

FAQs

1. Discuss the principles of landscape design in an Italian renaissance garden.

“The ten books of architecture” (De Re Aedificatoria) by Alberti was influential and he recommended the following:

Site Selection: A well-drained site on solid ground needs to be considered.; Orientation of the site to the sun and prevailing winds should be analysed; and Adequacy of water supply should be ensured.

Design: Villas should be Sited on gentle elevations with the view of the surrounding country side. He recommended i) Terraces and Stairways to overcome the difficulties of uneven terrain ii) An Avenue or Axis to link all elements and spaces and iii) Porticos to make garden space continuous with that of the surrounding.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

Location:

The sites were usually on hillside, because of view and climate/ breeze. The sites overlooked the city from adjoining slopes or hillsides. Descending terraces were carved out of the ground and the result was a series of garden rooms projecting into space.

Layout:

The layout of the garden suggested that of a miniature town – Long avenues and walks interrupted with open squares and cross avenues leading to carefully placed climax. Crossings were marked by open spaces and accentuated by fountains and stone works of some kind.

Axial Symmetry:

Italian Renaissance gardens were organized along central lines of sight, creating a geometric ordering of space.

Laid out as a sequence of geometric divisions linked by a common axis The garden was considered a part of the house and vice versa.

In its simplest phase it was regarded as an extra room → A salon flooded with unlimited light and air.

Water, stonework and evergreens were important components of the garden. (Refer to the slides for sketches)

Discuss the use of water in Italian renaissance Gardens.

In Italian Renaissance gardens, water was used extravagantly to suggest coolness both by

sight and sound. It was used with technical brilliance to delight and surprise the visitors.

Each pause in the ascent of the hill side garden was marked by a new varied use of water

A fish pond at the lower level

Glittering water cascade as the climb begins

Great monumental fountains enclosed in garden rooms among trees

Reflecting pool were designed for peace and rest. Design of fountains depended upon the volume of water. Cascades, water roaring and splashing in its fall, were designed primarily for the sound of water

Hydraulic features included not only visual spectacles like fountains and cascades but also acoustically active built-in devices such as organs and bellowing creatures.

Water tricks played an important role. At certain points jets of water were designed to spray unsuspecting guests

2. Give examples of any two garden representatives of the Italian Renaissance Style.

- i. Villa Medici, Fiesole
- ii. Villa D'este, Tivoli
- iii. Villa Lante, Viterbo

3. Explain the following:

- a. Parterre
- b. Bosco
- c. Topiary

Parterre: Ground plane composed of patterned garden beds meant to be viewed from above is known as Parterre. In the Italian Renaissance gardens, the patterns are simple, where they are secondary to the sculpture. Where the parterre is the sole interest of the garden it becomes rich and complicated.

Bosco: Italian term for a wooded grove within a garden.

Topiary: Art of training plants (typically evergreen shrubs and trees) into intricate or stylized shapes and forms

4. Sketch and explain salient features of Villa Lante

VILLA LANTE (Refer to the slides for plan and sketches)

The villa is made up of both a formal garden featuring a series of fountains along a terraced hillside and an informal park consisting of fountains and other features connected by straight roads

The park is laid out as a series of straight tree-lined lanes connecting its buildings, fountains, and other features.

The formal gardens – terrace and --- are laid out symmetrically on a hillside

Viewing Sequences

Two viewing sequences are possible according to which gate is entered.

Entrance through Park Gate – Near the top of the park, the formal garden can be entered at its summit, and from this point, visitors experience an evolution from unspoiled nature to geometrically ordered flower beds.

Entrance through Parterre Gate- This route provided a reversal of the theme so that man moved backward from the height of civilization and artistry to a time of unspoiled nature and man living in a Golden Age.

From the Park Gate entrance:

Visitor encounters the Fountain of Pegasus surrounded by muses and Reach the top most terrace of the formal garden.

Near the top of the park, the formal garden can be entered at its summit, and from this point, visitors experience an evolution from unspoiled nature to geometrically ordered flower beds.

Features of the Formal Garden:

The formal garden is laid out symmetrically on a central axis on a hillside whose drop in elevation from top to bottom is around fifty feet

The architectural features, namely the two palazzine and the two temples to the Muses, are laid out in pairs that are located on the sides, which leaves the center open for water features.

Thematic Progression:

Visitor experience a progression from untouched nature at the top of the hill to a series of geometrically designed beds at the bottom.

High up the wooded slope there is a gate through which one can enter the garden at its top. There the visitor is confronted by **the fountain of deluge/ flood**

Flanking the fountain are twin dining pavilions known as loggias of the muses

Small pipes are installed beneath the eaves of the pavilions. It allows the water to rain from above. Visitors are sometime treated to an unexpected drenching .(Water tricks)

Symmetrical **colonaded aviaries** were designed as wings to the loggias. Within them berry-producing plants were grown to attract bird

Below the fountain of the flood sits **an Octogonal fountain of the dolphins** - The fountain is surrounded by benches and a row of boxwoods

A stepped ramp leads to the next terrace

The Water Chain extends from the Fountain of the Dolphins to the Fountain of Giants.

Water symbolizes untouched nature, and the chain form, which exercises complete control over the water, symbolizes the civilizing of nature by art.

Fountain of Giants - The two statues represents the Tiber and Arno Rivers , which is symbolic of the fertility that water brings to the land.

In the middle of this terrace – stands the stone dining table / fountain of the table

Stone table has central water channel and bubbling jets. Water running through a trough provided a means of chilling food and beverages and rinsing the table afterwards.

This is flanked by rows of plane trees.

The fountain of lights links the dining terrace with the water theater below. It has Upper concave and lower convex steps. 160 small jets shoot water upwards

From this terrace one can view the lower terrace with fountain of the moors set as the centerpiece of water parterre . In each of the ponds is a small stone boat . They fire jets of water towards the central fountain.

Conclusion:

One of the main design principles is the **strong central axis**, which starts at the entrance by the fountain of the Moors and runs to the top of the third terrace ending at the Fountain of the Flood.

The use of water flowing from the fountain of the flood through the entire garden enhances the strong central axis.

Another main design principle is **using bilateral symmetry** with the palladian circle and square.