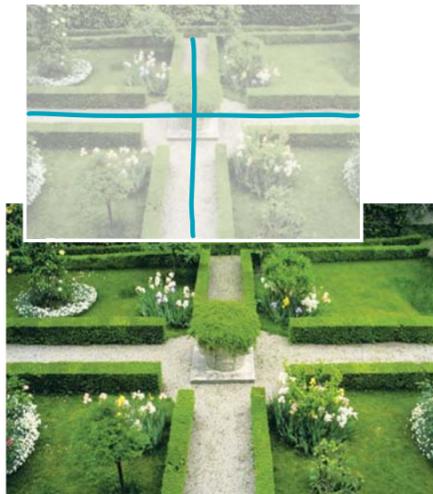
some, the primary routes, will dominate the vista and dictate the garden plan. The secondary routes are used occasionally, guiding you off the main thoroughfare to access areas hidden from sight, whether for practical or design purposes.

PRIMARY ROUTES

The main route or pathway through the garden not only links together the different areas, but also determines the basic design. For example, a main path laid straight down the centre suggests formality, while a curved route snaking through the garden creates the template for an informal plan. A wide path offers an open, inviting entrance, welcoming in visitors, and a narrow winding path,

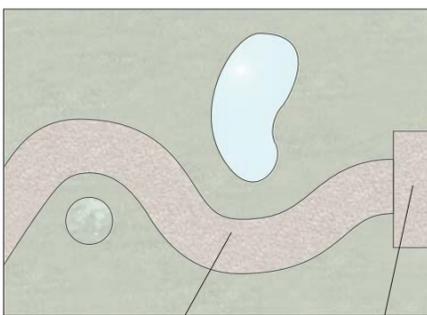
flanked by tall planting that obscures the view, adds mystery. To punctuate the end of the route, use a focal point, such as a bench, statue, or container, to create a visual full stop. By its nature, a primary route will be heavily used, so materials need to be durable as well as complementary to the overall garden style. Consider, too, how the shape and appearance of path edges fit into the design.

CENTRAL PATHS



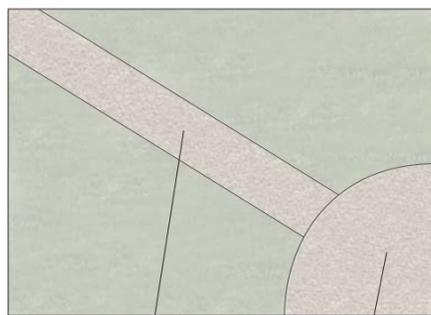
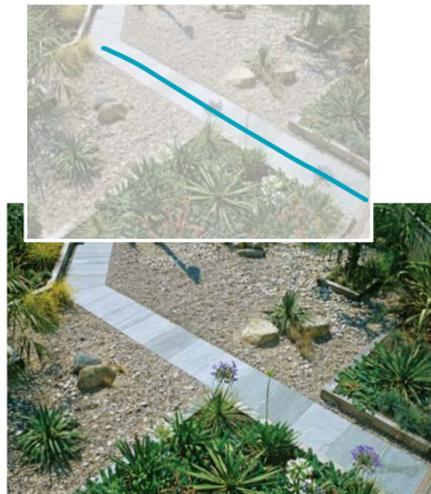
CLASSIC LAYOUT
A formal design is often built around a series of geometric and symmetrical paths. They are used to frame planted areas and meet at a specific focal point. There is usually no opportunity to deviate.

WINDING PATHS

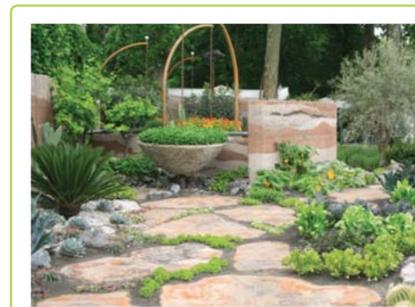


ENTICING CURVES
Routes that snake through the plot add a flowing sense of movement and an air of intrigue. They can be used to move around or join up key elements, as well as provide a few unexpected surprises.

