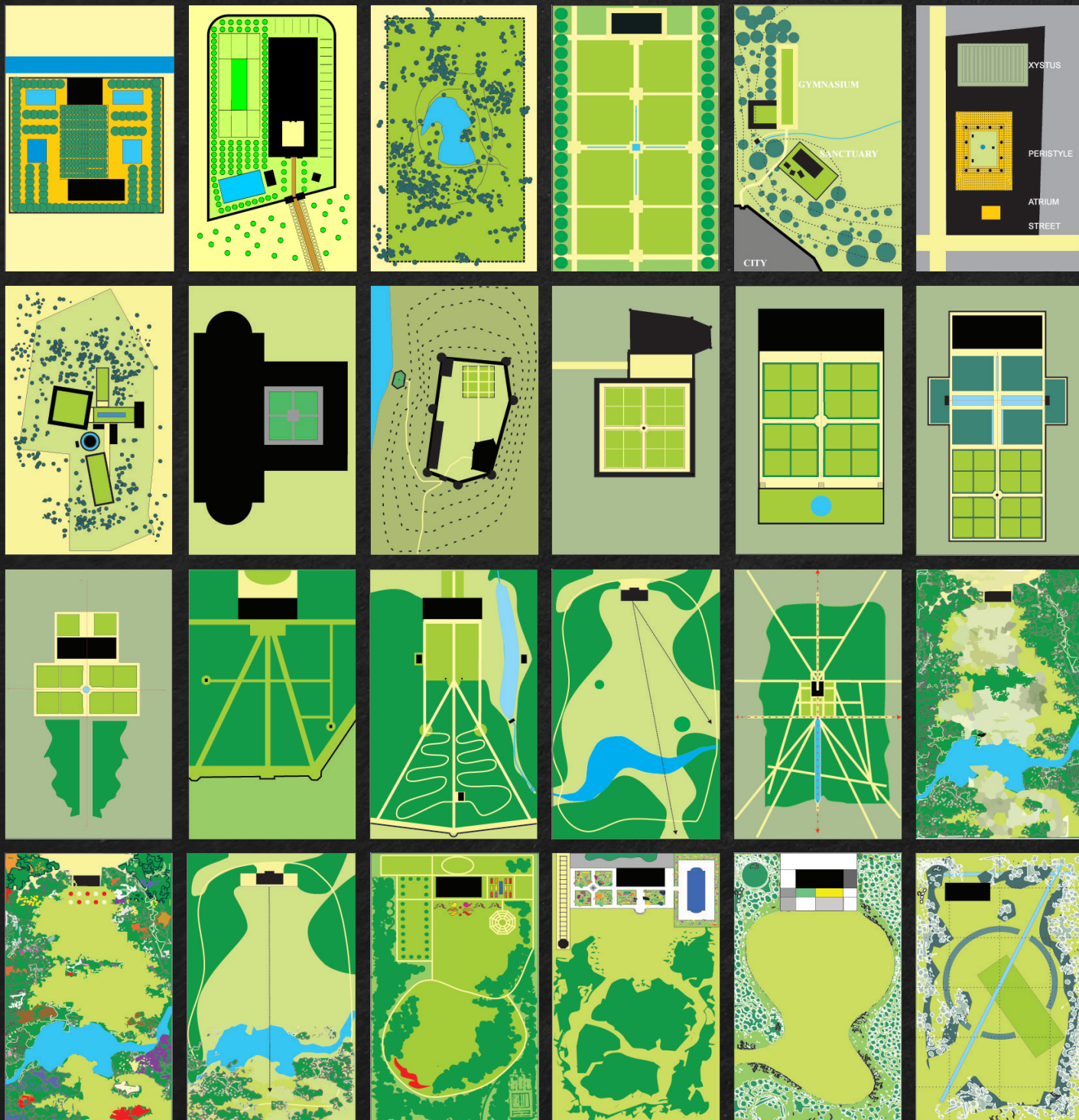


# Twenty Four Historic Styles of Garden Design

Tom Turner



Gardenvisit.com

# 24 Historic Styles of Garden Design



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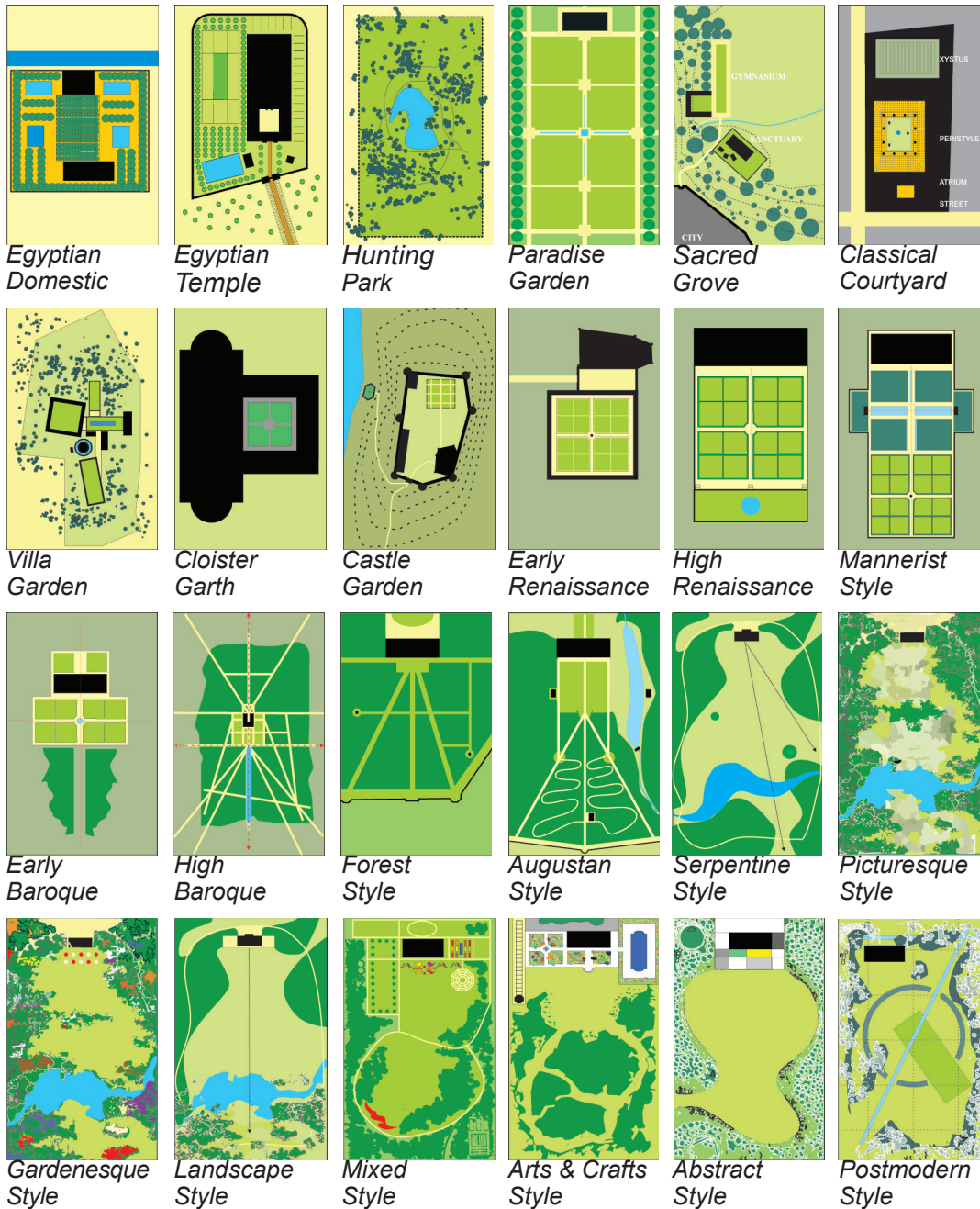
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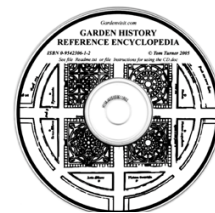


# Garden Design Styles 2000 BCE to 2000CE

The diagrams can be clicked - as a visual index.



Additional reference material relating to the diagrams can be found on the [Garden History Reference Encyclopedia CD](#).



## Introduction to Historic Styles

This eBook provides a short illustrated history of western garden design from 2,000 BC to 2,000 AD. 'Western' is broadly interpreted to include the gardens of Ancient Egypt, the hunting parks of West Asia and the paradise gardens of North West India. Twenty-four styles are identified and each is explained with a style diagram, notes on the **Use** and **Form** of the garden and illustrations of examples.

The style diagrams were developed over many years. The first set was published in *English Garden Design since 1650* (Antique Collectors Club 1986). A second set in the *Garden History Reference Encyclopedia CD* (Gardenvisit.com 2002) and a third set in *Garden History: philosophy and design 2000 BC to 2000 AD* (Spon Press 2005). The intention is to extend the set of diagrams to include eastern gardens.

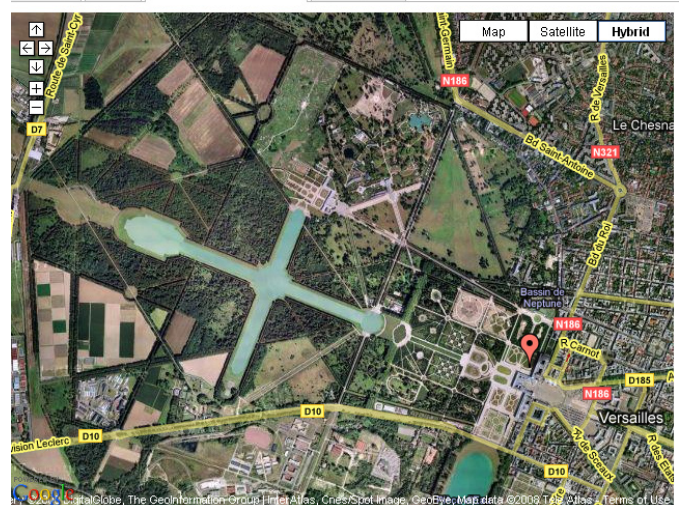
Garden design is influenced by a wide range of factors (religion, art, architecture, social customs, climate, ecology, history, geography, politics, etc.) which are not explained in this book. The aim is simply to illustrate the physical form and the uses of the types of garden which are described.



Versailles, Chateau de

★★★★★ 5.0/5 (2 ratings)

[Summary](#) [Details](#) [Large Map and Directions](#) [Write a review](#)

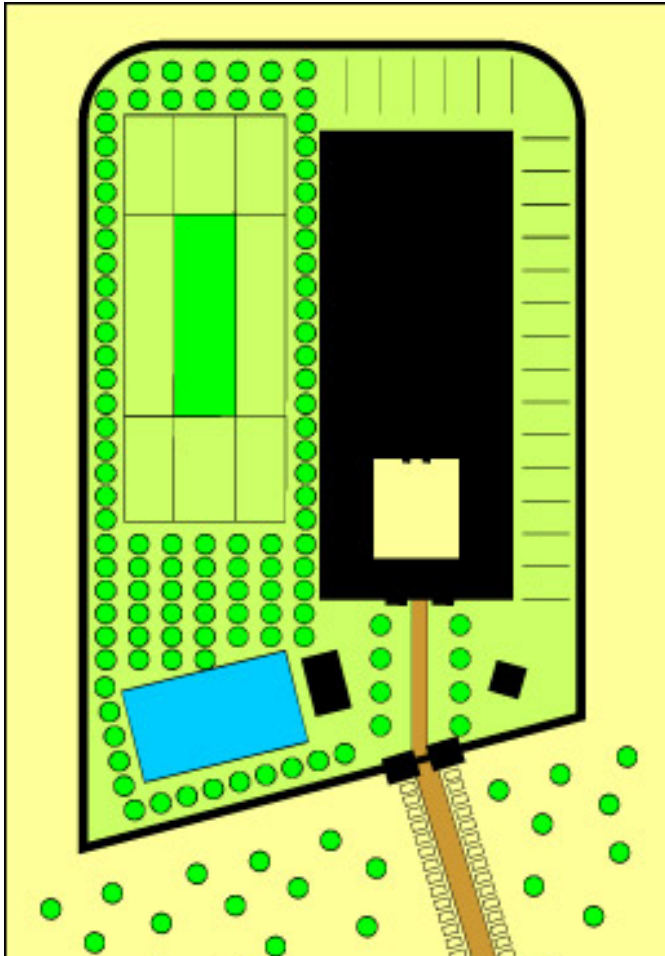


To supplement the text, there are hyperlinks which can be used, when your computer has a live web connection, to find additional information about the garden on the [www.gardenvisit.com](http://www.gardenvisit.com) website. As the example opposite shows, the Gardemvisit webpages have Googlemaps which show garden locations.



# Egyptian Temple Garden c2000 BCE

Style One



**Use:** The oldest garden survivals are the temple compounds of ancient Egypt. They were used by priests and pharaohs, though members of the public might be admitted on festival days. The design of temples helped to explain the nature of the world and the social order, as we now do through science, religion, art, history and politics. Temple compounds are the oldest surviving manifestation of the quest to make outdoor space as works of art. Sacred groves were associated with temple compounds.

**Form:** Axial lines were used but the overall geometry was non-symmetrical. Temples were built in rectangular compounds bounded by high walls. The internal space was in part ceremonial and in part laid to gardens. Temples were linked by avenues, lined with trees, sphinxes and statues. The line of the avenue ran into the compound and led through a series of processional gates to a hypostyle hall and then an inner sanctum, the holy of holies. Some of the enclosed land was used to accommodate store houses. Compounds also held sacred lakes, pools, statues, shrines, flower and vegetable gardens. The basic construction materials were stone and mud brick.



*Medinet Habu is on the fringe of the Black Land (farmland) and the Red Land (desert)*





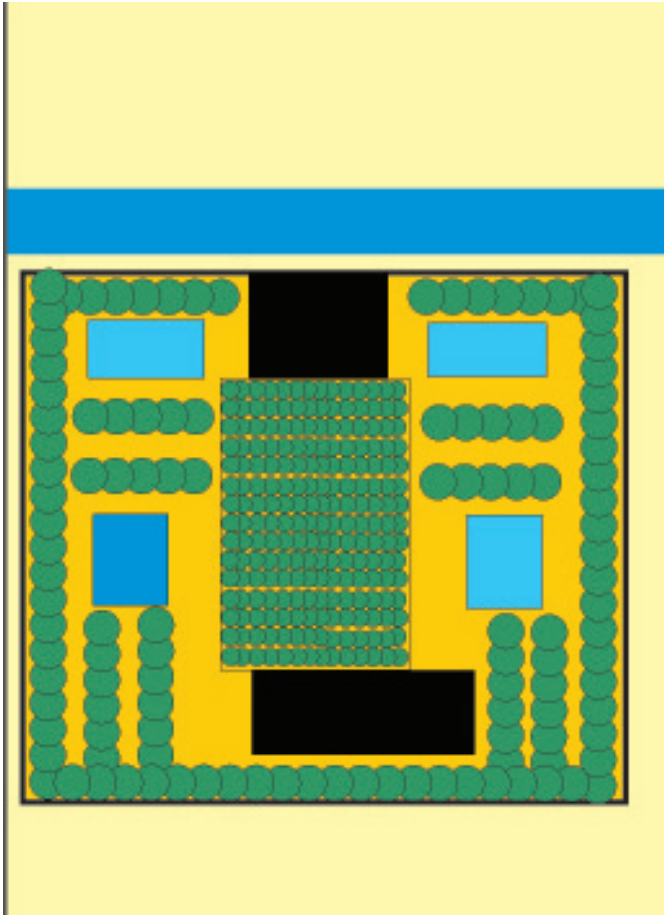
The Temples of *Queen Hapshetsut* (above) and *Karnak* (below)





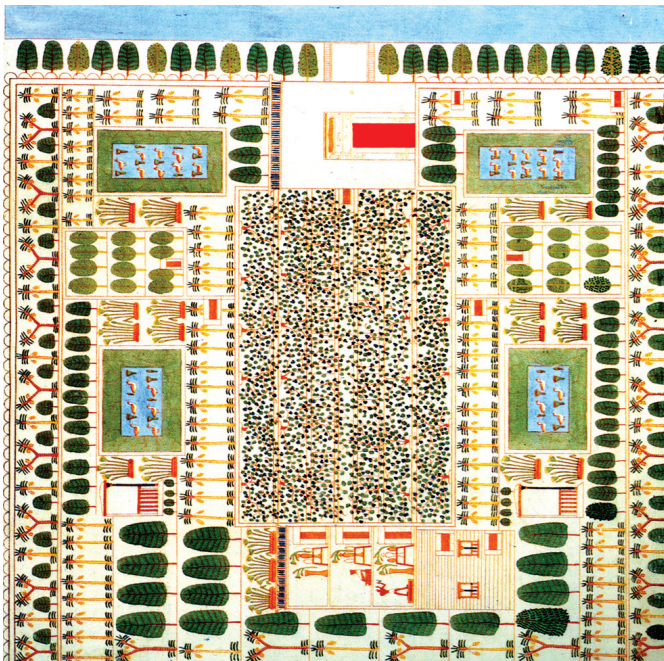
# Egyptian Domestic Garden c1800 BCE

## Style Two



**Use:** The oldest domestic gardens are astonishingly similar to modern domestic gardens and were used in similar ways: for relaxation, outdoor eating, childrens' play and the cultivation of beautiful and edible plants. Knowledge of these gardens comes from Egyptian tomb paintings, made so that pharaohs could enjoy in the after-life similar comforts to those they had enjoyed in the earthly stage of their existence.

