



Garden Design and Styles

OH 75

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Design—key plant elements or qualities (size, form, texture, color) in one of more design principles (size, form, texture, repetition, balance)

Whether form or function depends on primary purpose, often both

Design for function

Physical (wildlife, fragrance, edible, herbs, erosion control, a monastery garden of herbs or other)

Mental (plants found in the Bible, in Shakespeare, a collection of a specific genus, or plants and structures to provide amusement and education for kids)

Locations (foundation plantings, hiding corners, or along a fence or walk)

Ecological (rock gardens and wetland or bog gardens)

Design for form/style

Based on choice of plants, hardscape materials

Reflective of place and time, so of cultural conditions

Should fit site—aesthetics, culture—otherwise out of place, high maintenance, low sustainability

American

generally characterized by mass use of tough perennials like Autumn Joy Sedum, Goldsturm Rudbeckia, and ornamental grasses, popularized in the 1980s by Oehme and van Sweden; includes other styles such as historic and cottage gardens, or regional such as Southwest or Northwest; basically very diverse reflecting diverse cultures and regions

English

Can bring up various images, from the natural-appearing landscapes of Capability Brown of the 18th century (focusing more on large scenes and mass plantings of trees with ponds and sweeping vistas), to formal borders (often a result of using abandoned walled gardens in the 19th century and 20th), to cottage gardens (popularized by Gertrude Jekyll in the late 1800s).

French (not southern which is Mediterranean)

Often very formal, masses of annuals often in patterns (Mosaicultures), clipped low hedges in patterns (parterres) or knot gardens, with flowers between, or red stone (reflective of Persian tapestries), or vegetables (potagers); often includes taller flowers underplanted with lower ones; often includes espaliered fruit trees, water features, stonework and statues—very classical; exceptions would be an artist's garden such as Monet's Giverny, or the English influence in Normandy

German/Belgium/Dutch

Traditionally more formal, with bedding schemes such as in French; evolving more recently to more natural and ecological; public parks and gardens often include space and opportunities for people and their interaction

Scandinavia

Emphasis on nature and use of garden as outdoor rooms, for social purposes; other adjectives for this style might include clean, uncluttered, simple, sophisticated, casual, sometimes abstract, simple, contrasting forms and lines from foliage and trunks; public spaces often include circular seating, reflecting hundreds of years of such use going back to Vikings and often seen in regional art

Italian/Mediterranean (including Spain)

Characterized by very columnar conifers, stonework structures and fountains, containers with flowering plants or citrus; pastel colors in pots, paving, structures and even plants; sometimes cactus and succulents in warmer areas; trees such as olives, grapes, bouganvillea, sunflowers, lavender, rosemary and similar plants for hot and dry climates

Southwest/Mexican

Similar to Mediterranean, being influenced by a similar climate and early Hispano-moorish settlement, later by European settlers; often many found in public parks and spaces, often geometrical, incorporating and featuring building elements and water; courtyards with tropical plants and fountains

Japanese

One of the most copied and popular styles; follows very prescribed rules as with bonsai, reflecting control of man over nature; often round are lantern structures, bamboo water feature, zig-zag bridge, arched red wooden bridge, tea house and similar structures, pond, koi fish, waterfall or stream, clipped plants as in bonsai; often used are pines, azaleas

Chinese

Often design elements, as in Penjin, reflect man in collaboration with nature; when seen, are often gardens and structures typical of Ming Dynasty (mid 1300s-mid1600s); levels, mountains, lake often with island or “boat” structure, waterways or waterfalls, temples in larger gardens; intricate detail and patterns in paintings on structures and in paving; founded on principles of feng shui, and often designed as a painting; focus is on rocks and water, then architecture, lastly plants

Persian/Islam (Mideast, India)

Highly regarded for centuries and key in life and religion and so influenced; geometrical, generally rectangular, and divided into 4 quadrants with a central pavilion or water feature to divide (often water a key point, still or cascading); private, so usually walled; paths (paved or mosaic), terraces, defined flower beds, often fragrance included, trees often fruit for shade

Tropical

Predominance of plants of tropical origin—large leaves, exotic flowers, often fragrance, often less to poor growth in cool northern climates in summer and of course seasonal there; emphasis on form and texture; few if any structures except perhaps beds or stone boxes appearing to float in a pool; may include water stream or waterfall, often a pool, often with tropical water lilies or plants; should include vines and lianas (tropical, woody), epiphytes (orchids, bromeliads, ferns), and understory plants if sufficient height.

Cottage

May include small formal front gardens, but generally flower beds appearing casual and unplanned; better gardens often having attention to form and color in design; often unpaved paths, often lined with single flower, often annuals and perennials mixed, lots of different plants with traditional varieties for accurate historic gardens; seldom with any lawn, even if space; including vegetables and fruit trees if space

Victorian

Reflective of industrial age, more affluence and so money and leisure time, more availability of varieties from afar and beginning of breeding, and reaction to earlier natural landscapes; originally English and patterned after European; often with elaborate bedding-out schemes, iron fences and structures, use of some tropicals with large features for contrast.