

INTRODUCTION TO GARDEN DESIGN - PT 2

BEGINNERS GUIDE TO GARDENING



GARDEN DESIGN ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES

Once you have undertaken a decent survey of your garden, it is time to consider your ultimate garden objective. Before you pick up that pencil and sketchbook, understanding what elements make up a garden design and sound design principles is worth knowing.

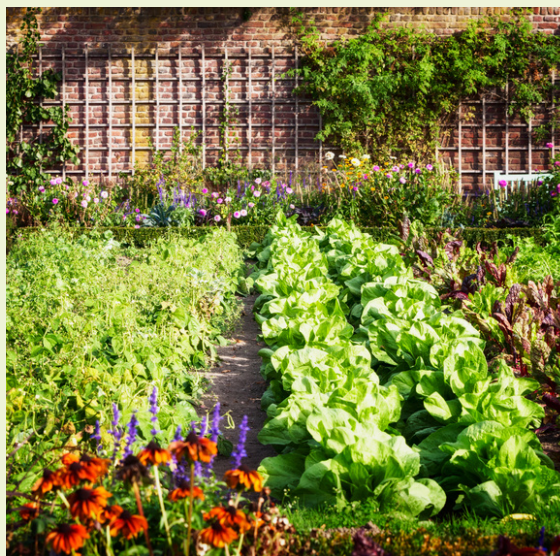


GARDEN DESIGN ELEMENTS

Understanding garden design elements is important because it helps you create a cohesive and visually appealing outdoor space. By incorporating these elements into your garden design, you can ensure that your garden has a sense of balance, rhythm, and unity.

Here are some examples of how to correctly implement these elements and what could go wrong if they are not implemented properly:

- Line
- Shapes
- Colour
- Texture
- Pattern

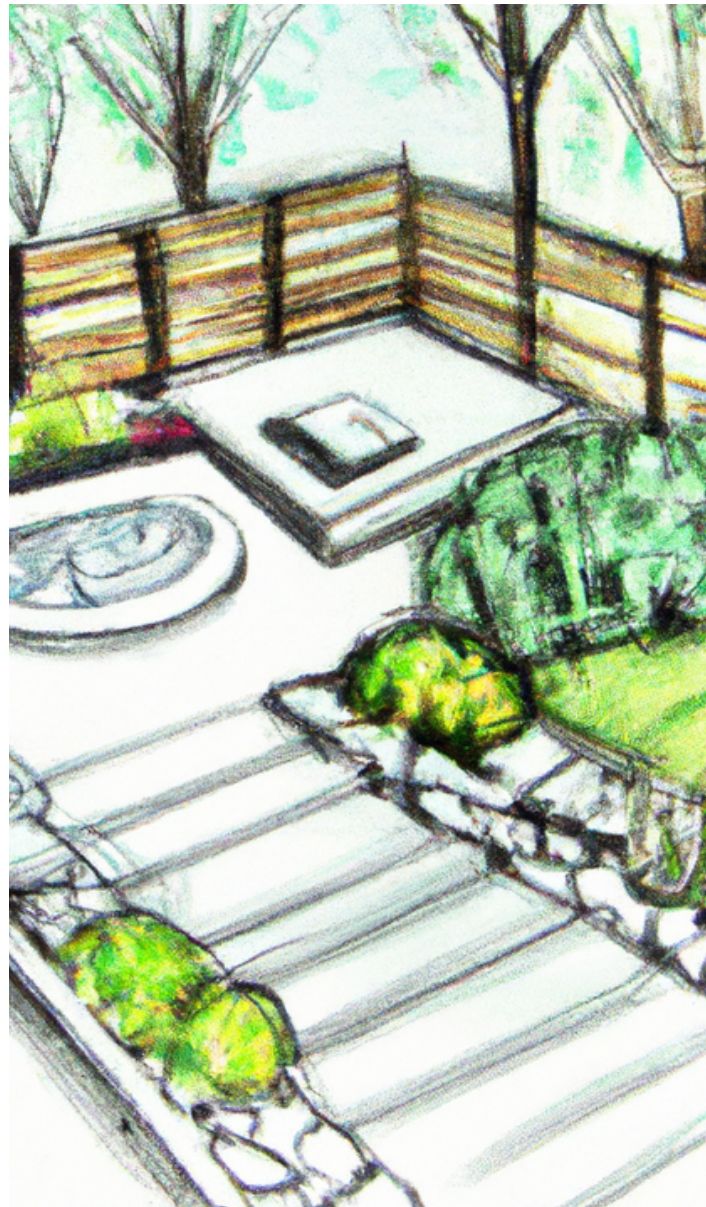


LINES

Lines can be used to guide the eye and create movement in a garden. Using straight lines can create a formal and structured feeling, while using curved lines can create a more organic and natural feeling.

Correct implementation: Use lines to guide the eye towards a focal point in the garden, such as a sculpture or a water feature. For example, plant a row of shrubs in a straight line leading up to a garden statue.

What could go wrong: If lines are not used purposefully, they can create a confusing and cluttered feeling in the garden. For example, if there are too many straight lines that don't lead to a focal point, it can make the garden feel disjointed.

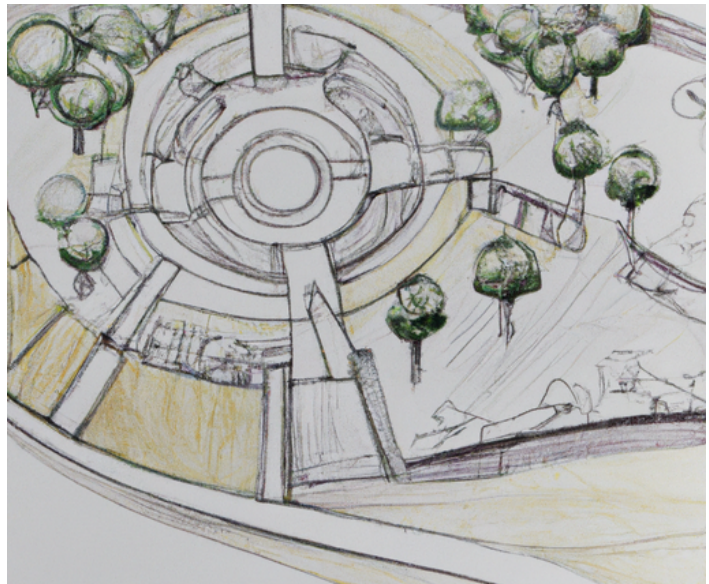


Examples to try:

1. Use straight lines to create a formal garden: Planting a row of trees or shrubs in a straight line can create a sense of formality in a garden. For example, planting five identical evergreen shrubs, such as boxwoods, in a straight line along the front of a garden bed.
2. Use curving lines to create a natural-looking garden: Curving lines can create a sense of flow and movement in a garden. For example, planting a winding pathway with plants on either side that follow the curve of the path. Use plants like hostas, ferns, or other shade-loving perennials in quantity to create a natural feel.
3. Use diagonal lines to add interest and create depth: Diagonal lines can add visual interest and create the illusion of depth in a garden. For example, planting a row of tall grasses, such as Miscanthus, at an angle in the back of a garden bed. Use a minimum of three plants, spaced evenly apart, to create a cohesive look.

SHAPES

Shapes can be used to create structure and visual interest in a garden. Using geometric shapes, such as circles or squares, can create a formal feeling, while using more organic shapes can create a natural feeling.



Correct implementation: Use shapes to create patterns in a garden bed or to group plants together. For example, plant a group of round shrubs in the center of a garden bed to create a focal point.

What could go wrong: If shapes are not used consistently, it can make the garden feel disjointed. For example, if there are too many different shapes in a garden bed, it can make it feel cluttered and confusing.