**Form:** Private dwellings, like temples, were rectangular enclosures bounded by high walls. The geometry of garden compounds appears more symmetrical than that of temples but, since there are no physical examples, this may be no more than artist's license. Regularity comes naturally to the artist and is less likely to appear on the ground, except when gardens are made with paper plans and surveying equipment. Egyptian domestic gardens were places for bodily comfort, with fruit trees, flowers, pools, pot plants, vine-clad pergolas and places to sit, in winter sun or summer shade.



*Sennufer's Garden*



*This model of an Egyptian house and garden (from the Metropolitan Museum, NY) shows a space which is enclosed by high mud walls, part-roofed and used to contain a central pool surrounded by shade trees (Photo courtesy Mary Harrsch).*



*This model of an Egyptian House (from the British Museum) shows a mud-brick building with steps leading to a flat roof. The courtyard does not contain plants and could have been used to protect animals at night. The below photographs, from Iran, shows a similar arrangement of steps leading to a flat roof.*

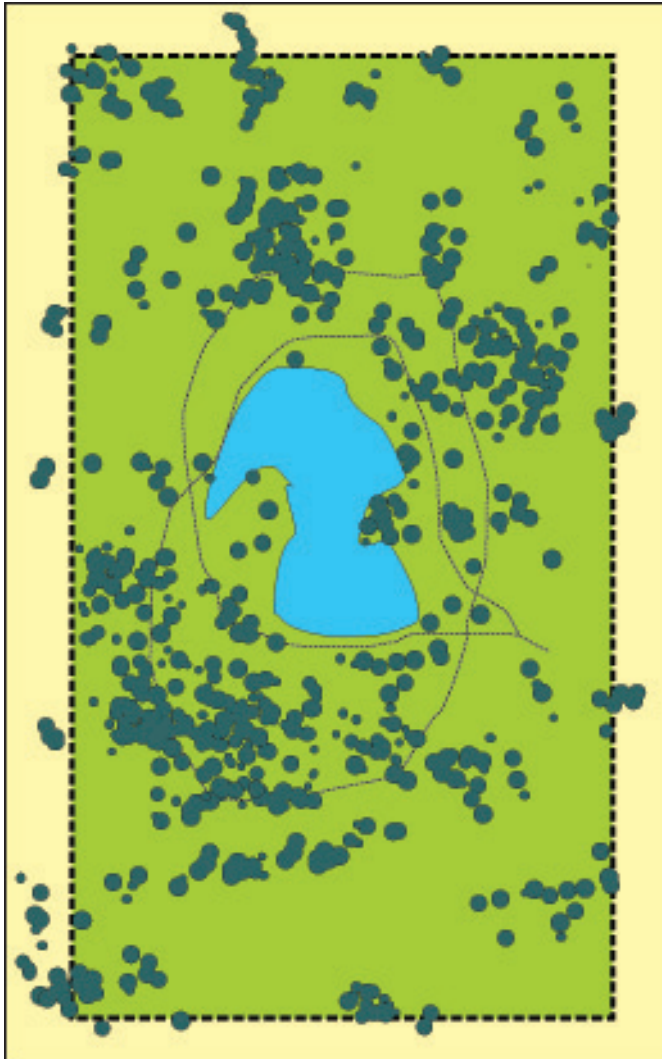


*Egyptian gardens, like modern gardens, were used for outdoor eating (Photo courtesy Martin Selway)*



# Hunting Park c1500 BCE

Style Three



**Use:** When the area of land taken into cultivation became significant, kings began to yearn for places where wild plants and animals could live - and be hunted. This happened first in the 'land between the two rivers' (Mesopotamia) and in Persia. Hunting parks were the preserve of kings and nobles and could be used to teach young men the arts of riding horses and driving chariots. The ancient hunting park can be regarded as the origin of the park as a place to take exercise and appreciate nature. National parks and nature reserves are their equivalent in the modern world.

**Form:** No physical examples survive from the ancient world but there are relief sculptures and written records. Large rectangular walled enclosures were used to make collections of exotic plants and animals. Physical examples survive from medieval and renaissance Europe. A varied topography of woods, water, grassland and hills was desirable. Boundaries are likely to have been made with mud brick, rubble stone or timber, depending on local circumstances.



*Hunting scenes from Ancient Mesopotamia*





*The Nile Valley and its adjoining desert provided excellent conditions for hunting, without the need to make hunting parks (Photo courtesy Michael Gwyther-Jones)*

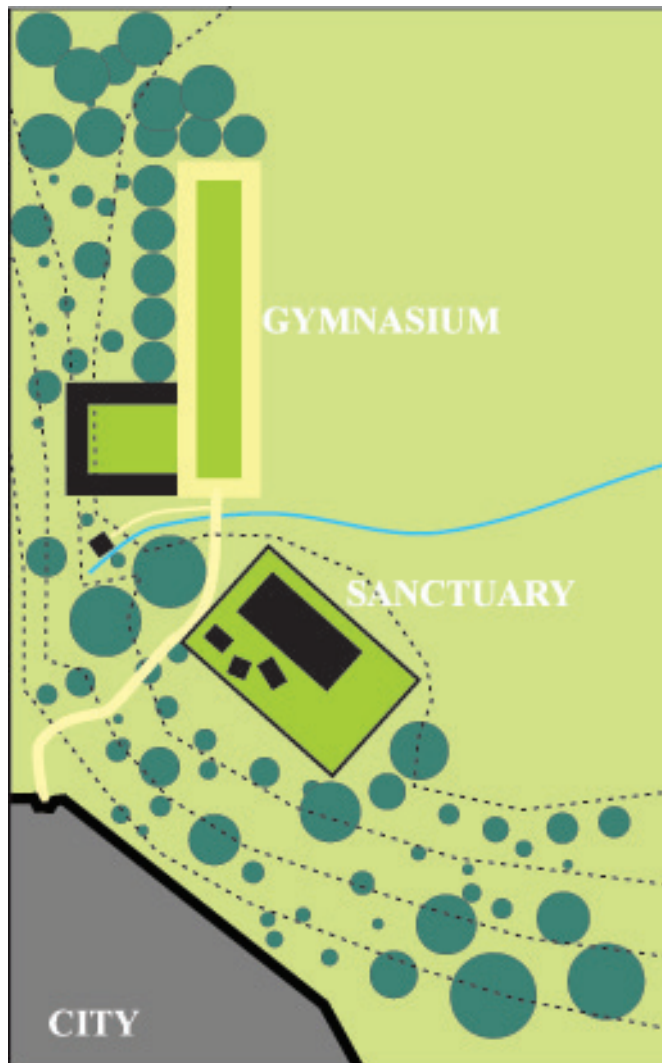


*The return of a hunting party in Ancient Egypt*



# Sacred Grove c400 BCE

Style Four



**Use:** When civilization became concentrated in high density walled cities, as in Ancient Greece, sacred groves took on a wider role. They lay outside the city walls and could be used safely during times of peace. If there was a spring in the grove it would be a natural place to site an altar to a local god or to build a temple in his or her honour. In time, these places came to be used for discussion, education and physical exercise. The Greeks ran and wrestled without clothes. When exercise was a dominant use they took the name 'gymnasium', deriving from the Greek *gymnos* (meaning naked) or 'palaestra', from *palaio* (meaning to wrestle). As works of art and places of spiritual enlightenment, sacred groves were related to the temple gardens of Egypt.

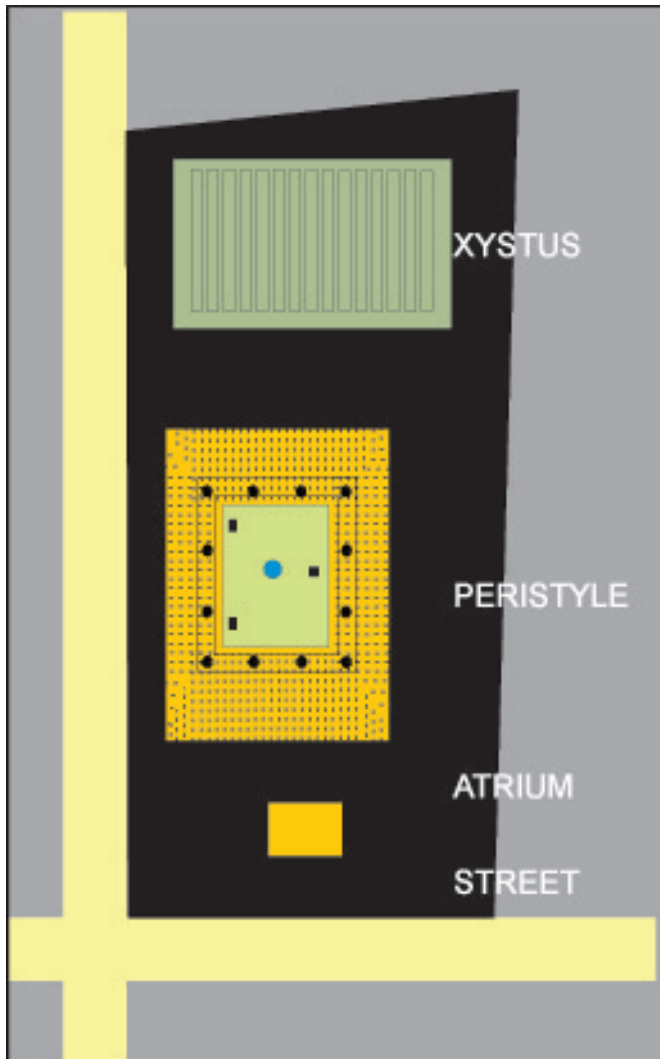
**Form:** A cave in a wood with a natural spring of water was an ideal location. The cave became a grotto with a statue of the god and other architectural embellishments. A roofed colonade (peristyle) was used to enclose a rectangular space for athletics or wrestling. Seats were placed in alcoves (exedra) attached to the peristyle and used for discussion or teaching. The sacred grove became a public place with specialised enclosures, seats, pools, rooms for philosophers and courtyards for wrestling and exercise. Groves developed into large temple complexes for education and sport.



*The sanctuary of Olympia*

# Classical Courtyard c100 BCE

## Style Five



**Use:** Space within walled cities was always valuable and expensive. Only the rich could afford small gardens. The poor lived in a single room with a door opening onto the street and no windows. Courtyards were made for specialised purposes, broadly similar to those of the Egyptian domestic garden: outdoor eating, entertaining, growing plants. In towns, they had to be enclosed by high walls owing to the proximity of neighbours and the demands of security and privacy. Walls also created an urban climate, warm in winter and cool in summer.

**Form:** Three types of courtyard were made:

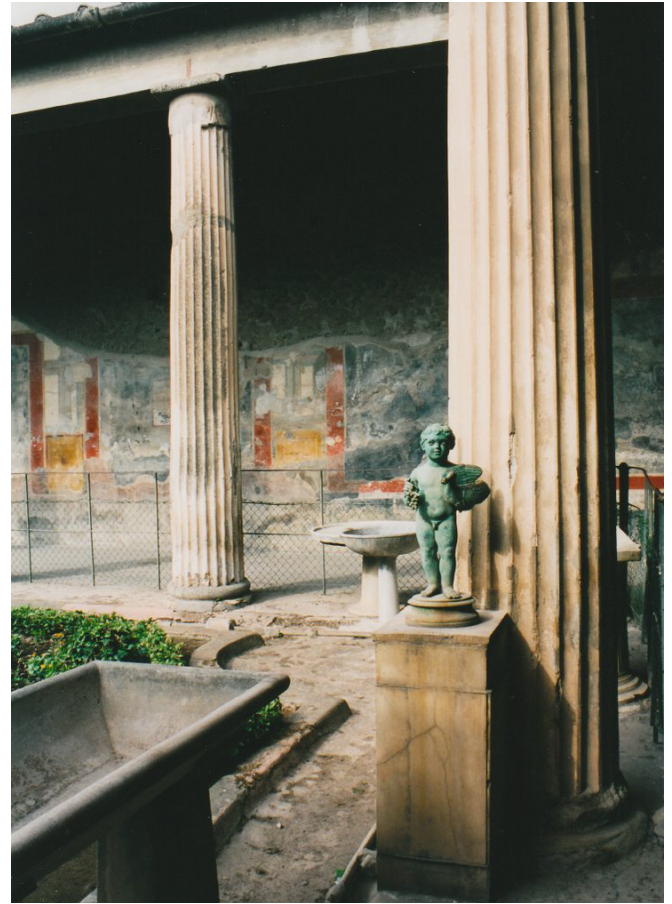
1. a yard (*atrium*) in the centre of the dwelling giving access to other rooms and to the street. It was a lightwell, a ventilation shaft and a place catch rainwater.
2. a colonaded yard (*peristyle*) ornamented and used as an outdoor living and dining room. The roofed colondade gave access to the rooms and courtyards often had pools, fountains, statues, a small shrine and planting (bay, myrtle, oleander, rosemary, box, ivy, rose, iris, lily, violet, daisy, poppy and chrysanthemum).
3. a horticultural space (*xystus*) was used for flowers and vegetables and might be decorated with statues, a pavilion and a water features.



Villa dei Papiri (Photo Jean-Pierre Louis)

The best examples of small Roman courtyards are in the once-buried cities of [Pompeii](#) and Herculaneum - and there is also a re-created courtyard from the Villa dei Papiri at the Getty Museum (photo above).





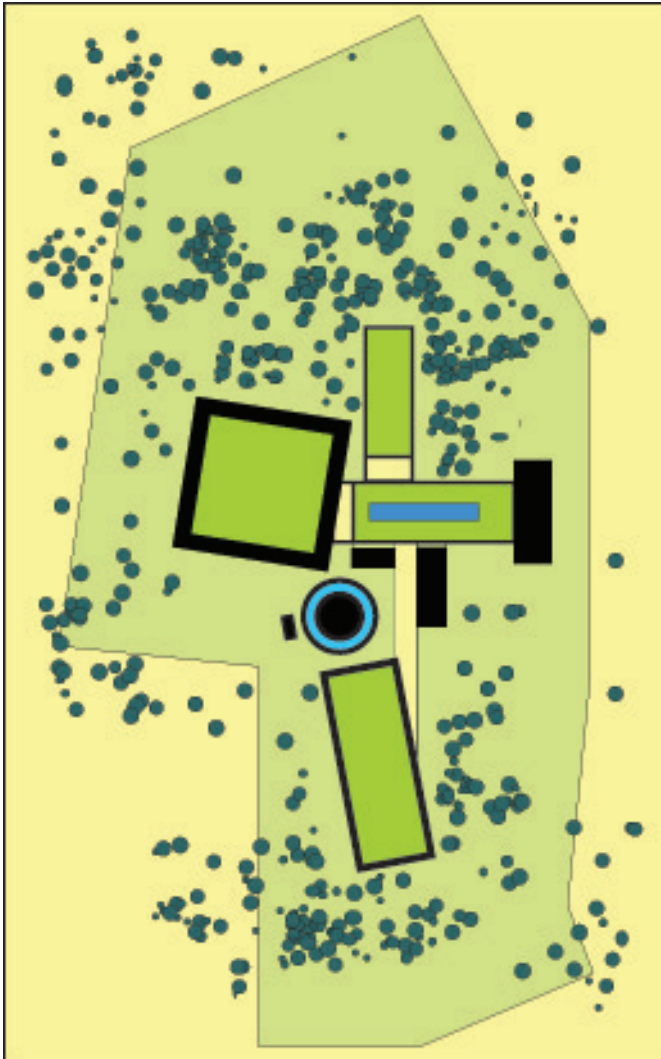
*Classical courtyard gardens in Pompeii*





# Classical Villa c100 AD

## Style Six



**Use:** The idea of making villas developed in Greece and reached fulfillment in the Roman Empire. The word 'palace' comes from Augustus' villa on Rome's Palatine Hill. The villa became a palatial estate complete with dwellings, gardens and numerous subsidiary buildings. Both rustic and urban villas were made. Their use was to live, relax, exercise, entertain friends and conduct pleasant business, or, in Hadrian's case, run an empire. The villa integrated elements of many earlier garden types: the domestic courtyard, the gymnasium (sacred grove), the temple garden (many emperors were considered Gods) and the hunting park. Owners enjoyed both the chase and the supply of fresh meat.

