



Pathways of Perfection

by Lydia Holley

Most gardeners focus on the plantings in their gardens, but the beauty of a flower bed is emphasized when the pathway through the beds are safe, secure and beautiful on their own. Although pathways are generally not noticed unless they are defective, they are very important to the overall look and design of your garden.



Probably the easiest pathway to install is a grass pathway. Grass is soft on the feet, integrates well with other plantings, and is fairly low maintenance, needing only a weekly mowing and possible string trimming.

However, grass pathways are not always the proper choice. If you have a lot of people that use this particular path, grass can get worn down, ruining the effect of the perfect green swath. If your pathway has no way in which to drain properly, during the rainy season you may end up with a pathway of mud. Additionally, if you walk across your pathway with high heels you may prefer a path that is more solid underfoot.

Pathways made from a thick layer of mulch look natural in a woodland setting and are soft to walk on. This type of pathway is also fairly inexpensive compared to other options, but it will need to be maintained and refreshed every year.

Gravel pathways are lovely to look at and make a pleasant crunchy sound when walked across. Plantings can pop up in between the gravel, which may delight or disappoint, depending upon your design. You also would not want to walk on gravel barefooted or in heels.

Decomposed granite (DG) is small granite particles which pack together to form a solid surface that looks much like asphalt. DG usually has a stabilizer or resin added to it to keep the DG in place and increase its lifespan. It needs to be set up properly and compacted well in order to achieve the best results. Try not to use DG next to doorways as those small granite particles may get tracked indoors.

Flagstone pathways are beautiful and integrate well into a natural setting. Due to the uneven surface of flagstone, however, if you are elderly or unstable on your feet, this may not be the best pathway for you.

Concrete pathways are permanent and one of the safest pathways that can be installed in a garden. But concrete is unforgiving should you decide to change your design, and one of the most expensive to install.

There is no one perfect pathway, but after careful consideration, you will probably be able to find the perfect pathway for you and your garden. After you have decided upon the right look and material, try to keep your pathways consistent throughout your garden for the most cohesive appearance.

For more information, call 903-675-6130, email hendersonCMGA@gmail.com or visit www.henderson-co-tx-mg.org.