DIAGONAL PATHS

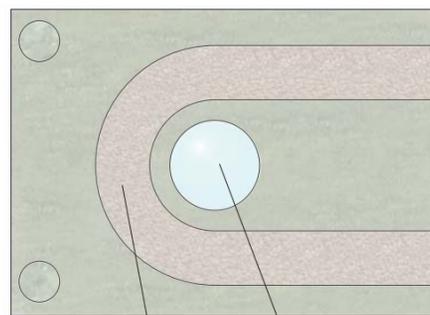


ILLUSION OF SIZE
Setting a path on a diagonal allows the garden to be viewed along its longest axis, thereby creating the illusion of greater space and depth in small spaces, drawing the eye away from the back boundaries.



ROAM FREE
Random paving with planted crevices creates a slightly erratic, informal design. With no defined route, the eye – and body – can move in several directions across the whole area.

CIRCULAR PATHS



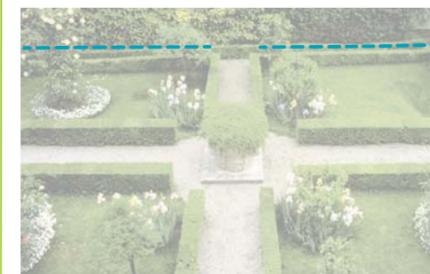
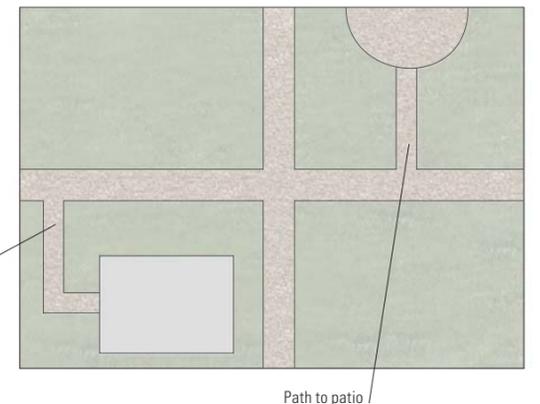
CONTINUOUS FLOW
A circular path takes you on a journey around the garden. It can be planned to provide alternative views of key features and different elements, depending on the direction in which you travel.

SECONDARY ROUTES

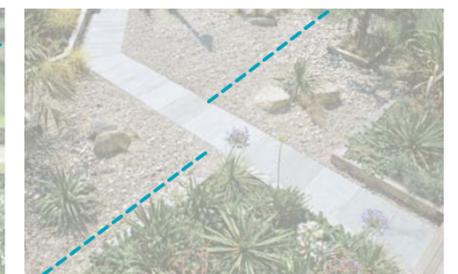
While primary routes determine the style of a garden, secondary routes should be less intrusive and subtly incorporated into the design. They can be both practical and ornamental, providing occasional access to a seating area, shed or compost heap, or leading you off the main path on an intimate journey to view a concealed corner. They can even cut through large flowerbeds, allowing you to experience colours and scents up close. Access routes need not be as durable as main paths, and can be created from softer, organic materials, or mown through an area of grass or wild flowers.

ACCESS PATHS

While helpful in offering access to other areas, plan secondary routes carefully and use sparingly to avoid a maze-like confusion of paths that make the design look muddled. They can be obvious (*as right*), or hidden in some way, either deliberately behind planting (*see below left*), or concealed within the design (*see below right*).



PRACTICAL SOLUTION
A path tucked away at the back of this formal design is not obvious, but it provides a practical, hard-surfaced route to the shed and compost bins.



HIDDEN APPROACH
The gravel to right and left of the path, while part of the design, also provides a direct, hard-wearing pathway to the garden's seating and play areas.



SECRET WAY
Visually, it appears as if the main pathway stops at the lawn, but concealed behind low hedging, a side path takes you off to a secluded area of the garden.



SUBTLE LINK
A path laid in the same paving material as the main circular route links the off-set dining area without impinging on the cleanliness of the design.