Allan Block Provides Many Options For Steps

One of the unique benefits that sets Allan Block apart from other retaining wall systems is a great variety of options in designing and building steps into a retaining wall. With Allan Block, you can build steps parallel or perpendicular to the wall face. Step corners can be designed with right angles or smooth flowing curves, and stair treads can be built with AB Capstones or a variety of other finishing options. No other retaining wall system gives you these options.

Building steps without using corner blocks

The simplest and easiest method of building steps with Allan Block is to use smooth flowing curved walls with stair treads made of poured concrete. The benefits of this method include:

- no cutting of blocks
- no corner blocks
- less time and expense to construct
- soft curves compliment most landscape designs

Step 1: Base Course

- Excavate a 6 in. deep x 18 in. wide (15 cm x 45.7 cm) base trench at the location of your steps (Fig. 1).
- Place 4 in. (10.2 cm) of granular material in the trench and compact with a mechanical plate compactor (Fig. 2).
- Position Base Row of AB Blocks as shown. Carefully place granular material in block cores and 6-12 in. (15-30 cm) behind blocks and compact to lock in position (Fig. 3).

NOTE: The height of this backfill material should be level with the back of the base row of blocks.

Step 2: 2nd Course

- Place AB Blocks on 2nd course as shown (Fig. 4). Make sure to level each block and keep the step level as it curves back to join up with the front of the wall.

Additional Courses

- Repeat STEP 2 for each course of the stairs. Maintain a even spacing of each stair tread (Fig.5).

Step 3: Finishing stair treads

- Allan Block’s patented front lip provides a built-in edging for finishing stair treads. Allan Block Capstones, crushed rock, mulch, exposed aggregate, poured concrete, paving stones and flagstones all work well (Fig. 6).
Building Parallel Steps With Round Corners Cont’d.

Options For Finishing Stair Treads

Construction Notes:

GRANULAR BASE AND BACKFILL MATERIAL: Allan Block recommends using the same material for the base, the drain field within the block cores and 6-12 in. (15-30 cm) behind the wall. We recommend a well draining compactible aggregate, ranging in size from 0.25 in. to 1.5 in. (6.4 mm to 3.8 cm) diameter. See your local aggregate sources for availability.

COMPACTION: Use a plate compactor to compact material in 8 in. (20.3 cm) lifts. Run the plate compactor on top of the block to lock them in position. Compact parallel to the wall, working from the front of the wall to the back of the infill material. Keep heavy equipment a minimum of 3 ft (0.9 m) from the back of the wall.

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