**Form:** Buildings and gardens were grouped together within a bounded enclosure. The spaces adjoining individual buildings were axially planned but, by the standards of renaissance villas, the lack of an axial relationship between buildings is surprising. Structures were scattered like parcels on a table. Either there was no overall plan or it was asymmetrical. In Southern Spain (c1250) the Moors built palatial villa-gardens, planned like their Roman predecessors but also drawing upon the gardens of Mesopotamia.



The seaside villa at [Sperlonga](#) has a maritime grotto







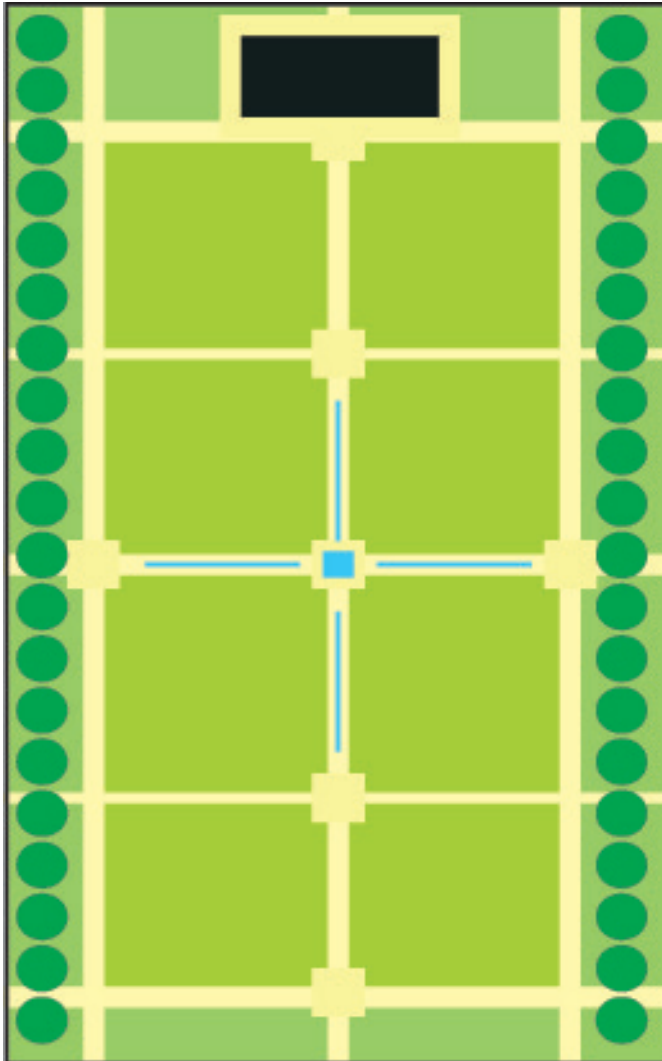
*Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli. The details of the gardens on the model, above, are speculative and improbable. But more survives than of any other Roman villa, including the Canopus (below).*





# Paradise Garden

## Style Seven



**Use:** The Persian word (*paradeisoi*), from which our word *paradise* comes, meant a walled garden. It derives from *pai* (around) and *deaza* (wall). The term was first used for large hunting parks and, much later, for rectangular walled gardens in cities or in the countryside. Paradise gardens were a calm retreat from the noisy and dusty outside world. They were used more as ornaments to be viewed from upper windows, or garden pavilions, than as rooms for outdoor living. Water channels, pools, fountains and cascades cooled the air. Flowers provided scent and colour. Fruit trees provided shade. They did not have lawns.

**Form:** The classic Paradise Garden is divided into four parts by canals and known as a *chahar bagh* or quadripartite garden. The Koran (xxv.15) describes paradise as a garden of eternity (Arabic *jannat al-khuld*) with four rivers: of water, milk, wine and honey. Gardens demarcated by water channels were made by the Persians (from the sixth century BC) and by the Mughals (from the sixteenth century until the eighteenth century). It is likely that symmetry only became a characteristic of paradise gardens after the sixteenth century. Actual gardens were associated with Paradise, in the religious sense, after the fifteenth century and the best surviving examples of such gardens were made by the Mughals in the Indian sub-continent.



*Humayun's Tomb, Delhi (above)*

**Note:** the use of channels and basins in this manner dates from at least 500 BCE but surviving examples of the style associated with the Islamic conception of Paradise date from c1500 CE. The position of the diagram in a sequence relating to western gardens is therefore somewhat arbitrary and was chosen with regard to the point at which the idea became known in the west.



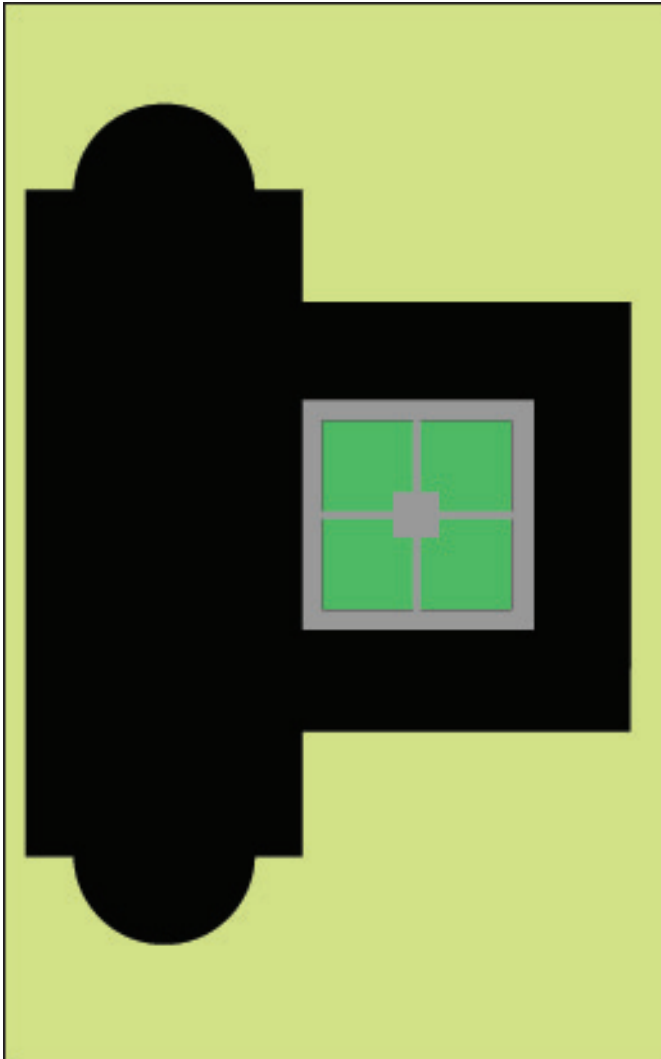


The tomb gardens of *Itmad Ud Daula* (above) and of his grand daughter - Mumtaz Mahal - for whom Shah Jahan built the *Taj Mahal* (below)



# Cloister Garth c 1100 CE

Style Eight



**Use:** The word cloister means enclosed. Often, cloisters had colonnades like the Greek and Roman peristyle courts from which they so clearly derive. They were contemplative spaces at the heart of monastic life and used for walking and reading. They gave access to adjacent buildings used for eating (the refectory), sleeping (the dormitory) and food storage (the cellar). Another door led into the church.

**Form:** The typical cloister is a square courtyard surrounded by a covered walk. The central green space was known as the cloister garth (garden). There are no medieval records of them having contained any plants except closely-scythed grass. During the renaissance, princes of the church became leaders in the art of garden design and many simple plats of grass were made into ornamental gardens. In the nineteenth century some became garde-nesque, with herbaceous plants and shrubs. Monasteries also had flower, vegetable and orchard gardens, but no examples survive.



*Monreale Cloisters, Sicily has crossing paths, though the date at which the paths were formed is not known (Photo courtesy Bex Ross)*





Cloisters in Naples (*Santa Chiara*, above) and on Capri (*Certosa di San Giacomo* below)







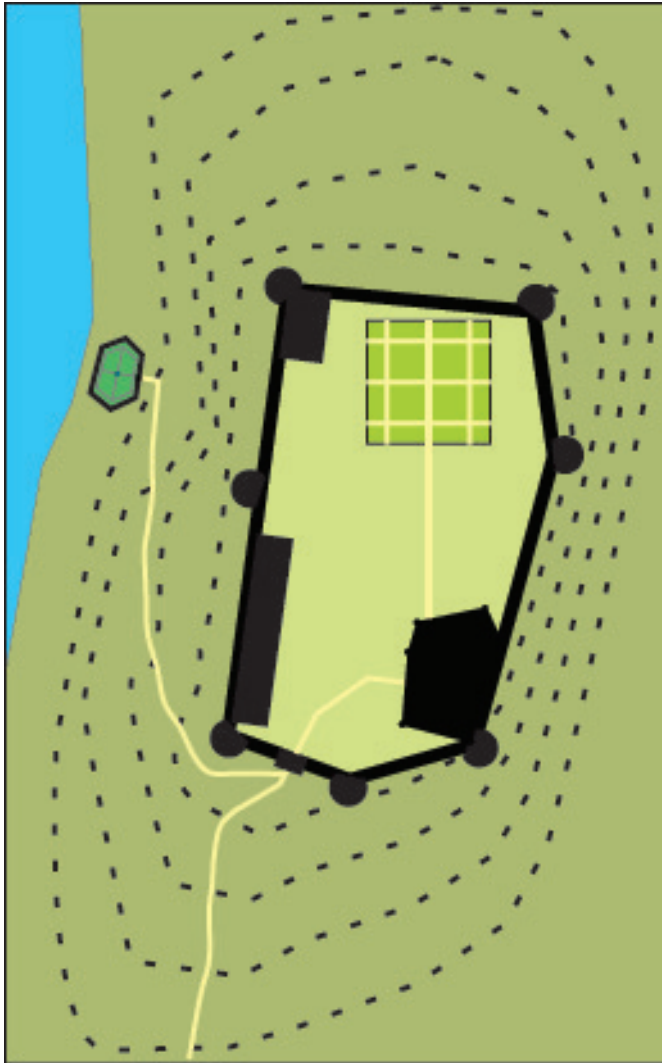
The cloisters of *Mont Saint Michel*, France (above - photo Yuichi) and *San Lorenzo*, Italy (below)





# Castle Garden c 1300 CE

Style Nine



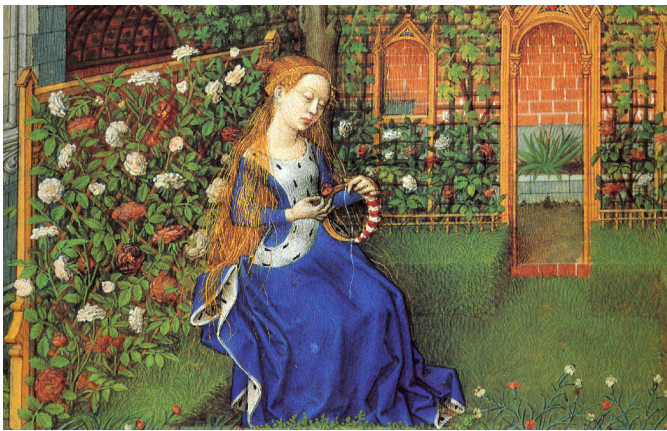
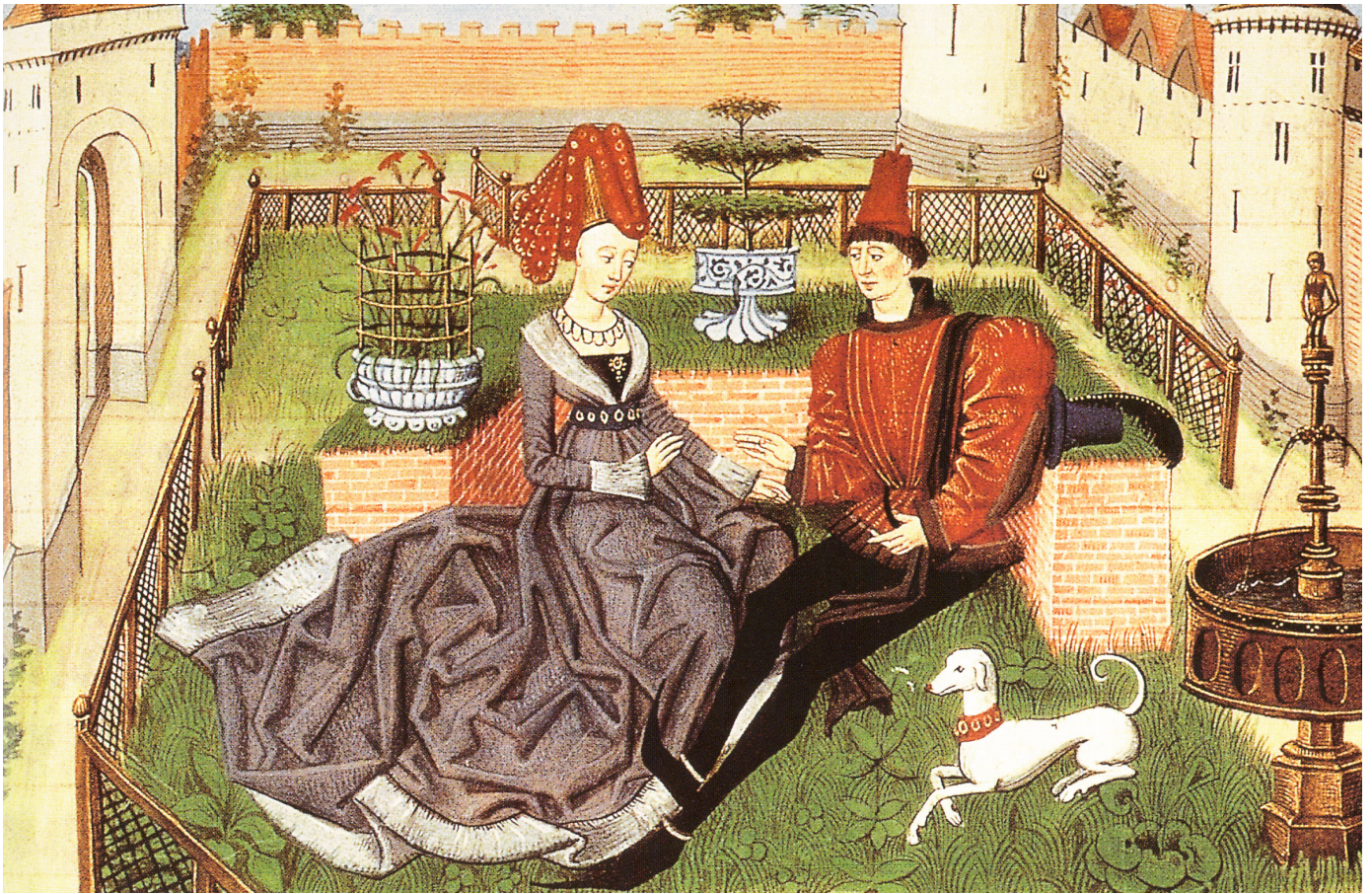
**Use:** Forts were occupied by soldiers and used exclusively for military purposes. From the middle ages onwards, castles were places for families to live with their dependents and retainers. Some had small pleasure gardens within their walls, primarily for the use of ladies, children, swains and troubadours. In times of siege, an army, or the population of the local village, would occupy the space inside the outer fortifications and, presumably, trample the garden.

