

Trashy Gravel Remedy

Contributed by C. Mason Hearn
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Mason,

Is there any good way to keep a gravel garden path or driveway free of debris? ... get the kids to pluck the crap out with tweezers? I can't keep mine clean. Makes me nuts. Any tips?

- Lisa C Richmond, VA

Lisa,

Hmmm.... Tweezers sounds like a good way to keep the teenagers occupied during the summer months. That aside, I know that most folks prefer their garden maintenance to be as simple as possible.

From my perspective as "sometimes-garden designer" and "sometimes-yard-grunt", I can suggest to you that you should first specify and install the right type of gravel. We always advise the use of angular-type gravel (ours, I think, is Albemarle 3/8" clean stone from Luck Stone), because it literally "locks together" better - so I can take the leaf blower to it without the gravel flying away with the debris. The rounded stuff, like pea gravel (brownish-yellow stone, that seems to be most people's favorite around here), is harder to keep in place and clean off.

Relatedly, I advise that the finished architectural stone be placed not-too-deep (about an inch for paths, maybe 1 ½ - 2 inches for driveways) over a stabilizing stone dust sub-surface. Too much architectural gravel tends to "rut" more quickly under traffic.

Mason