

Rolling Garden . . .

Watch your step, please!

If there is a change of level in your yard -- if one part is higher than another -- build some steps. They can be an interesting and decorative garden feature.

Psychologists say that the human eye enjoys looking at stairs, and that stairs figure in our pleasant dreams.

Stairs must be functional as well as decorative. They must follow certain rules as to size so people can climb them easily and not trip or stumble. Too shallow can be as much of a hazard as too steep. However, in general, outdoor steps should not be quite as steep as indoor steps.

A good rule-of-thumb to follow is to have twice the riser plus the tread equal to 27 inches. For instance, if the step up (or riser) is six inches high, the flat part of the step, or the tread, should be 15 inches. If the steps are five inches high, the tread should be 17 inches.

IF YOU HAVE A long, steep slope, plan to break the flight of steps with a landing or two. Plan a landing if the change of level is over six feet.

The steps are easier to climb and the design more interesting if

the groups of steps can be off-set at the landings or can change direction. It is a good idea to have a hand-rail for a steep or long flight of stairs.

Each step should pitch forward just slightly so water drains off.

Don't make the steps too narrow. Four feet in width is needed for two people to walk side by side on the steps. In general, shal-

. . . Can Use A Stairway . . .

low steps look better if they are wider. Steep steps can be narrower and still look in good proportion.

THE SHAPE AND direction and size of the steps depends on the ground form and on the rest of the garden around them.

The design of the steps and the material used for construction should be in keeping with the surroundings. If they are near the house, the style of the house should determine the design. Away from the house there is

more freedom of design. Wherever they are, the steps will have a profound influence on the character or mood of the garden because they are a rather dominant garden feature.

Brick, stone and concrete are suitable for steps in a formal garden. Split cedar rails pegged into a slope, or large wood rounds are rustic and informal.

Railroad ties make sturdy durable steps that are easy to build. The tie makes a good riser. A second tie can be set behind to make a broad tread, or gravel can be used for the tread.

Steps made of wood are light and open in feeling. Stone steps suggest the rugged stability of a natural rock outcropping.

A FEW BOULDERS can be placed at the edge of steps, and plants at the sides soften the stiffness and help blend the stairs into the surroundings. The area next to

. . . But Make It Safe!

the stairs makes a perfect spot to grow special plant treasures.



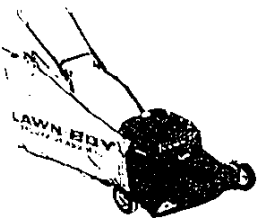
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Whatever the materials used, and no matter what the design of the steps, they should be solidly constructed and not tippy or wobbly or loose. Poorly built steps are a real hazard.



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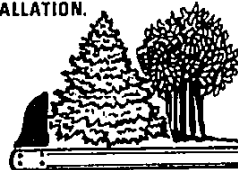
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