**Form:** The garden could be a small rectangular, hexagonal or irregular enclosure, inside the outer fortification (bailey). There are many surviving castle spaces where one can see places for such gardens within the inner or outer bailey. No examples survive but there are symbolic illustrations of them in medieval prayer books and romances. They show trellis fencing, flowery lawns, turf seats, tunnel-arcades and a profusion of sweet-scented flowers. Most of the land within the bailey would not have smelt sweet. Castles also had orchards and hunting parks outside the fortified zone.



*Werfen Castle, Austria (Photo courtesy Nathan Wong)*





*Herber is the medieval word for a planted garden (from the Latin herba, meaning either grass or a herbaceous plant). The herber could be used for medicinal plants or flowers. Later the word came to be used for an arbour. Medieval castles had small planted areas within the fortifications, protected by wooden fences and used as sitting areas for ladies and their swains. Castles also had larger pleasure gardens outside their fortifications.*







*Stirling Castle, Scotland (above) has an imprint of old gardens on the land below the castle walls. (Photo Dominic Mitchell). Rochester Castle, England (below) now has only an empty space.*



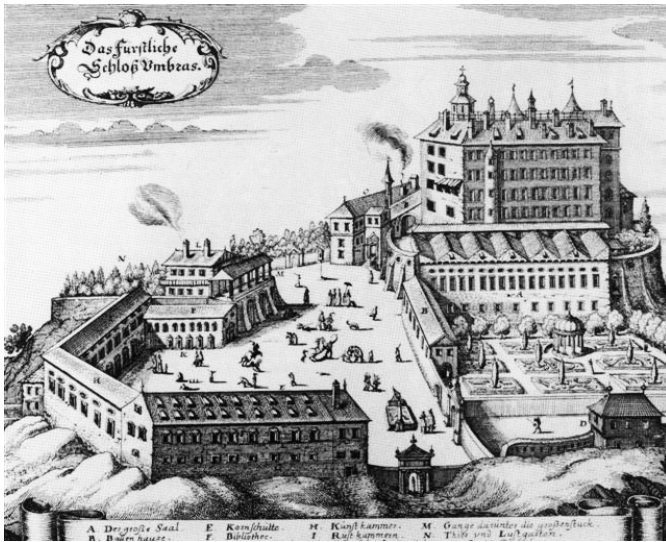




*Segovia, model above and photo below, still has gardens outside the city walls*







*Ambras Castle, Austria, has a garden re-creation loosely based on old drawings (above and below).*

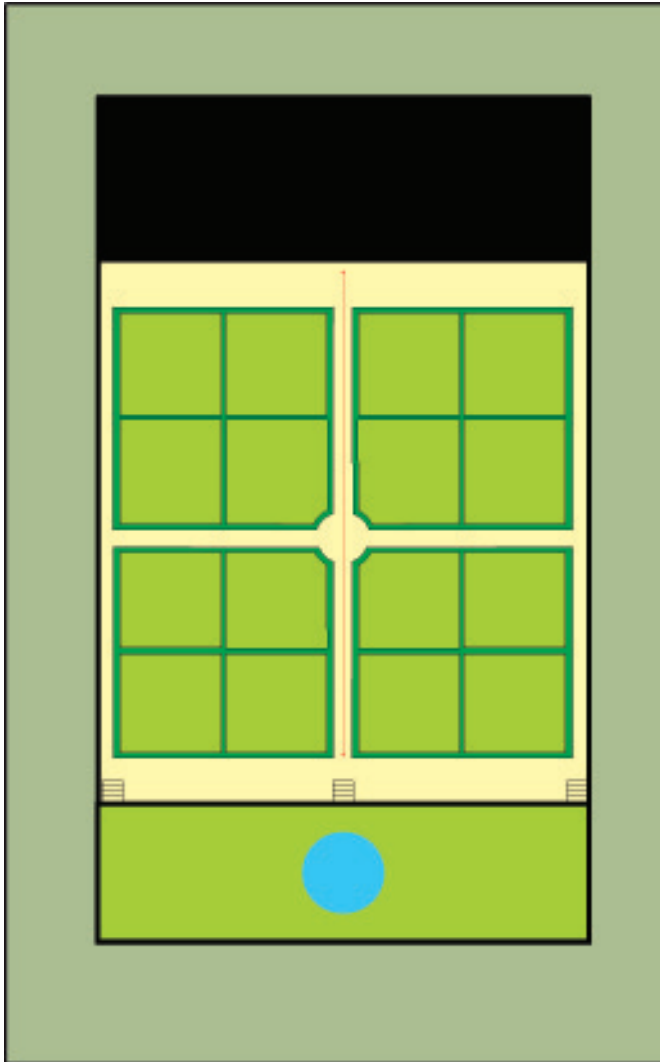


*Salzburg Castle has fortified platforms of the type once used for gardens in time of peace and for soldiers in time of war.*



# Early Renaissance Style c1450 CE

Style Ten



**Use:** The renaissance garden developed by stages from the medieval castle garden. When it became safe to live in fortified villas, instead of hilltop castles, space became available for the design of ornamental gardens. Women could use them to take the air in safety. Men resumed their involvement with gardens and more resources were devoted to their design. The principles of ancient gardens were re-discovered and experiments were made with new ideas. The social use of gardens, for holding discussions and entertaining friends, was also re-born

**Form:** Square and rectangular 'garden carpets' were laid out so that their unity, order and regularity could be viewed from the upper windows of a house, as they were in Paradise gardens. In marked contrast with eastern practice, early renaissance gardens had no particular geometrical relationship between the fortified house and its garden. Patterns, inspired by knotted carpets, were used in the design of what became known as 'knot gardens'.

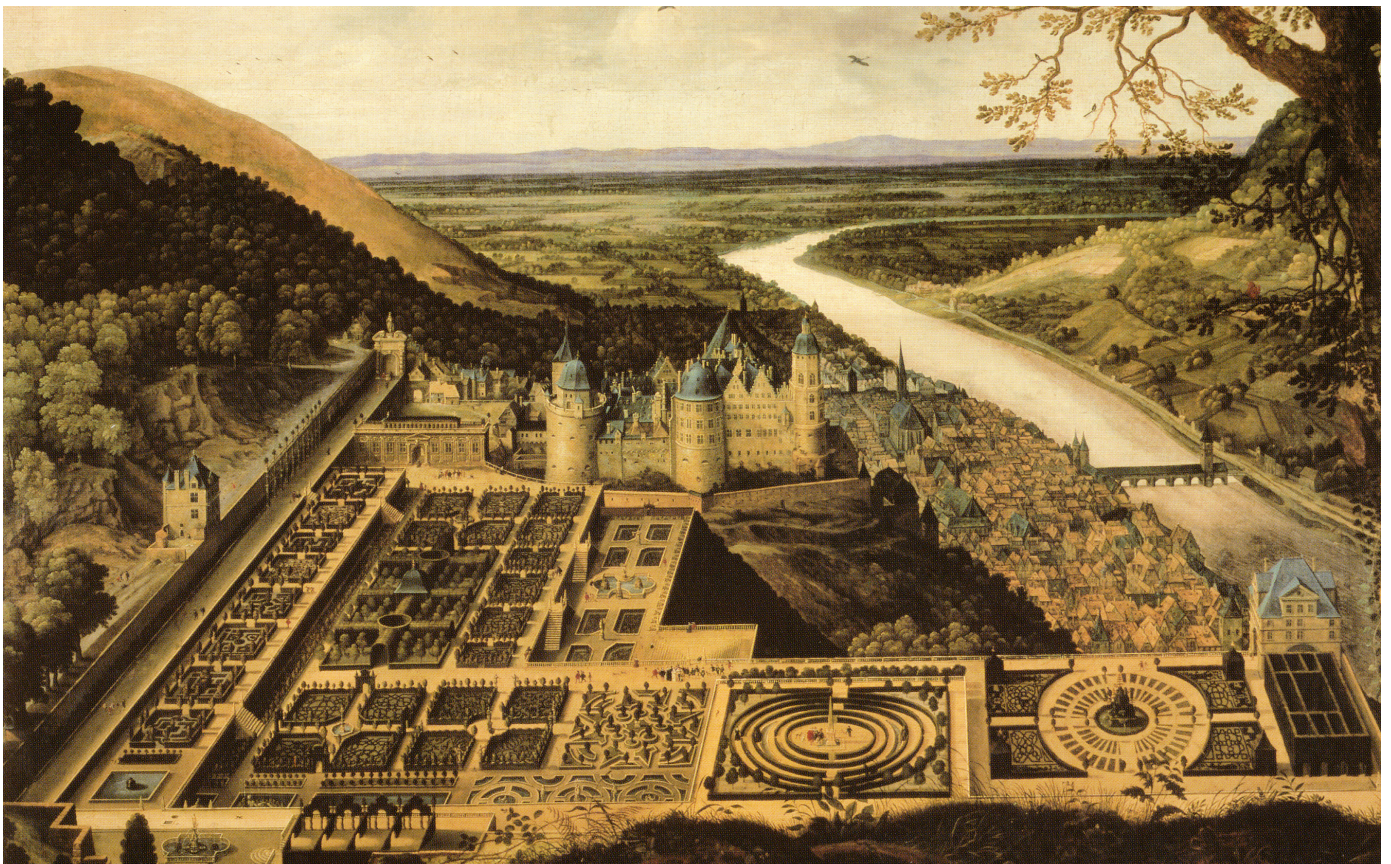


*Villa Medici at Fiesole, Italy (above and below)*



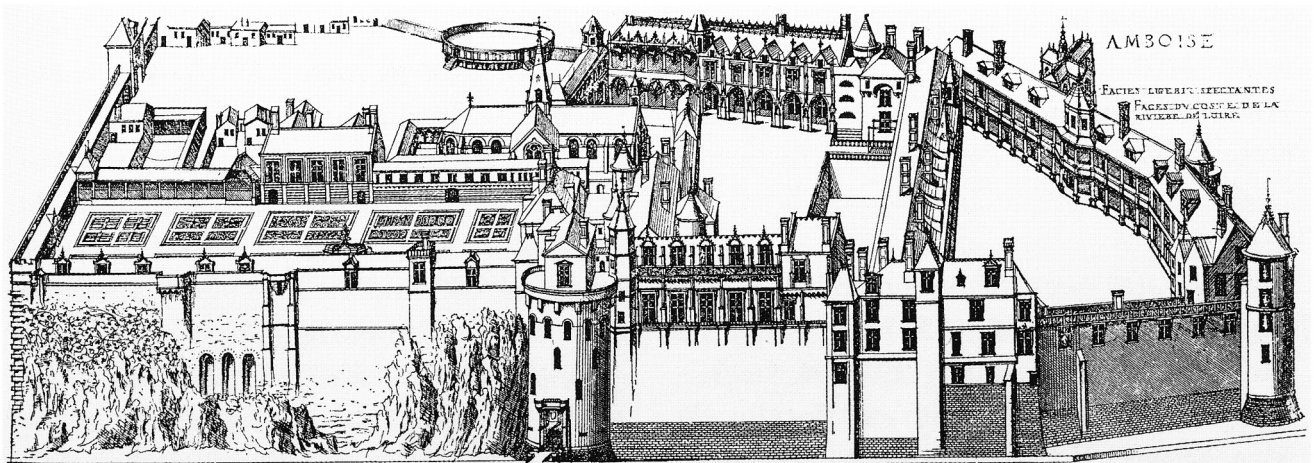


*Edzell Castle, in Scotland has a classic renaissance square enclosure - with modern planting. The garden is not aligned with the axis of the garden.*



*Though very large, the Hortus Palatinus, in Heidelberg, Germany, is an early renaissance garden with the castle unrelated to the axes of the garden.*





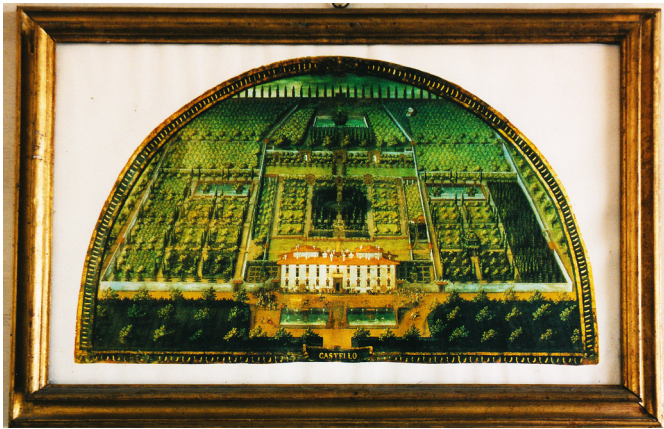
*Chateau Amboise has the space where a renaissance garden was made (above and below)*







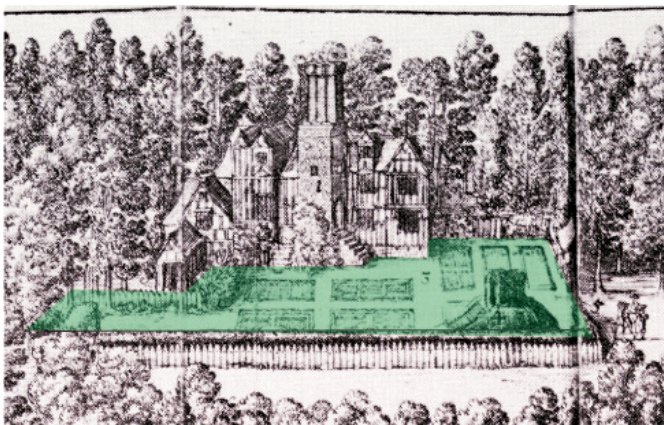
*Palácio de Fronteira, Portugal*



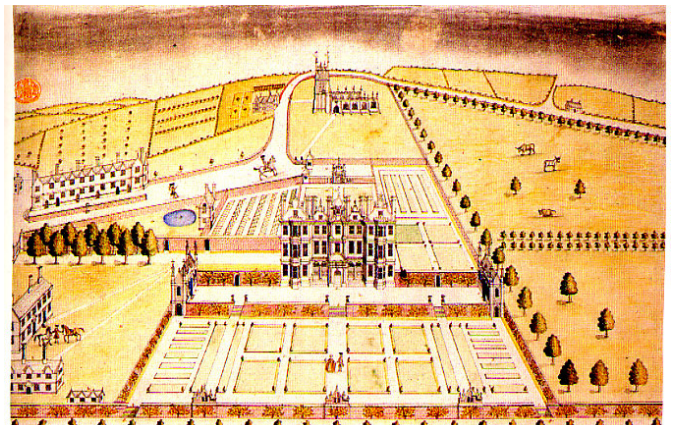
*Villa Petraia, Italy*



*Medici Villas around Florence*



*Boscobel House, Shropshire, England*

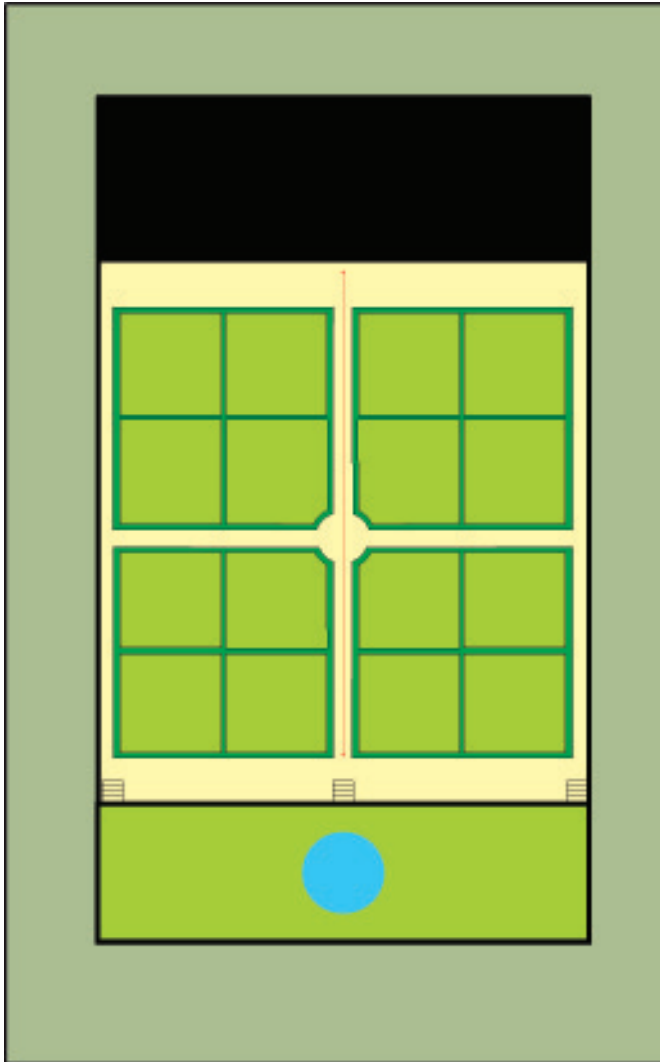


*Campden House, Gloucestershire, England*



# High Renaissance Style c1540 CE

## Style Eleven



**Use:** With a departure from the enclosed gardens of the late middle ages, Alberti advised making 'open places for walking, swimming, and other diversions, court-yards, grass-plots and porticoes, where the old men may chat together in the kindly warmth of the sun in winter, and where the family may divert themselves and enjoy the shade in summer ... and have a view of some city, towns, the sea, an open plain'. Medieval gardens had been inward-looking. Renaissance gardens, with their hillside terraces, began to look outward, physically and intellectually. Making a collection of antique statuary became an important garden use. It was a way of looking to history and the fine arts.

