Create a garden path with pavers
By Rob Paddock

When portions of your scheme's common property garden become informal pathways, the grass doesn't have a chance to grow and the water never drains properly. What a pain!

Paving is often the cleanest, cheapest and most enduring way to clean up your garden walkway. If you are considering paving a large area, it is advisable to get a professional in to do the job. However, if you're feeling up for a challenge and keen to get your hands dirty with a few other members of your body corporate this year, laying a small path with pavers could be a great summer holiday project.

Step 1: Dig your path

Dig out the proposed pathway to the required depth and width – the exact measurements will depend on the available materials and the size of the pavers you have chosen. Try to plan the width of the path so that full pavers can be placed without cutting. When working out the overall path width, allow an extra 3mm between each paver (spaces that allow sand to penetrate around the pavers).

Step 2: Lay down your edging

Lay a bed of sand along each side of the path excavation. Lay your edge boards on top of the sand and tamp down into place until the top of the edge boards are at the required finished height of the path. Retain them in place with stakes nailed to the outside and trim the stakes off slightly below the top of the edging board.

Step 3: Install a weed barrier

Install a layer of landscape fabric in between the edging boards. Landscape fabric is designed to prevent weeds while still allowing water to drain through. Ensure that the sheets overlap.

Step 4: Through and compact your bedding sand

Add a layer of bedding sand in between the edging boards. Compact the sand with a mechanical plate. At the same time, compact the soil against the outside of the edge boards to ensure that they stay in place. You can hire a plate vibrator from your local hire shop. After you have thoroughly compacted the sand, level it so the finished height is about 50 mm down from the top of the edge boards.

Step 5: Lay the paving stones

Start laying the pavers from one end of the path and work uphill. Space the pavers with a gap of approximately 3 mm to allow filling sand to penetrate around the pavers. Kneel on a board across the area you have already laid. At this stage, you should only use full pavers; if necessary, go back later and fill in with cut pavers.

Step 6: Compact your pavers and put in joint sand

The pavers should now, prior to compacting, be 10 mm above the required finished height. Compact the pavers consistently with the plate vibrator. The final step is to brush jointing or filling sand over the surface. This fills the joints and binds the pavers together. Fill the joints again in a few days after the sand settles.

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