

HOW TO DESIGN

Lecture 5

Shapes and spaces

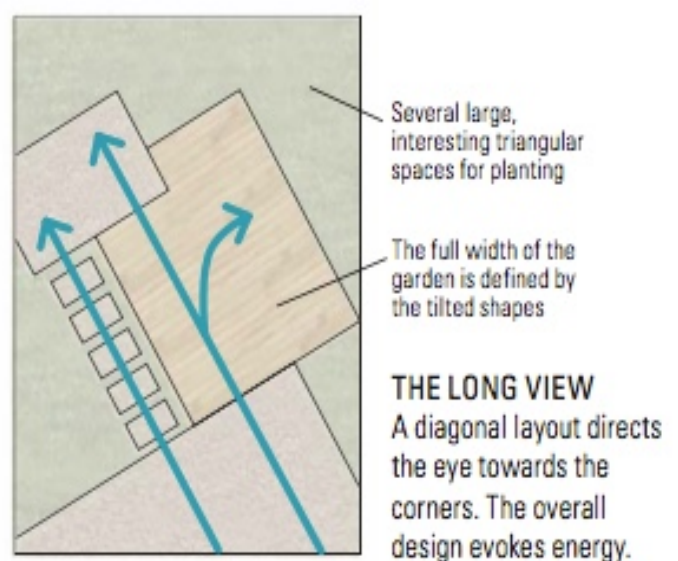
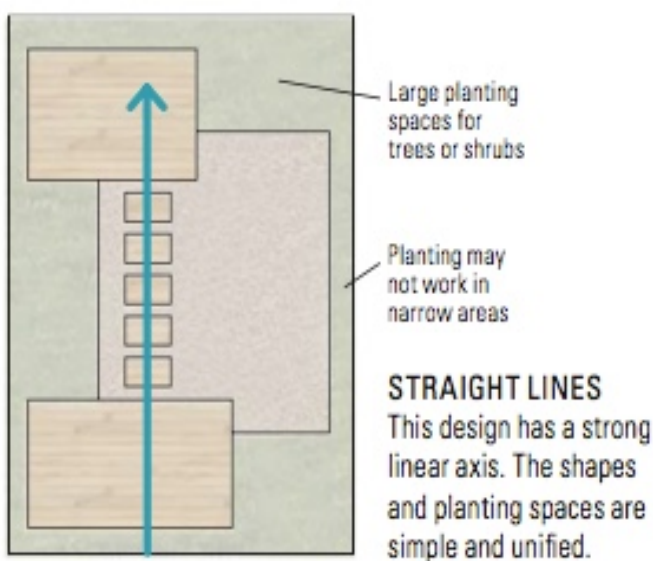
Choosing the basic ground shapes for your plot is a good starting point for a design: one simple shape is best for small gardens, but larger areas can accommodate a variety. How you fill the spaces between the shapes also determines the final look.

HOW TO USE SHAPES

When choosing squares, rectangles, or circles for a design, also consider the size, shape, and location of the surrounding buildings and boundaries. Experiment with different options: try layouts based on existing features, the structure of the house, and the way the garden will be viewed and used. In general, shapes with straight sides are easier and cheaper to build than circles and ovals.