**Form:** The organising principle of high renaissance gardens was first demonstrated by Bramante. He used a central axis to control the layout of house and garden. It integrated a series of rectangular enclosures with terraces at different levels. Flights of steps, alcoves, niches and fountains were disposed in relation to the axis and embellished with statues, fountains and terracotta pots holding flowers and fruit trees.



*Villa Castello, Italy (top) and Quinta da Bacalhoa, Portugal (right, photo courtesy Mark Hogan)*





The *Villa Madama*, Italy (above) deserves the description 'High Renaissance' better than any other garden, because of its association with Raphael. The *Escorial* below was partly a palace and partly a monastery.







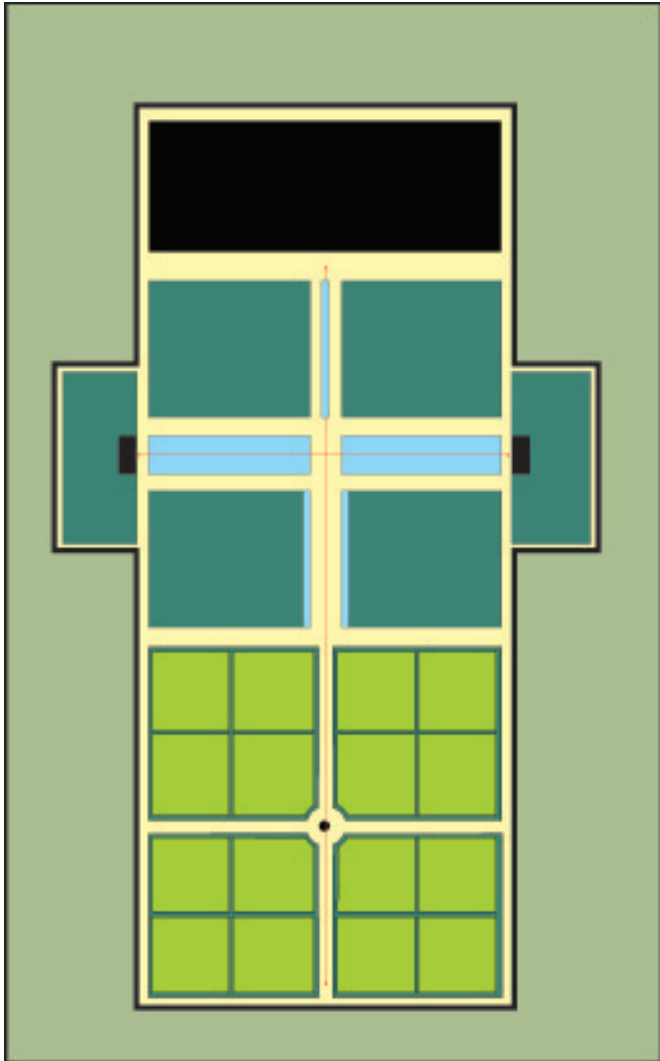
*Chateau de Chenonceau, France (above) and Wallenstein Garden Czech Republic (below)*





# Mannerist Style

## Style Twelve



*Vizcaya, America (Photo courtesy Funkyug)*

**Use:** When renaissance art was thought to have reached a peak of perfection, designers and clients became attracted by surprise, novelty and alusion. Gardens were furnished with dramatic features and used for outdoor masques and parties. Virtuoso water displays were admired and the creation of garden features to impress one's friends became an objective. Montaigne visited Pratolino in 1580 and thought the Duke had 'expressly selected an inconvenient site, sterile and rugged, and utterly without water, merely that he might have the pleasure of bringing the water from 5 miles off'. He was amazed to see 'various musical instruments powered by water and hidden machinery which 'gives motion to several statues, single and in groups, opens doors, and gives apparent animation to the figures of various animals, that seem to jump into the water, to drink, to swim about, and so on.'

**Form:** Movement and drama became important in mannerist gardens, as they did in mannerist painting and sculpture. Compared with their predecessors, gardens were less calm and more given to theatrical display. Hydraulic marvels and elaborate water features, often based on streams flowing through the garden, were characteristic features of mannerist gardens. It was as though garden designers had taken heed of Leonardo's remark that 'It is a wretched pupil who does not surpass his master'. Dramatic sites were chosen and embellished with exotic sculpture. There was an interest in scholarship and, with Palladio, a Neoplatonic concern for circles and squares.

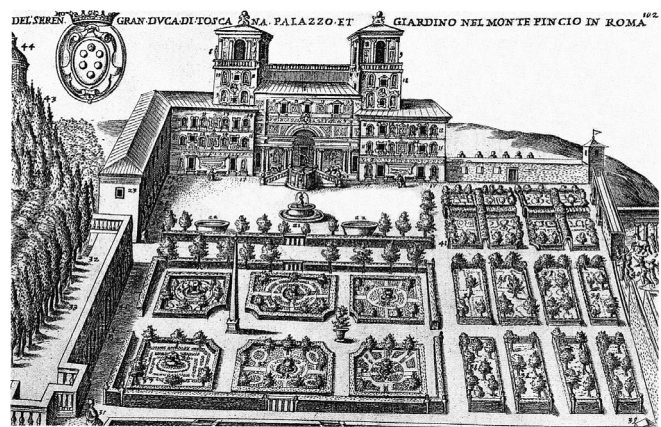




Villa Lante, Italy (above) Photo courtesy Rory Ferrari



Villa d'Este, Italy (above) and Villa Medici Rome, Italy (below)







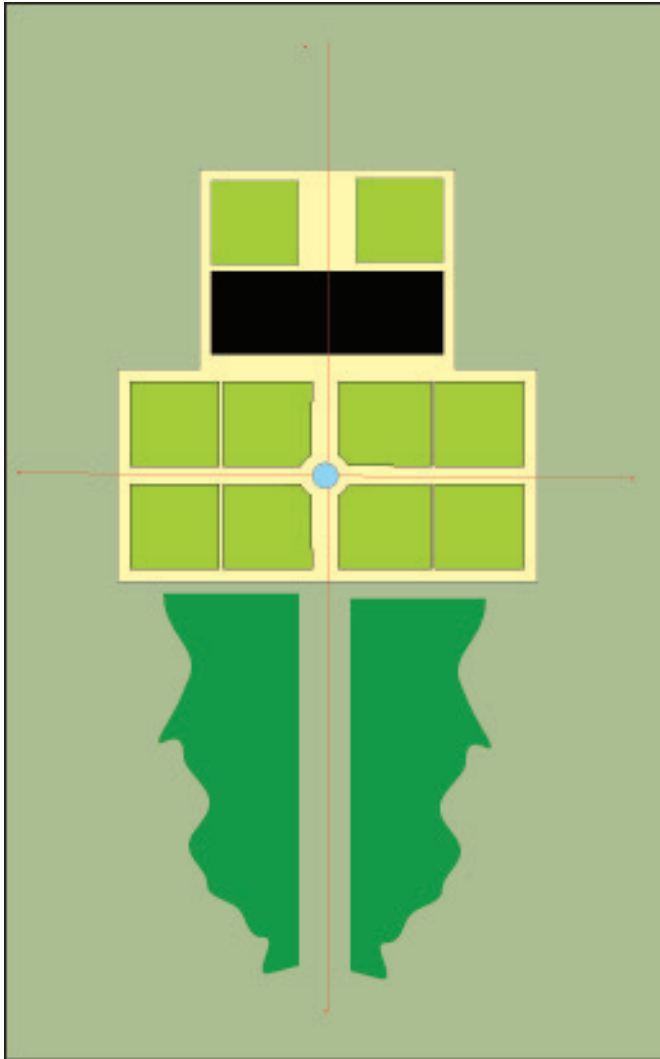
*Schloss Hellbrunn, Austria, has one of the best surviving examples of a Mannerist garden, with axes projecting outside the garden and the water tricks still in perfect working order.*





# Early Baroque Style c1600

## Style Thirteen



**Use:** Early Baroque art is associated with the Counter-Reformation and a desire to re-establish the authority of the Catholic church and the power of the princes. Garden layout became a way of demonstrating the importance of Popes, Princes and Dukes. Since physical security now rested more on guns than city walls, living in rural areas became as safe, or unsafe, as living in towns. The villas of Frascati were built with their lines of sight fixed on the dome of St Peter's in Rome. Pope Sixtus V used Baroque ideas in the planning of Rome, with vistas fixed on a set of obelisks. Important social gatherings took place in Baroque gardens.

**Form:** The Baroque style began with the projection of axes beyond the boundaries of enclosed renaissance gardens. In towns, the avenues focussed on churches and other features. Outside towns they pushed into the landscape, bringing mountains, lakes and forests into a composition with the garden. The results were dramatic. Lines of view, and then axes projected ever-outwards. An enthusiasm for the discoveries of geometry, optics and perspective influenced the style. The avenue is the most characteristic feature of baroque layouts. It had begun life as a shady walk on the edge of a medieval garden. Then: (1) Bramante gave avenues key role to a central axis (2) avenues became focused on garden features (3) avenues focused on features outside the garden (eg the dome of St Peters) (4) avenues began radiating in all directions to the greater glory of their owner.



*Villa Aldobrandini*





*Isola Bella* (above Alessandro Vernet and below Ezrioman) shows a 'baroque tendency' to engage with the wider landscape







The *Boboli Garden*, Italy, has strong internal avenues centred on focal points





# High Baroque Style c1650

## Style Fourteen



**Use:** Baroque gardens were for show. High society gathered to admire and participate in the theatricality. Like a play, the garden was incomplete without an audience. It was also a physical expression of the owner's power and importance: one had to be there. France was the leading country in the development of high baroque gardens and they became associated with autocratic government. Versailles was freely open to gentlemen, providing they carried a sword. The crowds would part admiringly when Louis XIV made a stately progression of his estate, perhaps in the company of his skilled designer, Andre Le Notre. An ancient park-use was re-discovered: forest rides were used for hunting.

**Form:** Designers drew upon developments in mathematics and science, using a 'Cartesian' geometry with avenues reaching to draw the surrounding landscape into the composition. The characteristic features of baroque gardens were: a centrally positioned building, elaborate parterres, fountains, basins and canals. A unified discipline infused the residential architecture, garden architecture, sculpture, fountains, cascades, planting and other features. Command of the waters was essential and in many gardens there were so many fountains that they could be operated only for a short time each week.



Versailles





*Vaux le Vicomte is regarded as the first High Baroque garden but has a Mannerist plan*



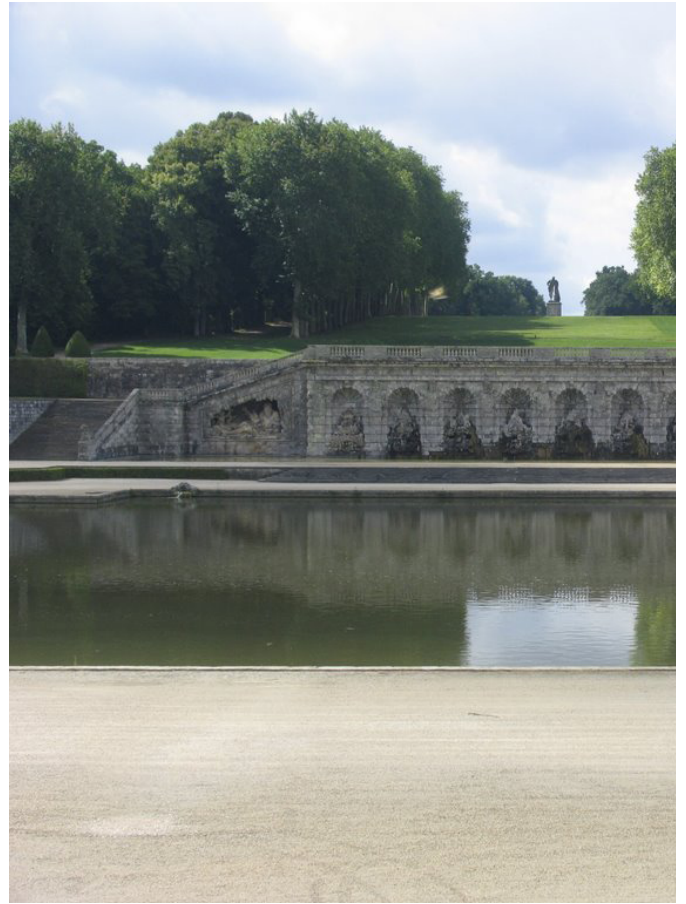




*Versailles is at its best when the fountains are working and the garden is crowded*







The great scale of *Vaux* gives the central parterres the character of avenues







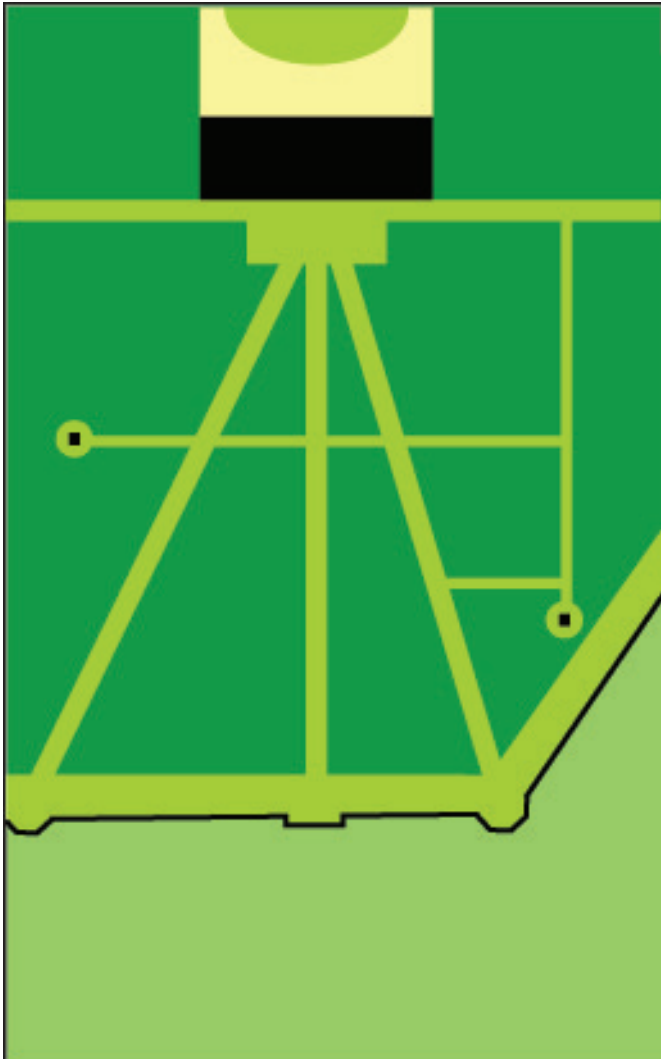
*Versailles has internal avenues which project beyond the garden limits and into the city*





# Forest Style c1710

## Style Fifteen



**Use:** The idea of the garden as a rural retreat grew in deliberate contrast to the high baroque style. Owners shunned courtly life. Their proud intention was to make 'useful and beautiful' country retreats, as Virgil had done. Timber production was an important land use. Avenues were made by planting trees, not by cutting rides through existing forest. The name for the style comes from Stephen Switzer.

