

Create space  
for entertaining,  
family or relaxation



Ideas for Outdoor Designs

## INSPIRATION



A guide to  
creating a  
useable  
outdoor  
space

**LIFESTYLE**

**PURPOSE**

**DESIGN**

**SHAPE**

**SPACE**

**MORE**

© 2006, Gardens123, Paula Revill, All Rights Reserved

# 1

## Shape

2 – Object  
3 – Colour  
4 – Plants

## Shape in Design

What's your style? Formal gardens contain symmetry and clean lines such as strong geometry. Contemporary gardens also contain strong geometry but have an asymmetrical approach to the design.

Cottage gardens often contain symmetry but are created with irregular shapes and more curving organic shapes.



### Purpose

Shape is important for creating design unity which links the overall space together. They can draw your eye to or away from objects or provide the definition and edges to smaller area within a space. Shape can also determine the feel of the overall space creating an open feel or closed feel.

Do you have a small space? These suit circular shapes detracting the eyes away from the boundaries and giving a sense of openness.

Do you have a long, thin space? A design using rectangles on the diagonal works well to make the space feel wider.

L shaped spaces are tricky to design in the fact that the space has two areas with little connection. A simple use of a repeating shape through the space ensures the unity or linking of the long and short areas.

An example of this linking could be with the use of a curved lawn area. With its sweeping edges moving their way round the L shape leading the eye into the space around the corner.

## Design

With the use of strong lines and key shapes a good design can be used to set the size, style and movement around your space.

As the human eye is often looking for shapes within spaces it is important to use consistent shapes or create a gradual change in shape to keep the unity of a design.

A design often works well by using interlocking shapes which form a basic pattern within the space and create the overall theme or style.

By mixing organic shapes with a strong contrasting geometric shape an exciting visual effect can be created adding tension and energy. This however could also overpower a space and make it feel uncomfortable if too bold a contrast.

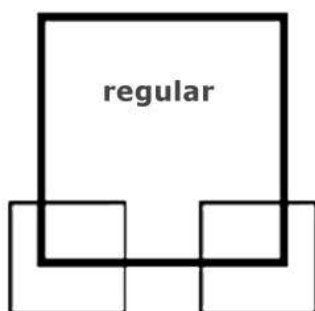
You have to therefore be careful to balance the mix of shapes in the space and carefully design how they interact with each other.

An example of using geometric shapes balanced with organic could be shown by using regular paving units laid from a house in such a way that the overall shape of the paving forms an organic curve leading to an informal planting area.

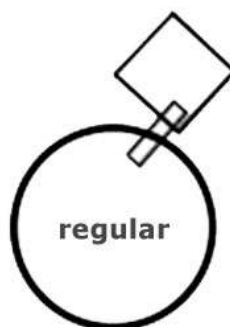
## Shape

Shape can be both 2 dimensional such as the shape of a lawn or 3 dimensional such as the arching branches of a tree. The tree forms an outline which highlights the volume of an enclosed space.

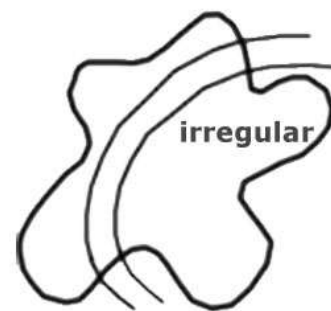
Shape can in simple terms be classed as geometric and organic as well as regular and irregular.



**Interlocking  
Symmetrical Geometry**



**Linked Asymmetrical  
Contrasting Geometry**



**Interlocking Organic  
Abstract Shapes**

Natural shapes are usually thought of as organic such as the curving lines of a branch and irregular such as the positioning of plants in the wild.

Manmade structures are thought of as regular and geometric such as straight lines, squares, triangles etc.

In a space surrounded by manmade objects such as an inner city garden or modern development geometric shapes work well. In a country garden however or space surrounded by nature organic curves blend well.

## **Space**

Once the basic shape theme is set think about adding a different texture to the different shapes within the overall design.

Long thin spaces suit the use of several interlocking diagonal areas and more organic shapes which divide the space. Square spaces suit bold contrasting shapes and strong geometry.

By creating a circular lawn next to a sweeping gravel path or a square patio area interlocking with rectangular plating areas a 3d quality will begin to appear in your design.

Shapes can also be used to form symmetrical or asymmetrical style within a design. Which style you choose tends to be a very personal or individual one.

Symmetry or symmetrical balance is where the shapes are equally sized or matching within a design.

This could be highlighted by a garden equally divided with both sides sharing all or part of the same shape. This creates a mirror image or reflection but can be quite static and visual uninspiring.

Asymmetrical balance in design however is more complex and harder to get right. If done well asymmetrical designs can add drama and longer term interest to a space.

While textures, forms, colours, etc. may remain constant to create some unity, shapes and hard landscapes may be more random or abstract.

Try out your ideas on paper, include and enhance the current or surrounding shapes but best of all keep it simple.

'Shape in Design' has been created as a starting point of information and ideas to help you make the most of your outdoor space.

Gardens123 would like to thank you for your interest in our free guide and would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few more of our products and services.

## **Free Guides**

Please browse all our booklets in this series for more garden design inspiration. We hope you will find these booklets useful as we are looking to increase this inspiration range further so keep checking for the latest booklets.

## **Concept Consultations – (£45 consultation fee)**

If you need design guidance, a little inspiration or a friendly chat about how to use your outdoor space to its advantage, book a visit with our Landscape designer.

By mixing your ideas and enthusiasm with the designer's passion and skills, a concept vision for your garden can be created in an hour's consultation.

## **Concept Designs – (start at £160)** as of Dec09 subject to change see website

These designs are created specifically if you have strong ideas for your space and know the materials you would like to use or you have existing features needing simple makeover revamp.

## **Layout Designs – (start at £320)** as of Dec09 subject to change see website

This design process has been created if you have a small garden and just need a contractor to 'do the tricky bits' e.g. paving.

## **Further Services**

Gardens123 offer a range of different garden design and construction services to suit your needs. We also offer gift vouchers for that unusual gift.

Visit **[www.gardens123.co.uk](http://www.gardens123.co.uk)** for more information.

**Gardens123 hope you have found this guide interesting. We wish you all the best with your design ideas and look forward to hear from you again soon.**