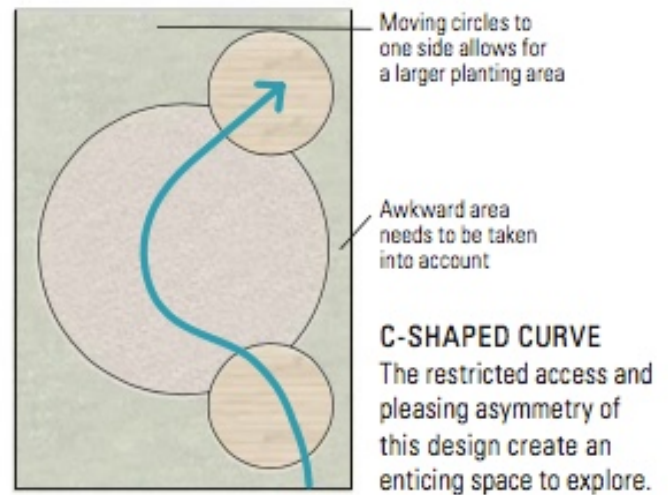
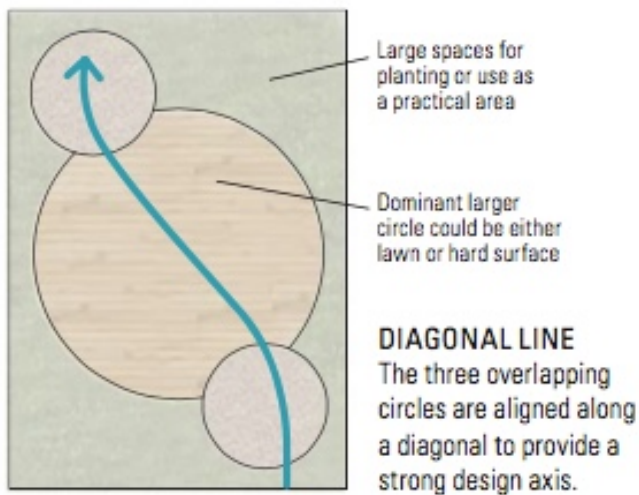
1- RIGHT-ANGLED SHAPES

A variety of these straight-sided shapes easily divide the garden into separate areas, provide a strong sense of direction, and exploit both long and short views. A long axis running down the garden will lengthen it visually; a diagonal layout creates more interest; blocks laid across the plot foreshorten the garden and take the eyes to the sides, making the space feel wider.



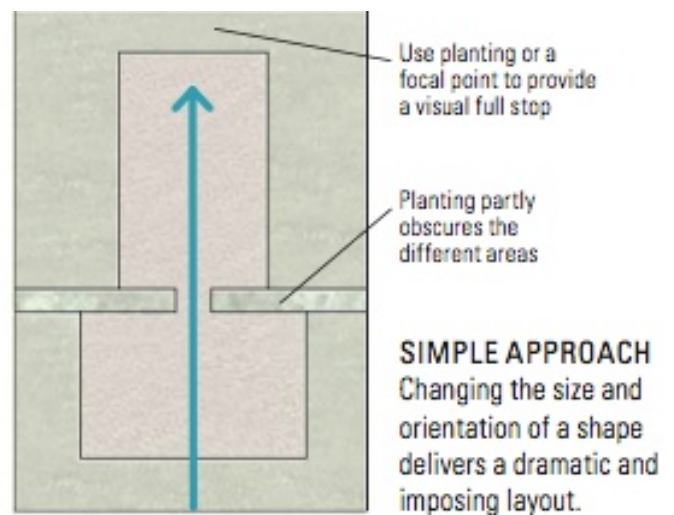
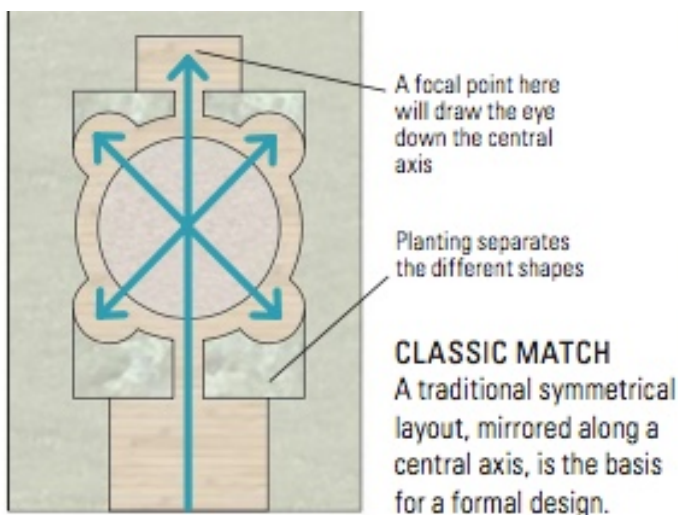
2- CIRCULAR SHAPES

Circles are unifying shapes, and while combinations can create pleasing effects, they do leave awkward pointed junctions that can be difficult to plant or designate. Work with geometric principles: for example, a path should lead you into the center of the circle; if set to the side, the design will appear unbalanced. Ovals have a long axis, providing direction and orientation.