**Form:** The radial geometry was carried over from the high baroque. The boundary was often a low retaining wall with bastions at turning points giving views over the surrounding countryside. There was an interest in lines of view, sometimes emphasised by low hedges on the inside margins of avenues, meeting the estate boundary at bastion points.



*A forest retreat in Cirencester Park*

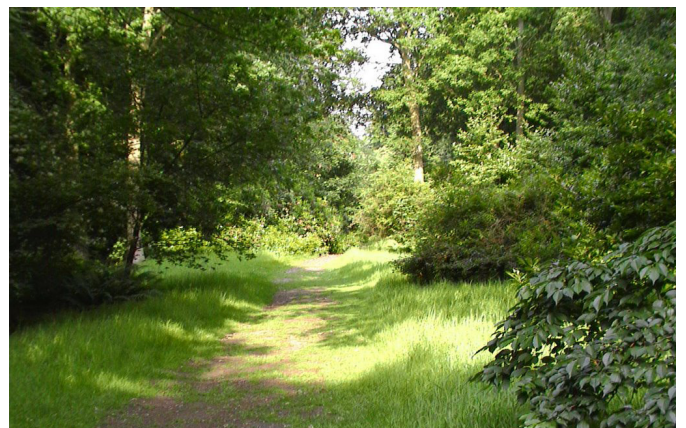
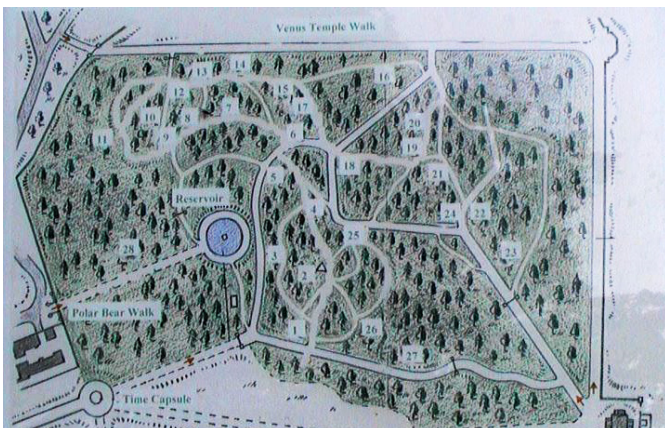
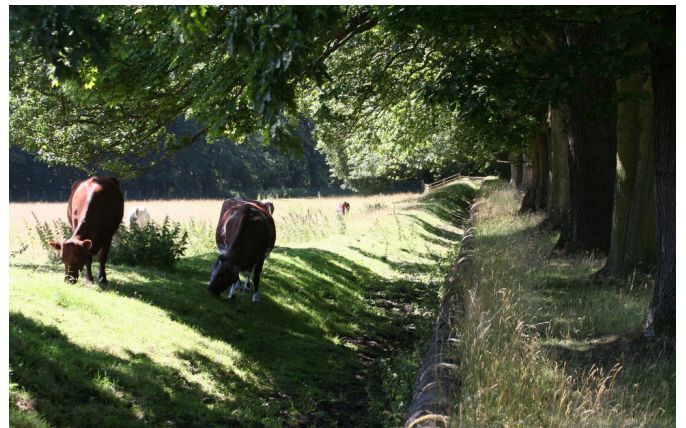




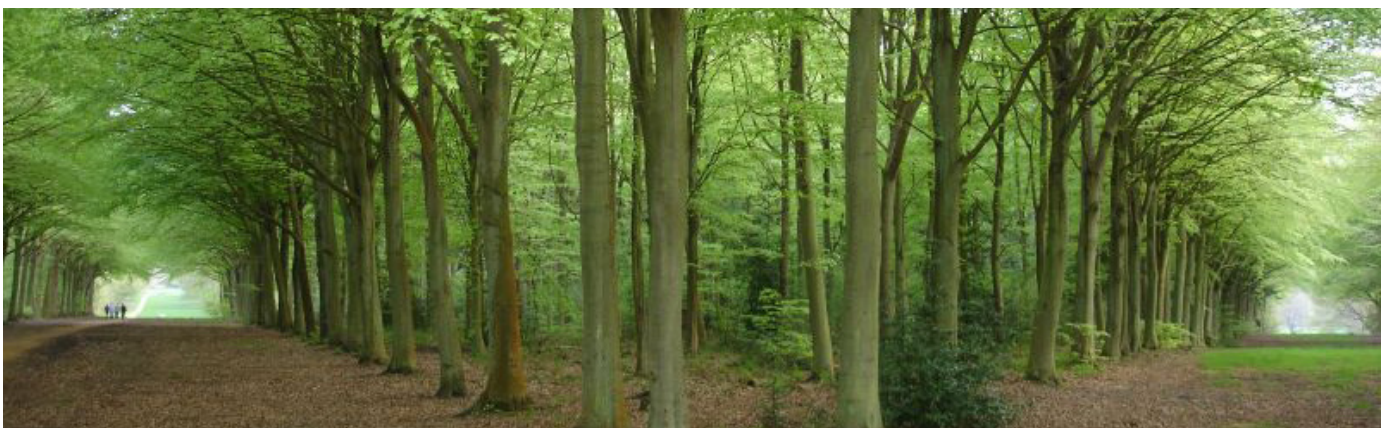
*Chiswick House* (Photo Ben Coombs) has a vestigial network of projecting avenues



*Gibside* is an early example of a Forest style garden



Wray Wood (or Ray Wood) at *Castle Howard* was preserved as a natural forest



*Felbrigg* has a forest with both aesthetic and functional roles (Photo courtesy Ed Mitchell)





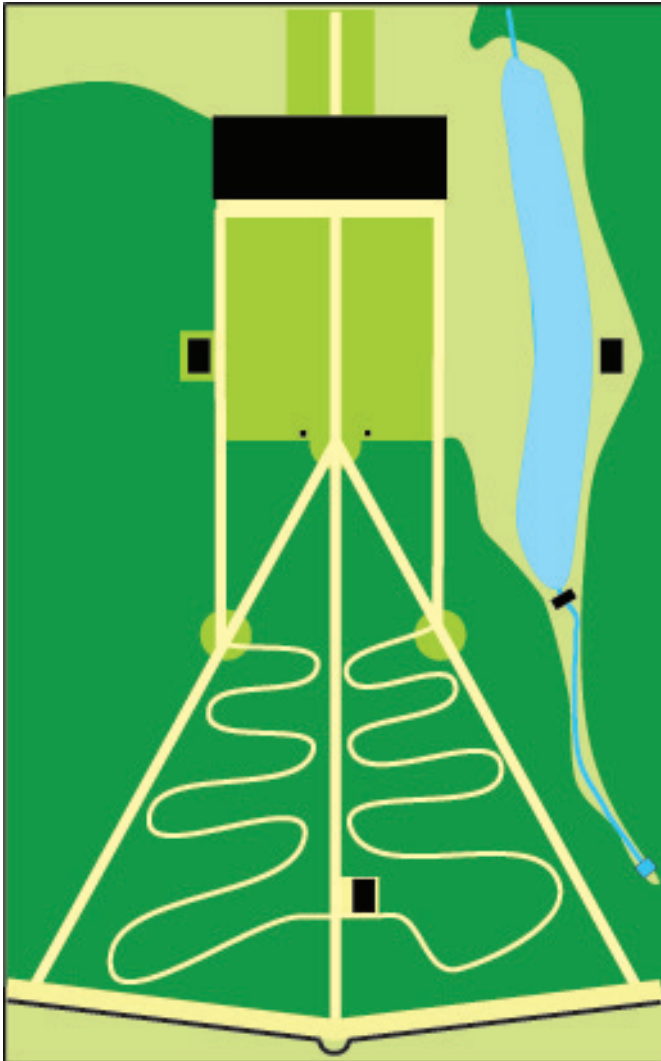
*Cirencester Park* was a country retreat, planned in part as a forestry operation





# Augustan Style c1730

Style Sixteen



**Use:** Owners started to look back, beyond the baroque, beyond the renaissance, beyond the middle ages: to the classical origins of western culture. They wanted gardens which recalled the landscape of antiquity and could be used as places of reflection: on literature, history, natural science and the affairs of the day. Discussions with a few friends might take place while strolling through the grounds or sipping tea on a well placed seat. Classical ornament and allusion contributed to theme. For land-owners who had been on the Grand Tour, the Augustan garden served as a reminder and as a place to display souvenirs (eg urns and statues).

**Form:** The first 'landscape gardens' in England were inspired by visions of the Roman landscape in the time of the Emperor Augustus. They were classical landscapes with woods, water, grass and small temples. William Kent was one of the first professional designers to give physical form to this vision. The diagram shows part of the garden as a carry-over from the baroque and part as an early exercise in the re-creation of a classical landscape. Between 1720 and 1745 the placing of temples and statues was more important than the overall plan.



*The Pantheon in Rome (125 AD) may have been designed by Hadrian. It certainly inspired the Villa Rotunda, by Palladio, Chiswick House, by Lord Burlington and the Pantheon at Stourhead. All were inspired by Rome's peace and prosperity in the Age of Augustus: 63 BCE-14CE. (Photo courtesy Camille King).*





*Chiswick House, inspired by the Villa Rotunda, was inspired by Roman classicism*







*Stourhead is the most famous example of a classical landscape garden*







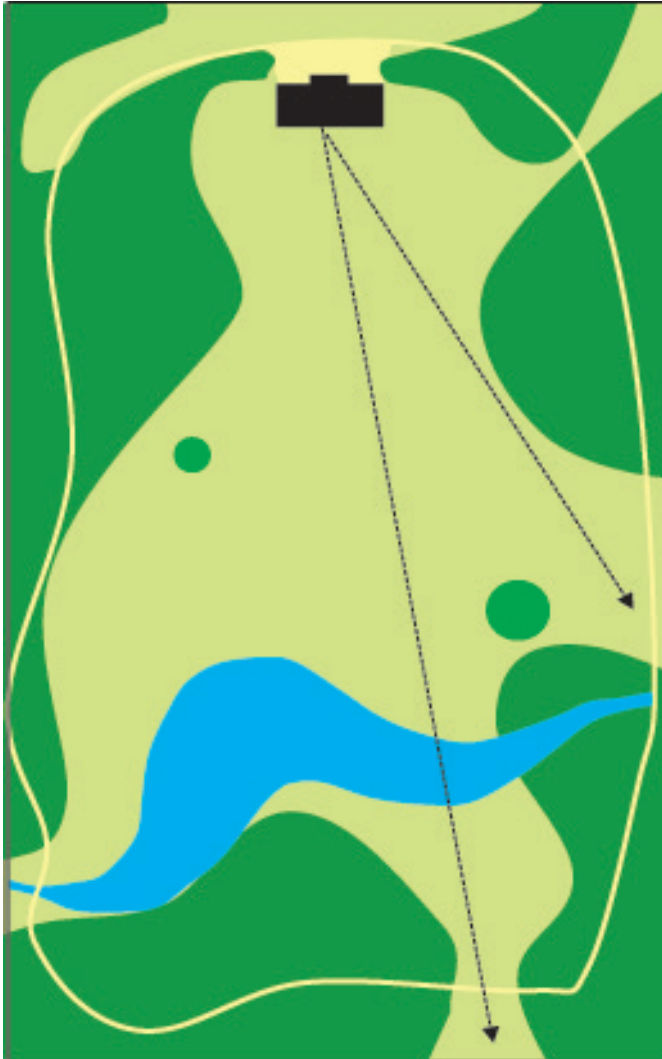
*Stowe (above and below) was designed in admiration of Rome in the time of Augustus*





# Serpentine Style c1750

## Style Seventeen



**Use:** The circumferential path could be travelled on horse back or in a coach to enjoy the 'sense of being swiftly drawn in an easy coach on a smooth turf, with gradual ascents and declivities' (Christopher Hussey). The park was used for grazing. One then observed that, although the owner was extremely rich, his resources were used productively instead of being wasted on boastful display. Goethe and Rousseau saw the style as an embodiment of Enlightenment principles. It was regarded as more 'natural' than anything which had gone before. One must look with an educated eye to appreciate the qualities of the serpentine style.

**Form:** The classic features of this style were a lawn sweeping to the house front, circular clumps, a serpentine lake, an encircling tree belt and a perimeter carriage drive. This is the style of what is sometimes known as the 'English landscape garden'. One could call it the 'Brownian' style. The name Serpentine Style draws attention to the free-flowing curves. There are many examples. In the middle years of the eighteenth century, Lancelot Brown developed a personal style which can be seen as more-abstract version of the Augustan Style. It made less use of garden buildings and more use of serpentine lines .



Tree belt and clumps at *Petworth Park*, designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown





*Prior Park (above) and Duncombe Park (below)*







The serpentine lake at *Blenheim Park* was designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown







*Pavlovsk, Inga Ivanova/Dreamstime*



*Castle Howard (above) and Alnwick Castle (below)*







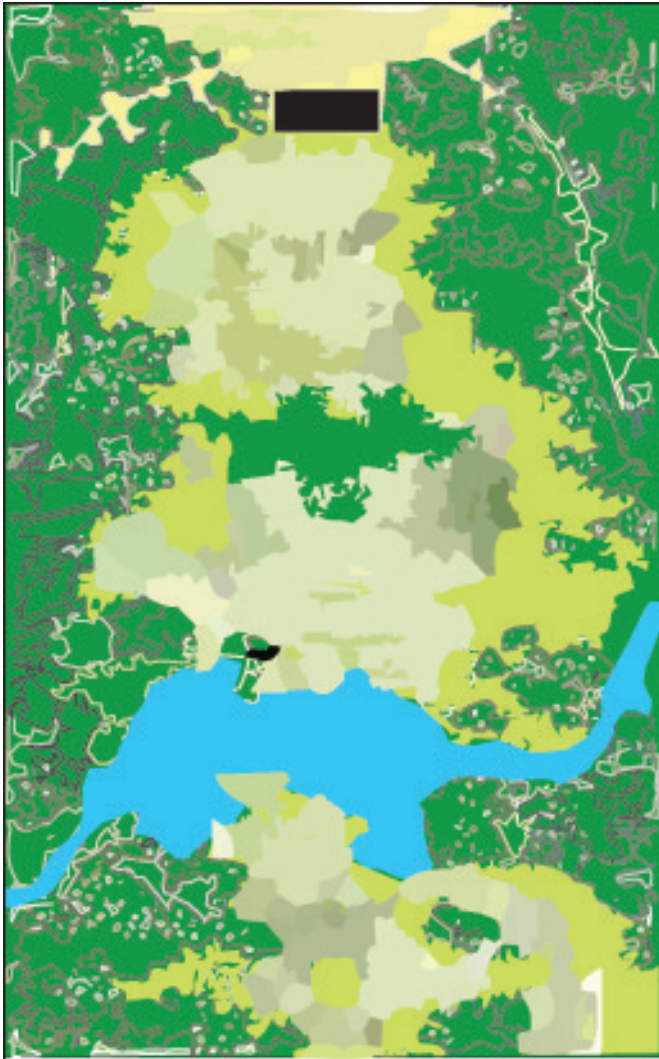
*J C Loudon used these drawings to differentiate Brown's style (above) from the Picturesque*





# Picturesque & Gardenesque Styles c1790

Styles Eighteen and Nineteen



**Use:** Enthusiasm for wildness and irregularity was the driving force behind these styles of garden layout. A thirst for landscape painting, travel, adventure, awe and scientific knowledge could be slaked by garden scenery. Picturesque estates stirred the mind. The aim was to create parks for the enjoyment of an artistically composed representation of the natural world. They were not designed for, social gatherings or hunting. But they did become places for the collection of exotic plants from far-off lands. Loudon believed this should become a primary objective and invented the term Gardenesque to describe a Picturesque layout furnished with exotic plants.