Examples to try:

1. Use geometric shapes for a formal garden: Using geometric shapes, such as circles, squares, and rectangles, can create a formal and structured feeling in a garden. For example, planting a boxwood hedge in a rectangular shape around a garden bed. Use 6-8 boxwood shrubs for a 2-3 foot tall hedge.
2. Use flowing shapes for a natural garden: Using flowing, organic shapes can create a natural and relaxed feeling in a garden. For example, planting a grouping of native grasses, such as Switchgrass, in a natural-looking shape. Use 3-5 grasses in varying heights for a more natural look.
3. Use repeating shapes for a cohesive garden: Repeating shapes can create a sense of unity and cohesion in a garden. For example, planting a group of round shrubs, such as globe arborvitae, in multiple locations throughout the garden. Use 3-5 shrubs in each grouping for a cohesive look.

COLOUR

Correct implementation: Choose a colour scheme that complements the style of your home and the mood you want to create in your garden. Use a variety of colors to create interest and contrast.

What could go wrong: If you use too many colours, your garden may look chaotic or overwhelming. If you choose colours that clash or don't work well together, your garden may look unappealing or distracting.

Examples to try:

Example 1: Use a monochromatic color scheme with plants in different shades of the same color. For example, plant different varieties of pink roses or pink coneflowers. Use a ratio of 3 light pink plants, 2 medium pink plants, and 1 dark pink plant.

Example 2: Use contrasting colors to create interest. For example, combine purple salvia with yellow coreopsis or combine red roses with white daisies. Use a ratio of 3 purple plants to 2 yellow plants or 3 red plants to 2 white plants.

TEXTURE

Correct implementation: Mix different textures of plants and hardscaping materials to create a sense of depth and contrast. For example, use plants with fine foliage to contrast with bolder textured plants.

What could go wrong: If you use too much of the same texture, your garden may look monotonous or flat. If you use too many bold textures without any fine textures to balance them, your garden may look overwhelming or cluttered.

Examples to try:

Example 1: Use different types of hardscaping materials to create a sense of texture. For example, use a combination of brick, stone, and gravel to create a pathway. Use a ratio of 1 part brick, 2 parts stone, and 3 parts gravel.

Example 2: Use plants with similar textures but different heights to create a sense of layering. For example, use plants such as lavender or salvia with fine-textured foliage and plant them in a group of 5, then add plants such as euphorbia or catmint with similar fine-textured foliage but taller height behind the lavender or salvia.





PATTERN

Correct implementation: Use repeating patterns of plants or hardscaping elements to create a sense of unity and rhythm. For example, use a repeating pattern of pavers to create a sense of direction in a pathway.

What could go wrong: If you use too many patterns, your garden may look chaotic or confusing. If you use patterns that clash or don't work well together, your garden may look unappealing or overwhelming.

By understanding these garden design elements and implementing them correctly, you can create a garden that is visually appealing and enjoyable to spend time in.

Examples to try:

Example 1: Create a pattern with plant groupings. For example, plant a group of 3 hydrangeas, then a group of 3 azaleas, then a group of 3 Japanese maples, and repeat. Use a pattern of 3-3-3-3.

Example 2: Use a repeating pattern of hardscaping materials to create a sense of direction. For example, use a pattern of rectangular pavers in a pathway. Use a pattern of 2 pavers in length and 1 paver in width.

GARDEN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Understanding garden design principles is important because it helps you create a garden that is functional, aesthetically pleasing, and enjoyable to spend time in. These principles help guide your decision-making process and ensure that you create a garden that meets your needs and fits your personal style. Here are some examples of how to correctly implement these principles and what could go wrong if they are not implemented correctly:

- Unity
- Balance
- Focal Point
- Proportion



UNITY

Correct implementation: Create a sense of unity by using a consistent design style, color scheme, and plant palette throughout your garden. This will help tie everything together and create a cohesive look.

What could go wrong: If you use too many different design styles or color schemes, your garden may look disjointed or cluttered. If you use too many different types of plants, your garden may look chaotic or overwhelming

Examples to try:

Example 1: Use a consistent design style throughout your garden. For example, if you prefer a cottage garden style, use plants such as roses, peonies, and daisies in combination with garden decor such as birdhouses and picket fences.

Example 2: Use a consistent color scheme throughout your garden. For example, if you prefer a cool color scheme, use plants such as blue hydrangeas, purple lavender, and white phlox in combination with hardscaping materials such as gray stone or blue slate.

