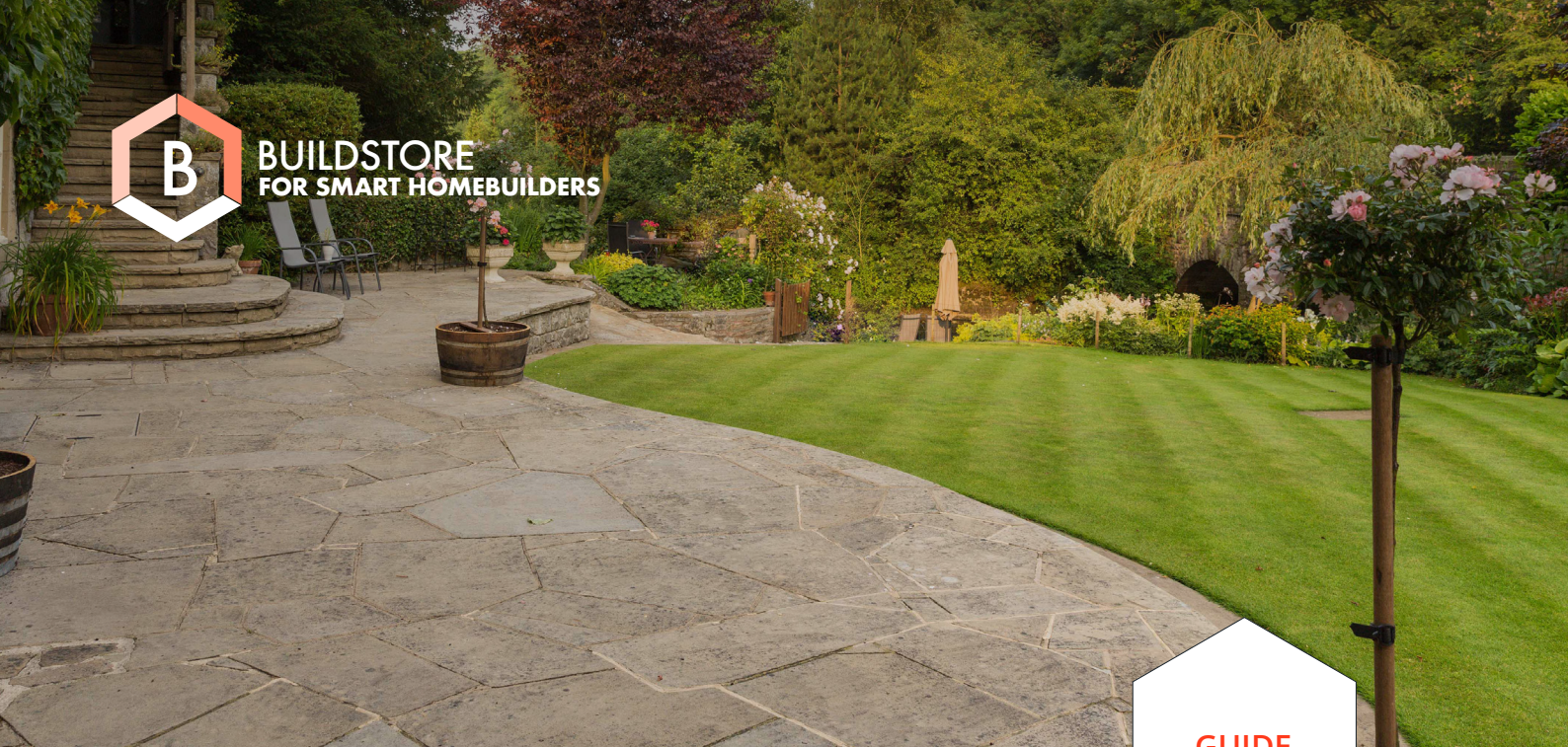




BUILDSTORE
FOR SMART HOMEBUILDERS



GUIDE

HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING

This is one area of the home that many self builders fail to consider properly. This is a pity because the garden should not be considered as separate from the house but rather, should be thought of as an extension to the home; a room in the open air.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for disabled access in the Building Regulations also impinge on the garden area where the design of pathways has to facilitate wheelchairs being able to approach and enter the house via a level threshold.

- Ramps should not be longer than 10 metres with a slope of up to 1:15 or 5 metres for slopes up to 1:10.
- Normally steps are not allowed except on steeply sloping sites where they must have a rise of no more than 150mm and a minimum width of 900mm.
- Additionally, the rise between landings must be no greater than 1.8 metres.
- A level threshold and approach pathway are required to the main or at least one entrance on the main entrance floor. This will require a hidden drain or gully to prevent the ingress of water.

PLANNING YOUR GARDEN

Large amounts of soil have to be taken away from some sites. Think about whether this can be kept on site and used to form the landscaping with banks, terraces, rockeries and ponds.

You can claim the VAT back on most materials purchased for hard landscaping within the garden of a new house or conversion, including fencing, paving and walls.

It is also possible to reclaim the VAT on certain soft landscaping such as turfing or planting, so long as they were included or required within the planning consent.

TIPS

- Many local authorities refuse to issue a completion certificate until a proper driveway is installed. They must also insist on pathways, including disabled access, and bin stores being completed
- Stand in the rooms and view the gardens from as many angles as you can to ensure that trees and shrubs are planted in the optimum position
- Choose hard landscaping that, if it doesn't match the house materials exactly, at least compliments them
- When choosing patio, pathway and drive surfaces, be careful about just how slippery some things like brick pavers can get in the winter