**Form:** Advocates of the Picturesque criticised the Serpentine Style was for being 'bald', 'shaven' and 'un-natural'. The style they favoured was Picturesque in the sense of 'wild and shaggy'. The Gardenesque was similar in form but used exotic plants. Himalayan plants (eg rhododendrons and camellias) and North American plants proved particularly well suited to their design intentions. The diagrams show a Picturesque estate, planted with native plants and a Gardenesque estate, planted with exotic plants. Loudon favoured circular beds because they show plants so well and because they are instantly 'recognisable' as the work of man. They obeyed the Principle of Recognition





*Isabella Plantation, London (Photo courtesy Ajth)*





*Hawkstone Park (above and below) has a picturesque setting and gardenesque planting*



*Scotney Castle, below ( Photo courtesy Rictor Norton/David Allen)*







*Cragside is a picturesque estate with gardenesque planting*



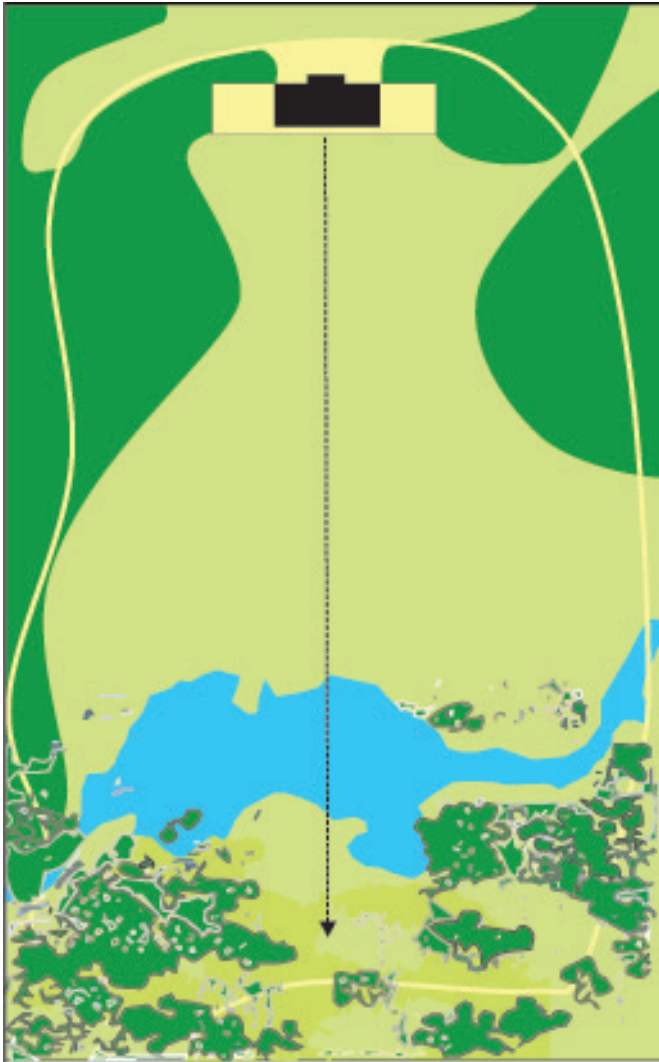


*Sheffield Park has picturesque architecture and gardenesque planting (Photo courtesy Mark Barkaway)*



# Landscape Style c1794

## Style Twenty



**Use:** The style had distinct regions with distinct uses (1) the terraced area near the house was used for the quiet enjoyment of domestic pleasures and polite society; (2) the serpentine park was used for grazing farm animals and growing forest trees; (3) the background scenery was not used by the owner and was conceived a place for wild nature. In the twentieth century this idea led to the planning of compact towns with a protected agricultural hinterland and national parks in distant hills and valleys.

**Form:** The Picturesque Controversy between Knight, Price and Repton concluded with each of the participants recommending a transition from a rectilinear area near the house, through a serpentine park to a wild and irregular background. It is a Landscape Style, in the sense of being 'composed, like a landscape painting with foreground, middleground and background'. Alberti's comments on the siting and layout of High Renaissance villas has fostered a foreground-background relationship of this type. The inclusion of a serpentine agricultural park as a middleground created a three-stage transition. It reflected an ever-growing understanding of landscape evolution.



*William Kent and Lancelot Brown worked on the park at [Holkham Hall](#) - and William Nesfield added the terrace (in 1854) which converted the design to the Landscape Style.*





*Harewood House has a terrace by Sir Charles Barry and a park by Lancelot Brown*







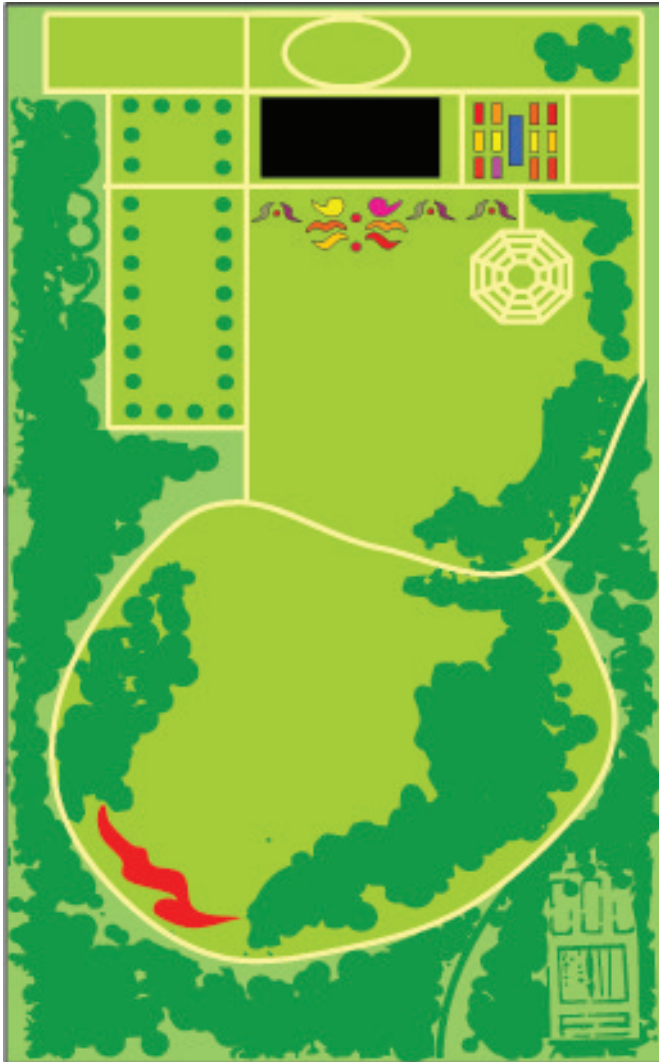
*Howick Hall Gardens have a terrace with a transition into the wider landscape*





# Mixed Style c1810

Style Twenty-one



**Use:** The Gardenesque taste for plant collecting developed into a wider enthusiasm for collecting styles garden design. Forming the collection became a hobby, not unlike collecting books, paintings, porcelain, roses or suits of armour. The collection gave both visual and intellectual pleasure and helped one's imagination to envisage historically and geographically remote areas. As with the landscape style, the areas near the dwelling were used for domestic pleasure. Servants did the physical work. The owners would take tea, play summer games and admire the collections.

**Form:** Towards the end of his career, Humphry Repton argued that there is no more absurdity in collecting styles in a garden than books in a library or pictures in a gallery. This led to a vogue for American, Chinese, Japanese, Italian and other eclectic gardens. Victorian gardens came to be characterised by their mixed collections of areas laid out in different styles. As the century drew on, the 'Italian' style came to be the most popular. The diagram shows the style as it was used in suburban gardens. In large parks, there was scope for more extensive collections. In Britain there was a special fondness for Italian gardens and in France for restorations of the High Baroque style.



*Branitz, Germany*





*Biddulph Grange has a rich mix of Chinese, Egyptian, Italian and other garden design styles*







*Biddulph Grange (above and below) is a fine example of the Mixed Style*







*Longwood Gardens, in America, is a prime example of the Mixed Style*







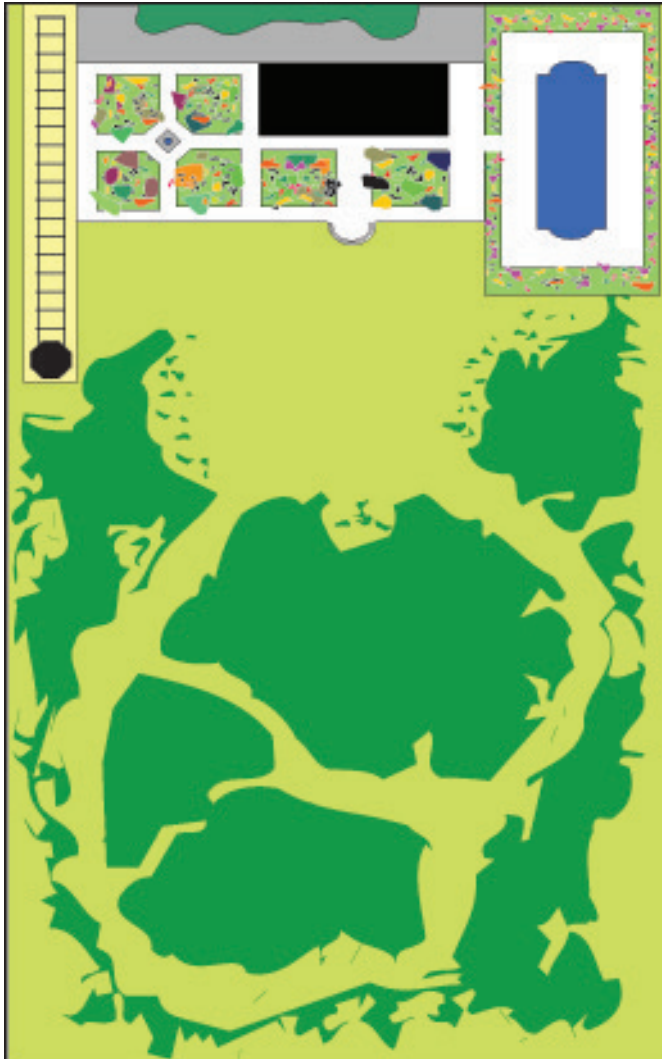
*Linderhof, in Germany has a romantic mixture of design styles*





# Arts and Crafts Style c1890

Style Twenty-two



**Use:** Using one's hands to care for a garden came to be seen as a pleasurable activity. This is the first style in the history of European garden design where the owner was a significant contributor to the maintenance. Less wealthy people must always have worked their own land, and the rich undertook some diletant activities, but the hard physical work had always been done by specialist gardeners and domestic staff. The Arts and Crafts Movement celebration of the purity of craftsmanship and honesty of manual toil led to a progressive involvement of owners in garden work.

**Form:** Towards the end of the nineteenth century, artists and designers came to despise styles borrowed from other countries and historical periods - usually without knowledge of the design principles which had inspired the originals. Led by Ruskin and Morris, they sought a return to the principles of art and to the craft skills on which, it was believed, a genuine style must rest. Designers drew inspiration from the fine arts, especially in the handling of shapes and colours. Arts and Crafts gardens generally have a clear demarcation between an enclosed area, with geometrical beds, near the dwelling and a naturalistic 'wild garden'. Discernment is exercised in the use of good plants, fine building materials and traditional crafts.



*The Red House, designed for William Morris, pioneered the Arts and Crafts Style*





*Sissinghurst Castle Garden is the most famous example of the Arts and Crafts style*







*Hidcote Manor Garden*







*Villa San Michele, on Capri, Italy, was made by Axel Munthe*





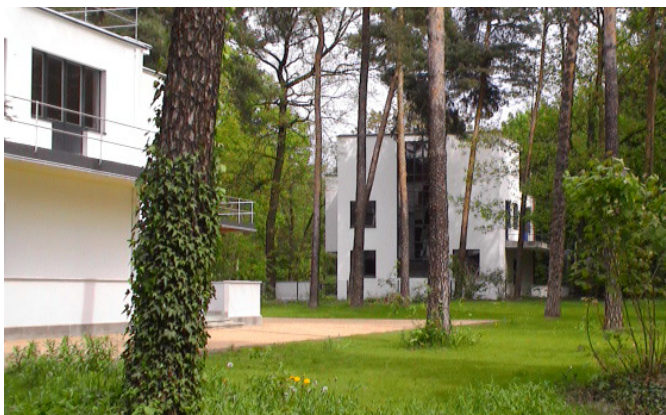
# Abstract Modern Style c1920

## Style Twenty-three



**Use:** The Abstract Style, like the Modern Movement itself, grew out of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Corbusier said the house should be a machine for living. The garden became a place for outdoor life - and an exercise ground for machinery: motor mowers, concrete mixers, electric pumps, cultivators, sprays and other gadgets. This enabled owners to undertake as much of the maintenance work as they pleased, even in large gardens.

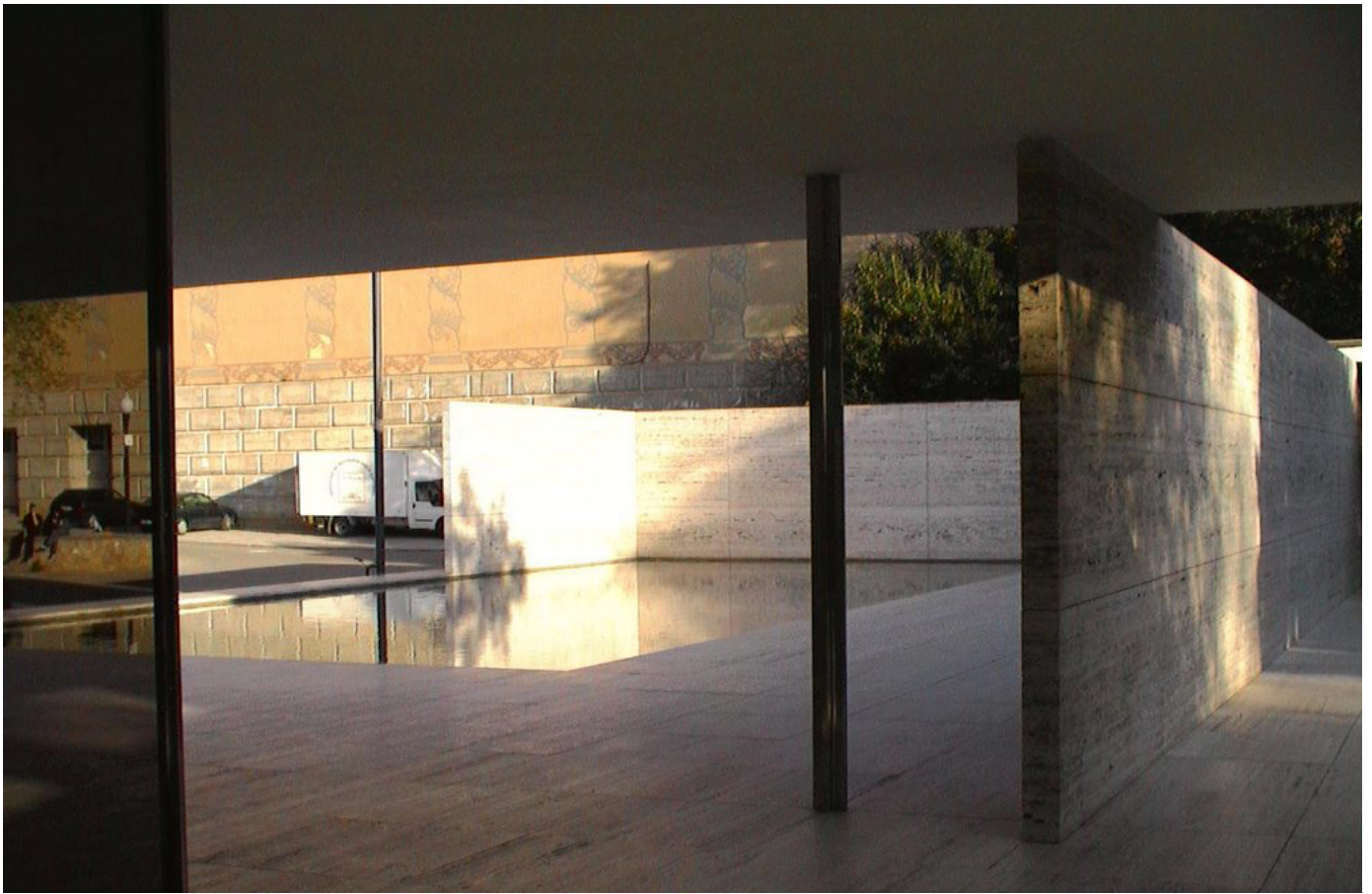
**Form:** The lines of the machine age became apparent. Twentieth century garden designs have been inspired by the shapes and patterns of Abstract Art. The rectilinear geometry of the de Stijl movement, of Mondrian and of Nicholson has influenced the design of paving and walls, while the curvilinear geometry of paving and planting has been influenced by Moore, Miro, Brancusi and Arp. Steel, concrete, glass and white-painted wood.



