



1 Cottage path

The character of this entrance is both formal and informal. The brick path runs direct from gate to garden between hedges that funnel you along. But the flavour is essentially country cottage with the bricks beautifully laid to a slight wiggle and following the contours of the ground.

1 BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER



Arne Maynard is a leading garden designer based in London and Monmouthshire

Paths and terraces

Good looks and practicality should go hand in hand when it comes to the design of these all-important elements

WORDS ARNE MAYNARD



2 & 5 BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER, 3 & 4 JASON INGRAM



2 Modern mosaic

This pebble mosaic path was made for my 2012 Chelsea Flower Show garden. It is deliberate and formal, and has a cleanliness and modernity to it. The attention to detail, generous proportions and sculpture at its end, all announce that it is intended to be special.

3 Formal lines

A chipping path follows all four sides of the lawn at Montacute House and the trees create a colonnaded effect that heightens the sense of drama. The design is very formal, yet is subtly underplayed by the simplicity of the path and its ragged edges.

4 Interlocking shapes

This is a garden made up of differently sized square and rectangular beds. The path follows the geometry of the beds, bringing you into the heart of compartments filled with flowers.

5 Grass path

In addition to its aesthetic qualities, this box-edged grass path is integral to the design of this kitchen garden because it marks the boundaries of the vegetable beds and gives access for maintenance.

6 Dressed stone

Alchemilla mollis and thymes growing in the stone terrace of a Georgian house. This is a perfect example of the way a paved area can be dressed down and softened by the right kind of planting, making the line between grass and hard landscaping less evident.



7 Herringbone brick pattern

The sunken terrace was created to link the garden to kitchen level. We chose brick to give a gentle, country feel and, because stepping down to a terrace is not ideal, we masked the change of levels with box cloud hedging on either side of the steps.



8 River terrace

This wooden deck is made of oak sleepers and it goes right up to the water's edge, linking the house to this waterside garden. In this context, wood was the natural choice, providing a surface that associates well with the watery planting and big rattan chairs.



9 Cobblestones

Small paved areas tucked away in the garden don't have the formality of the terrace, and here you can be more relaxed. Textural materials such as cobbles can be bedded into a weak cement mix and the joints brushed with sand and soil, to allow creeping plants to grow.



Paths and terraces are part of the fabric of the garden, and the materials chosen to make them, their dimensions and their positioning are crucial elements in the overall design. Let's begin with paths. There are many ways to create them, from mown grass, brick or stone, but within the range there are also varying degrees of formality and informality, and what might be described as a hierarchy of use.

The simplest, most casual kind of paths, are those trodden into the ground over time, usually as the quickest route to a destination. At the other end of the spectrum are the big, formal, designed

paths that act as circulation routes around the garden, form its main arteries and may also act as divisions within it. In general, the wider the path, the more formal and dominant it will appear and this sense of formality is reinforced if it is also straight, with a vista along it and an end in sight. A narrow path that wanders so you can never see the end, has a different kind of use and appeal, it draws you along and invites you to explore.

In the same way, choice of surface relates to function and purpose. A soft, mown grass path makes a beautiful secondary route in an informal part of the garden, but hard-landscaping,

6,7 & 9 BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER, 8 KRISTY RAVAGE



10 JASON INGRAM

10 Concrete terrace

This is a big terrace of concrete slabs, which initially we intended to take up. But as the concrete was weathering gradually, a compromise was reached. We knocked corners off some slabs and planted lavenders in the spaces, and this has helped add texture and softness.

Suppliers

Hanson Aggregates for limestone chippings.
Tel 0845 601 6643,
www.hanson-europe.com

Solopark plc for reclaimed bricks and Yorkstone.
Tel 01223 834663,
www.solopark.co.uk

Vastern Timber for oak and a good range of other British hardwoods and softwoods.
Tel 0800 135 7013,
www.vastern.co.uk

all-weather materials are usually needed for a primary path to the front door. Materials can be combined or dressed down and softened with planting to suit the mood and context.

Whereas a path takes you on a journey, a terrace is a destination, and as a place to sit, entertain and eat, is most useful when adjacent to the house. House terraces also have an architectural function, in that they provide an intermediate area between house and garden. They should feel generous and sufficiently wide: one-third the height of the house is a useful rule of thumb. I also like to leave room between the

terrace and the house for beds, even if they are only wide enough for planting climbers to soften the terrace and clothe the house walls.

House period and style are the most important guides to choosing materials, but stone or brick are the most usual, stone for formality, brick to give a more country feel. As with paths, hard landscaping on terraces can be combined and softened with planting. Occasionally we use limestone chippings or cobbles, and in the right environment, timber in the form of big timber sleepers, can be very effective. □

NEXT MONTH Sculpture in the garden