3- MIXING SHAPES

Combining various shapes creates more interest, but throws up problems when a curve and a rectangle meet, or different materials connect. Generally, keep the layout simple, experimenting with scale and proportion to work out how many opposing shapes can be employed. Planting can be used to “glue” the shapes together, and to blur the joins between awkward junctions.

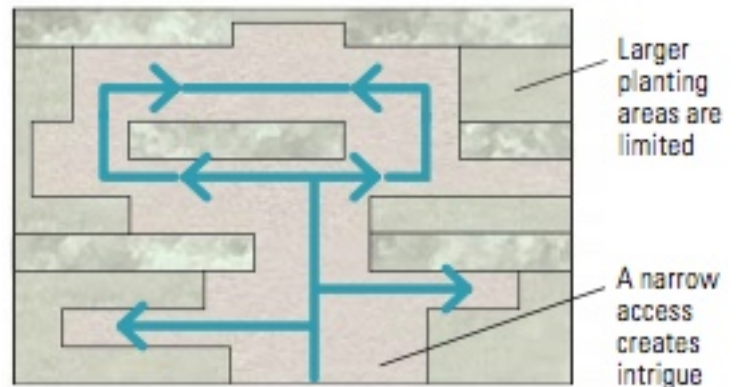


CLEAN LINES

Interlocking, steel-edged rectangular “trays” are the basis for this simple design. The metal cladding on the building creates a focal point and an effective visual boundary.

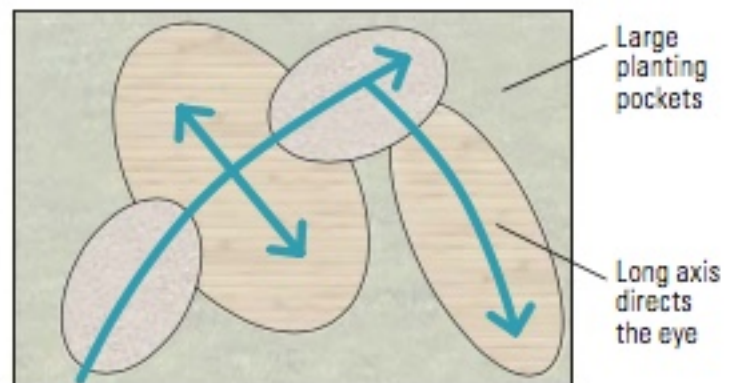
1-FULL WIDTH

A series of parallel divisions, with offset gaps for planting or practical structures, forces movement and views around the garden. The design draws you in.



2-SMOOTH FLOW

Using ovals instead of circles adds a smoother flow to the layout, because the eye is taken along their lengths, rather than in all directions as in a circle.



3-SECRET CORNERS

In this mixture of rectangles and curved hedges, only one part of the garden can be seen at any time. This allows the hidden areas to have different themes.

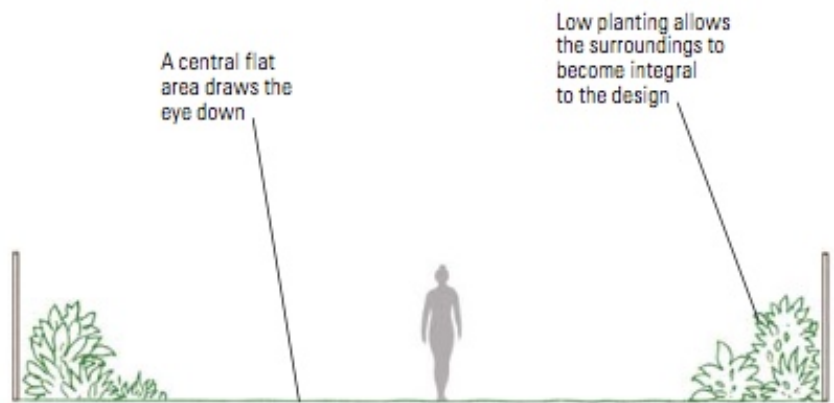


USING SPACES

Densely planted spaces, using height and filling the garden's width, will create a cocoon, while sparse, airy planting hugging the boundaries gives an open, spacious feel. Spaces can also be used to disguise the size and shape of a garden.

