

Making Paths & Walkways: Creative Ideas and Simple Techniques

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All walking is discovery. On foot we take time to see things whole...

This epigraph from one of the chapters illustrates one of the many reasons for the allure of walkways. Blomgren, an author of books and articles on animals and plant life, paths and hiking trails and Randy Burroughs, a registered landscape architect, offer their proficiency in designing garden paths and walkways.

Making Paths & Walkways begins with a brief history of walking paths, detailing centuries old European paths and their origins. For hundreds of years, animals have created many of the world's footpaths through their journey to water sources, salt licks and shelters. Urban paths were created by humans as adornments to palace grounds and other important structures. Over the centuries, walkways have made their way to the more common setting. Blomgren proves that whether the home is common or uncommon, there is a path to suit it.

The paths detailed in each chapter are meant for sauntering through gardens or yards of any type of terrain. Natural and cut stone, brick, gravel and concrete walkways are featured. Each is given a description of advantages and disadvantages, effect achieved, durability, degree of difficulty in construction, where to purchase the material, types of tools to use, calculating quantity and climate considerations. With the help of Burrough's expertise, Blomgren emphasizes the importance of considering the natural contour of the land as well as the purpose of the path or walkway before beginning. She matches materials with specific path types, advocating that gravel be used for a gently sloping path since it is unlikely to wash downslope during a heavy rain and is less slippery than stone or concrete. Knowing who will be travelling the path and why will help to determine the width, course and material of the path for comfort. If the path leads to the entrance of a home, a substantial width, straightness and durable material would accommodate a variety of travelers and objects.

Making Paths & Walkways is a work of art as well as a manual. Each chapter begins with a color photograph of a different path from around the world and an epigraph by authors and poets such as Annie Dillard and Walt Whitman. This book is an inspiration for saunterers and gardeners.

MARY BETH ZELEZNIK (July / August 1999)

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