

BORDERS



Free

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Boundaries and edges are ideas equally applied to agriculture and to gardens. The first marks made by humans with a stick in the dirt may have been to mark a path, but them might just as easily have been to divide territories. This is mine, and that is yours. Hedgerows like this one are so complex in their structure they often contain over a hundred species of plants. It is certainly elaborate, but it is still a separator, a line in the dirt.

Cashel, Ireland



Edges are about establishing distinction. A picture frame separates an image from the wall and announces: *This, is what I want you to pay attention to, not that.* Segregating is the only way we establish understanding. The letter G is not the same as the letter Q because we see their boundaries as being different.

Establishing edges is the first step in establishing recognition. When the cardboard was removed, we noticed where it had been because the edges were established when flour was sprinkled around. Now we see a rectangle. Before, all the dirt was the same.

Seattle, Washington



It is difficult to decide if this is an object of pity or an object of adoration. The frame is so much bigger than the object, it makes the singular plant look puny. The establishment of context is essential to understanding what is outside as well as inside the frame.

Bath, England



Was this a good idea gone bad, or something stupid to begin with? Is it a failed attempt at a garden plot, stones attempting to decorate where a tree was supposed to grow, or an inability to repave the place? Regardless, it makes a collision of mistakes announced by differences. And by the way, what is that red thing in the background?

Rovertò, Italy



This is three-quarters of a fence. An unfinished boundary. Humorous, because we assume it is supposed to be closed and wonder why it is left undone. This can't be a garden because it is not enclosed.

This photograph was taken standing next to the stone supposedly able to impart, "the ability to deceive without offending."
Bilarny, Ireland



Some of gardening is about anticipation and waiting. Most of gardening is about wishful thinking. Wonder and optimism glide hand in hand with the continual desire to see the seasons continue endlessly into the future. The more miserable the climate, the more fervent this desire.

Bath, England



The word 'fence' comes to us from 'defence' and means *against* something or some one. We only think of fences in terms of keeping. This is mine, that's yours, keep your dogs out of my garden. This fence keeps my cattle in. You stay out. Don't fence me in. Nature seems to have different ideas about boundaries than do most humans,

*Property boundary fence
Pismo Beach, California*



There are thousands of islands in this archipelago. Some are so arid they used them to practice for the moon landings. These stone fences were not made to keep something in or out, they were made to clear the rocks and plant on what meager soil there was.

Americans carry limitless nostalgia for the stone walls of New England without realizing beauty had nothing to do with dragging stones out of the fields every spring because winter frost had heaved new stones up in front of the plow.

Hvar, Croatia



Fencing has been symbolic, protective and decorative almost from the beginning. Picket fencing evolved from wanting to keep small things in or out and using the least material. Here the arborvitae hedge indulges the decoration of the fence while doing the real protection. Tom Sawyer would have a tough time with this one.

Melbourne, Australia



This semi-public park (what a term!) has a very has wonderful follies. Decorative nonsense that make the place really lovable. This colonnade is simply something at the end of the lake, but it is a fence separating a walkway from the lake. Small scale architecture looking like a Greek or Roman ruin while playing at being a picket fence.

Parc Monceau
8th Arrondissement, Paris



Fencing can be implied or have so much decorative power we forget it is really just a series of things meant to separate us from something else. It is a bit of a stretch to call these wonderful statues a fence, but even before you know any details about the statues, you know they announce the edge between the water and the land.

*Canopus, Hadrian's Villa
Tivoli, Italy*



These Plane trees (platanus) were planted here to make shade for the mules and horses pulling the barges on the canal, but the effect is still a fence. It is an edge that can be seen and read for miles.

Canal de Crillon
Chateaurenard, France



Panthiestic Romans thought about statues the way we think about Aspirin. (I said this before about flowers and it is true here as well.) If one is good then a whole bunch must be great. It is OK, because when you run out of room you can build a wall (big fence) and make niches deep enough to hold more statues. Much of the idea of 'Garden,' is about groups or collections of things.

*Near the baths, Hadrian's Villa
Tivoli, Italy*



Water has been almost as important to gardens as plants. Of course, the plants need water, but water also has had a visual presence in gardens since the beginning. Water has always been a boundary.

Villa Farnese
Caprarolo, Italy