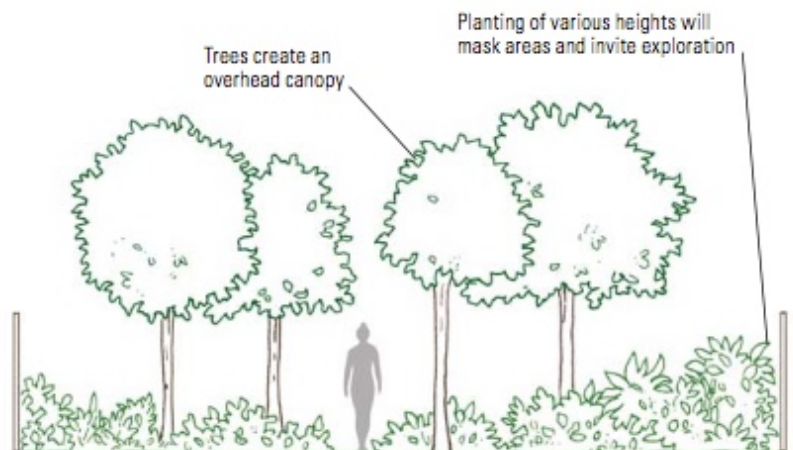
1-OPEN ASPECT

A narrow space between tall boundaries will be uncomfortable and restricting. Here, in a design dominated by a lawn or hard landscaping, low vegetation creates an area exposed to more light, longer views, and a connection to the sky above. It will feel open, but intimate areas may be lost.



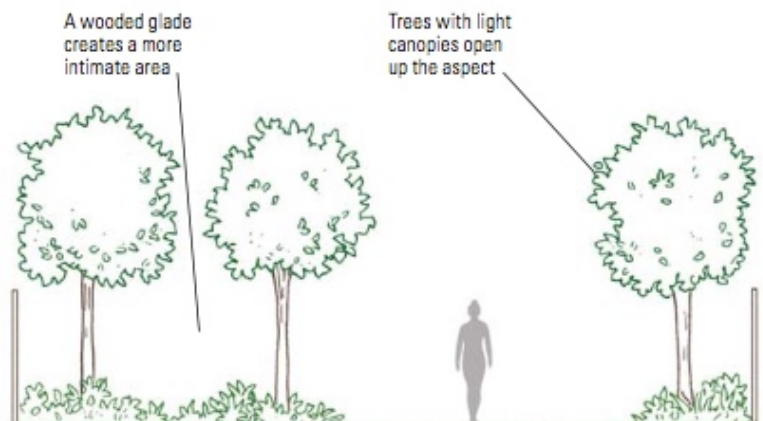
2-ENCLOSED FEELING

The same space filled with vegetation of different heights will be darker, much more enclosed, and with no views to the sides. The path will appear as a corridor through the center and can lead to different parts of the garden, divided by the planting into separately designated areas.



3-BALANCED APPROACH

The same path now moved to the side also creates a corridor-like effect, but this time views are allowed under the canopy to the right, across a narrower strip of planting into the brighter space beyond. To the left, secret, intimate places can be created with a pergola or arbor among the mixture of high and low planting.



