

Patio

How to Build a Flagstone

Project Overview

I chose 1-inch-thick Champlain Stone granite flagstones kept each piece manageable. Thicker, heavier pieces would hold their positions better, but they were too expensive.

My lightweight stones needed a multilayer foundation too keep them from shifting.

I began by outlining the patio, digging down several inches then adding a couple of inches of crushed stone, a couple of inches of sand, and finally the paving stones on top.

According to PM's "Build Your Own Stone Patio" story from 2006, I probably should have dug an even deeper foundation.)

Step-by-Step

1. Dig Out the Foundation

The first, most labor-intensive step is digging the footing. Begin by using a square-nose shovel to outline the patio perimeter. Loosen the soil within and scoop it out.

You're only going down a few inches.

A great back-saving technique for ensuring a flat-bottomed hole: Place the back face of a square-nosed shovel flat against the earth,

walk the shovel forward, plowing forward with your leg muscles while the shovel collects the loose dirt like a dustpan.

2. Spread the Crushed Stone

Unpile the heap of gravel bags, for instance, by tossing them into the pit at roughly the spots you expect they'll spread evenly.

Using a utility knife, split the bags open like a fish belly and use the back side of a garden rake to start spreading an even layer throughout the pit.

Pack the gravel down using a tamper.

3. Sprinkle the Sand

Toss the bags into position before cutting them all open. Using the back of the garden rake, spread the sand evenly over the gravel.

4. Lay Out the Stones

Arrange each stone over the sand bed.

It's best to go for narrow, uniform spacing between the stones.

We put the widest, flattest stones in the main field of the patio, and saved the smaller pieces for the less-trafficked path. Carefully walk over the pieces, or tap them down with a rubber mallet, to settle them firmly in the bed.

5. Fill the Joints

Pour more sand over the stones and sweep it into the gaps. Stone dust can also work for this step. To hold the stones more firmly in position, Alan suggested mixing one bag of cement for every six bags of sand.

Use a garden hose to lightly wet the whole patio, rinsing off the stones and settling the sand in place. If the sand seems to disappear completely after the first wetting. Just add some more, wet it again, and keep adding it until it forms a firm pack of mortar between the stones.

Conclusion

Reference: <http://www.popularmechanics.com/home/how-to/plans/masonry/4315657>