BALANCE

Correct implementation: Create balance by distributing garden elements evenly throughout your space. This can include balancing the placement of plants, hardscaping, and decor.

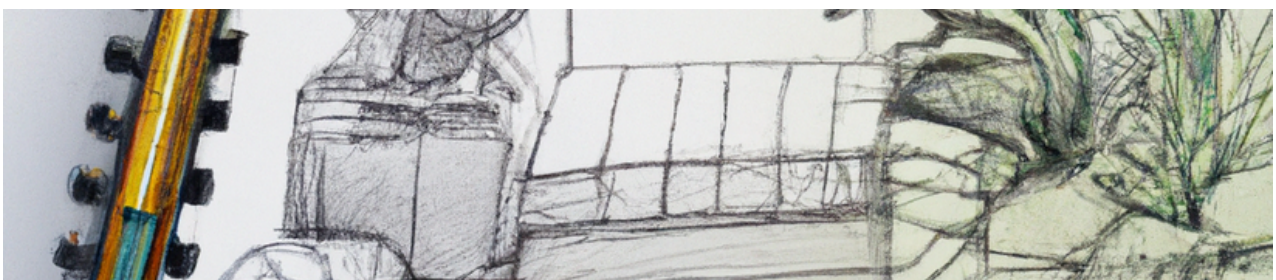
What could go wrong: If you have too much of one type of garden element, your space may look unbalanced. For example, if you have too many plants on one side of your garden and not enough on the other, your garden may look lopsided.

Examples to try:

Example 1: Use symmetry to create a sense of balance. For example, plant two identical shrubs on either side of a pathway or plant two identical containers on either side of a front door.

Example 2: Use asymmetry to create a sense of balance. For example, plant a tall tree on one side of a garden bed and balance it out with a grouping of smaller plants on the other side.

Example 3: Use different types of balance to create interest. For example, use symmetrical balance in the front of the garden and asymmetrical balance in the back of the garden.



FOCAL POINT

Correct implementation: Create a focal point in your garden to draw the eye and create a sense of interest. This can be a sculpture, a water feature, or a unique plant.

What could go wrong: If you don't have a focal point, your garden may look uninteresting or uninviting. If you have too many focal points, your garden may look cluttered or confusing.

Examples to try:

Example 1: Create a focal point with a specimen tree: Planting a specimen tree, such as a Japanese maple, in a prominent location can create a striking focal point in a garden. Use one tree that is appropriately sized for the space, and consider adding a contrasting understory plant, such as a mass planting of hostas or ferns.

Example 2: Use a water feature as a focal point: Installing a water feature, such as a fountain or pond, can create a calming and visually appealing focal point in a garden. Use an appropriately sized water feature for the space, and consider adding aquatic plants, such as water lilies or lotus, around the edge.

Example 3: Use an art piece as a focal point: Placing a sculpture or other art piece in the garden can create a unique and interesting focal point. Use a piece that complements the overall style of the garden and is appropriately sized for the space.

PROPORTION

Correct implementation: Use garden elements that are in proportion to your outdoor space. This can include choosing plants and hardscaping that are the appropriate size and scale for your garden.

What could go wrong: If you use plants or garden elements that are too large or too small for your space, your garden may look unbalanced or cluttered.

By understanding these garden design principles and implementing them correctly, you can create a garden that is functional, visually appealing, and enjoyable to spend time in.

Examples to try:

Example 1: Use plants that are in proportion to the size of your garden. For example, if you have a small garden, use dwarf varieties of plants or plants that stay compact, such as dwarf conifers or compact shrubs.

Example 2: Use plants that are in proportion to each other. For example, if you have a large tree, use large shrubs or tall perennials to balance it out, and use smaller plants in front of the tree.

Example 3: Use hardscaping materials that are in proportion to the size of your garden. For example, if you have a small garden, use smaller pavers or stones, and if you have a large garden, use larger pavers or stones.

ACTIVITY

Try to visit some lovely gardens and see if you can spot how proportion, balance, unity and focal points have been used.

Identify potential ways that you could employ proportion, balance, unity and focal points in your garden.