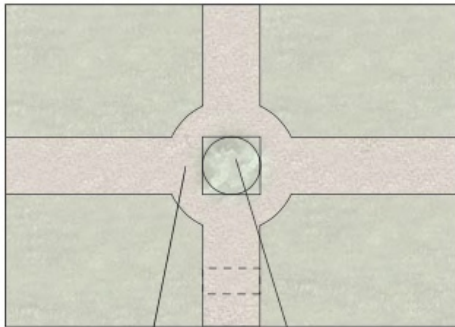
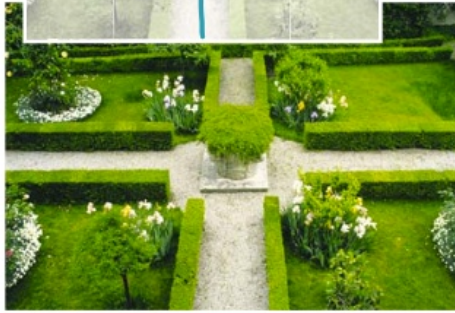
Routes (Route planning)

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:

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

CENTRAL PATHS

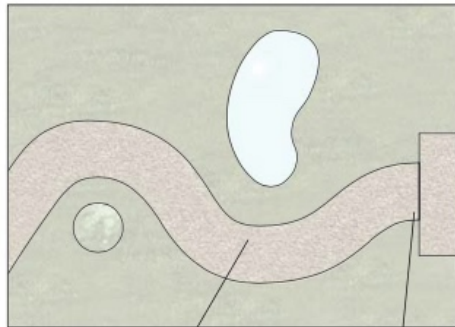
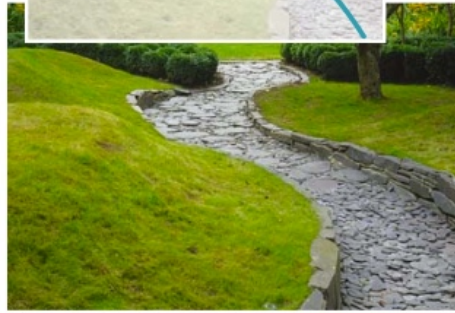
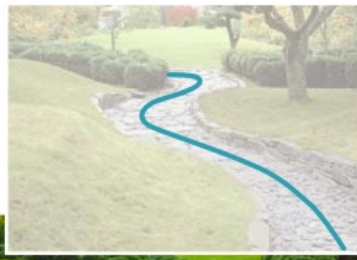


Paths converge in the center

A container provides focus

Paths converge in the center A container provides focus

WINDING PATHS

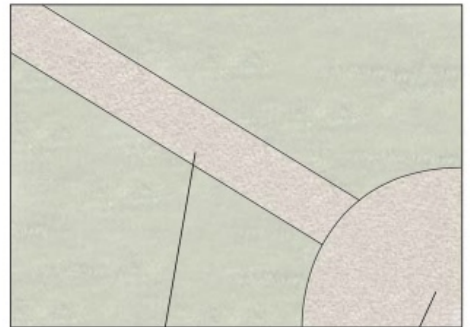


Path skirts a feature, possibly a pond

Path leads to a destination—for example, a summerhouse or seating area

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DIAGONAL PATHS



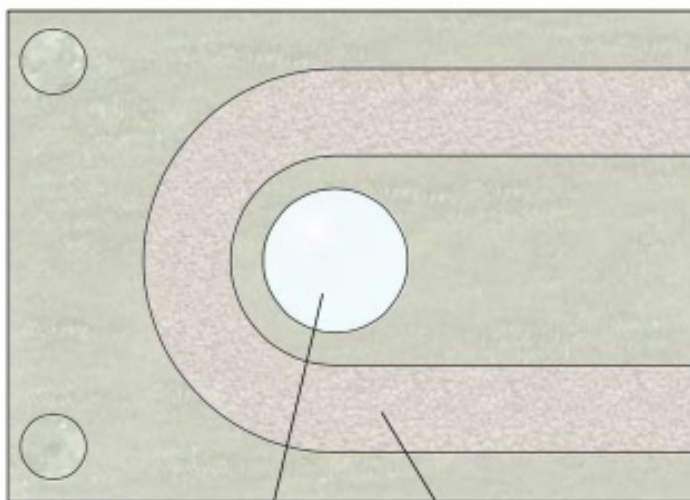
The straight path lengthens the plot

A circular patio adds contrast

The straight path lengthens the plot A circular patio adds contrast

CLASSIC LAYOUT	ENTICING CURVES	ILLUSION OF SIZE
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>

CIRCULAR PATHS



A pond, for example, is framed by the path

The circular path draws you on

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.