The *Bauhaus*, in Germany (above and right), launched the Abstract Style







*Mies van der Rohe Pavilion in Barcelona is a perfect example of Abstract Modernism*







*El Novillero, Donnell Garden, by Thomas Church and Lawrence Halprin USA ( Photo Chris Fullmer)*



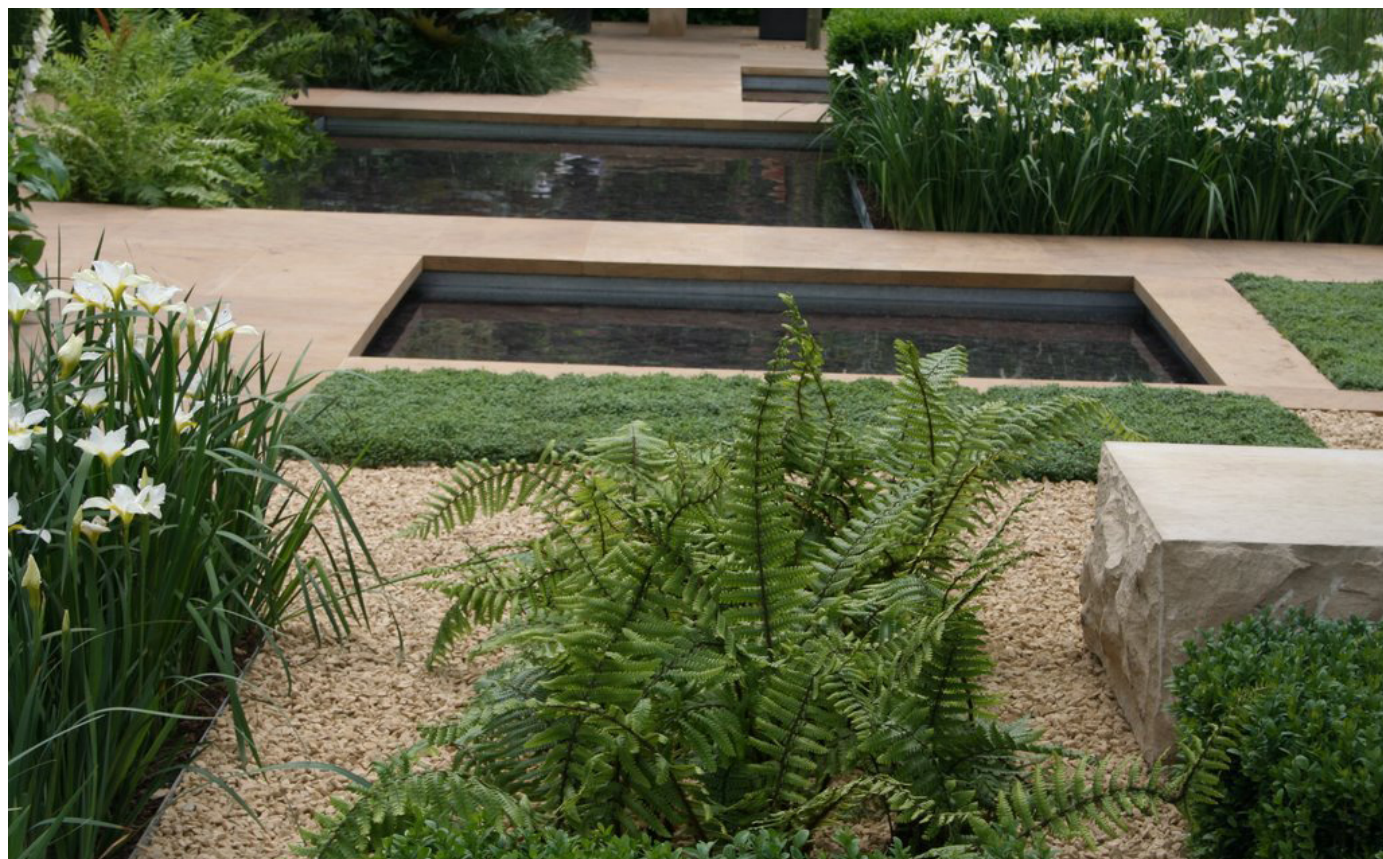
*Fountain Place Texas, USA, by Dan Kiley (Photo courtesy Preeti)*



Modernism became a dominant influence the Chelsea Flower Show gardens circa 2005 and in 2006 there was marked evidence of Postmodernism. See reviews of shows in [2004](#), [2005](#), [2006](#), [2007](#), [2008](#)



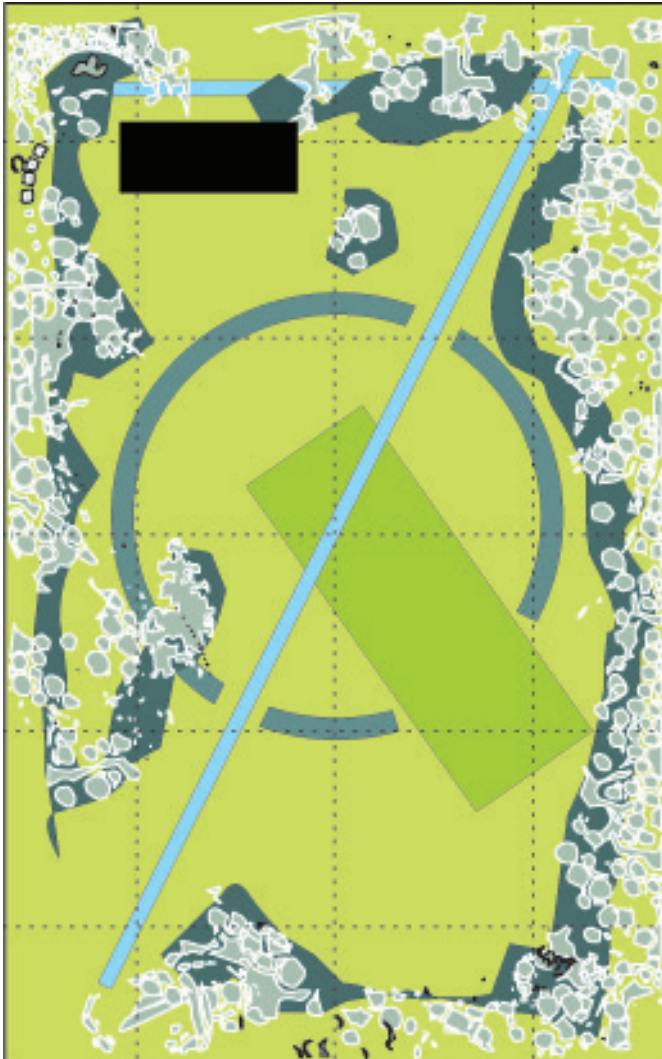
Chelsea 2008 designs by Philip Nixon (above) and Clare Agnew (below)





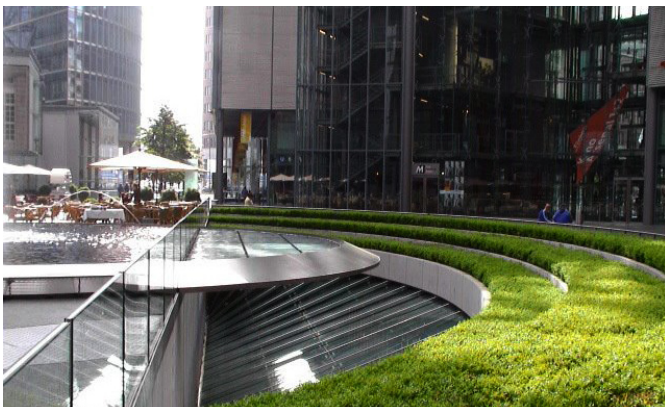
# Postmodern Style c1972

Style Twenty-four



**Use:** Postmodern ideas encourage garden owners to deconstruct their preconceptions and think in fresh ways. The garden is used to experiment with new materials and new geometries, to locate concrete poetry, to place a steaming tub, to build a glass room, to grow non-traditional plants, to transform a pavement into a fountain. Above all, it can be used to overlay uses and ideas in a multi-faceted postmodern structural composition. Towards the end of the twentieth century, the style was used to win design competitions.

**Form:** Geometrically, postmodernism is associated with a layered and deconstructive geometry. Rectangles clash with circles and are intersected by hapazard diagonals, as in a Russian constructivist painting. Steel and concrete structures are painted in bright colours. Glass and other reflective surfaces help create illusions and startling visual effects.

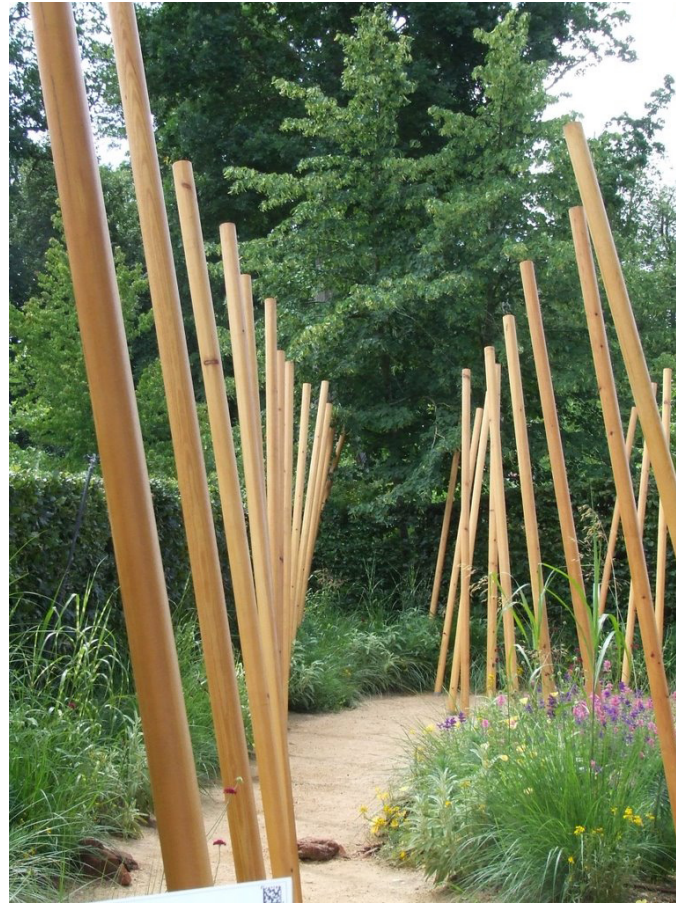


*Sony Center, Berlin, Germany,*



*Jinny Blom's Garden at Chelsea 2007*





*Jardin Atlantique (left) and Chaumont (right) (Photos courtesy Alan Graham)*



*Chaumont sur Loire Garden Festival is more influenced by Postmodernism than Chelsea (2008)*







*Canary Wharf, London (above) and Jubilee Gardens (below) depart from rational modernism*







*Wadakura Fountain Park, Tokyo, Japan*





# The Future

The Postmodern Style defines itself through a reference to its predecessor. Yet the time would appear to be right for the development of a new style of garden design. Any new direction is likely to draw on the 24 styles which characterize the preceding four millennia - but only star-gazing can suggest what forms the future holds in store.





# APPENDIX 1 Gardenvisit Tours & Short Breaks

Please see the comprehensive Gardenvisit.com advice section on [GARDEN TOURS](#). It adds to the information on visiting individual gardens with advice on finding “*Garden hotels near good gardens to visit*”.

**Garden Short Breaks** to groups of good gardens + hotels with good gardens to use while visiting them. The recommended short breaks are countries with concentrations of famous gardens, in Europe and around the world.

**Organized Garden Tours** Section in our Vacation Finder gives advice on finding organized Garden Tours in various parts of the world. They pre-planned, widely advertised, and notable for their comfort and convenience

**Tailor-Made Personal Tours.** These are often the best choice in less-developed countries where there are language or travel difficulties.





## APPENDIX 2 Video edition of this eBook

*Please email us any comments you have and please let us know if you would be interested in having a video edition of this eBook. It would cost more and the file size would be much larger - but you would have the advantage of moving pictures.*

**Email [contact@gardenvisit.com](mailto:contact@gardenvisit.com)**

*The **White House Garden** in Washington DC, USA was influenced by the English Landscape Style with regard to the architecture:landscape relationship. The White House was built between 1792 and 1800. Thomas Jefferson expanded the building after 1801. It was burned by the British in 1814 and painted white when restored.*



*Video of the White House Garden - can be seen and played only if you have Acrobat 6.0 or above and give permission to viewing multi-media content.*



# APPENDIX 3 Note on the style names

All the names refer to 'styles' in the sense of being 'collective characteristics' belonging to a 'school or subject or period'. However, (1) the first half of the list relates more to characteristics of garden use, (2) the second half of the list relates more to characteristics of garden form, (3) some of the types of space are better described as 'parks' than 'gardens', on account of their large size and their predominant use (eg for hunting), (4) some of the style names are not in common use (5) the notes below contain cautionary remarks relating to the style names:

**Egyptian Temple Garden:** temples were built in walled sanctuaries but these spaces are not often described as 'gardens'

**Egyptian Domestic Garden:** a great deal is known about the types of space attached to larger Egyptian houses, though no examples survive

**Hunting Park:** there are no visual records of the physical form of ancient hunting parks

**Paradise Garden:** there appears to have been some continuity in the form of gardens before and after the advent of Islam but form and the name of the Paradise garden represented by the diagram belongs to the period after the sixteenth century.

**Sacred Grove:** this type of space is usually described as a 'sanctuary' and rarely as a 'garden'

**Classical Courtyard:** 'courtyard garden' is the normal description for this type of space

**Classical Villa:** the word 'villa' refers to the dwelling and all its associated land, including woods and farms

**Cloister Garth:** 'cloister' originally meant the part of a monastery reserved for its inmates but is now commonly used for the arcaded walk and the greenspace it encloses. 'Garth' means 'garden'.

**Castle Garden:** castles had gardens inside and outside their fortifications

**Early Renaissance Style:** because gardens are subject to regular re-design the normal pattern was for early Renaissance gardens to become **High Renaissance** gardens and the distinction can be difficult to make

**Mannerist Style:** art historians disagree about whether 'mannerist' is a useful term and it is not widely used in relation to garden history

**Baroque Style** is widely used in relation to garden design and there is general agreement about the differences between the Early Baroque gardens of Italy and the Later Baroque gardens of France. English speaking historians often categorize these gardens as 'formal'.

**Forest Style:** there are few examples of the style and the name is not used extensively. Some historians see the examples as representing an early phase of the 'English landscape style' and others as a late phase of the Baroque Style..

**Augustan Style:** as with the Forest Style, some historians describe them as early examples of the 'English landscape style'

**Serpentine Style:** I have been using this name since the 1980s but it has not been adopted by most garden historians. It is more common to speak of the 'Natural Style', or the 'Brownian Style', or the style of the 'English landscape garden'

**Picturesque Style:** this term is widely used, though the specifics of its meaning still discussed.

**Gardenesque Style:** this term was invented and defined (in different ways in different books) by John Claudius Loudon. In my view its most appropriate use to describe a style of planting design in which exotic species are composed in the manner of natural habitats

**Landscape Style:** some historians apply the term 'landscape style' to all the gardens made under the influence of the 'English landscape movement'. I use in a more limited sense to describe gardens with a sequential transition from a garden terrace to the open landscape.

**Mixed Style:** this name enjoyed some popularity during the nineteenth century but the resulting gardens now tend to be described as Victorian or as Eclectic.

**Arts and Crafts Style:** amongst garden historians, this term has become well-established since the 1980s, though it is more often used for gardens in England than for other European and American gardens of the period

**Abstract Modern Style:** the term Modern Garden is generally used for this style, as the outdoor companion of Modern Architecture. In the longer term, Abstract Style would seem to be the most appropriate name for the style.

**Postmodern Style:** this name has general currency but, as with other aspects of Postmodernism there is a range of views as to its correct interpretation. If the term Abstract Style became popular then Post-abstract Style would be an appropriate name.

## Cautionary Note

There are no firm boundaries; all stylistic categories can be challenged; there is no perfect example of any style. Relationships between examples are like family resemblances: some are close and some are distant.