ROAM FREE

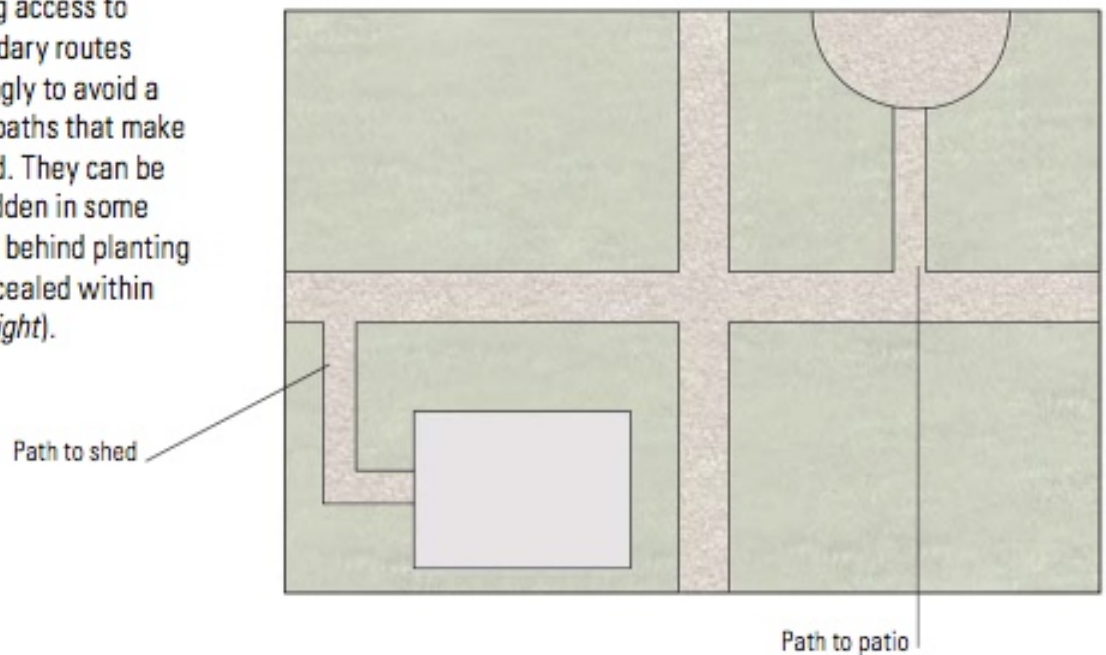
Random paving with planted crevices creates a slightly erratic, informal design. With no defined route, the eye—and body—can move in several directions across the whole area.

SECONDARY ROUTES

While primary routes determine the style of a garden, secondary routes should be less interfering and subtly combined 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 flower beds, allowing you to experience colors 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.

ACCESS PATHS

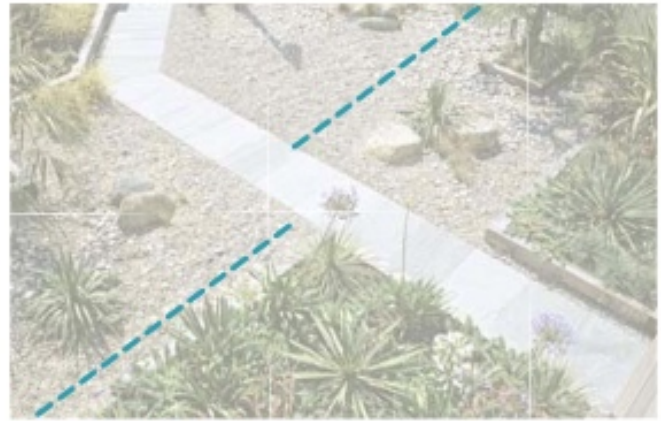
While helpful in offering access to other areas, plan secondary routes carefully and use sparingly to avoid a maze-like confusion of paths that make the design look muddled. They can be obvious (*as right*), or hidden in some way, either deliberately behind planting (*see below left*), or concealed within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