

## **\*\*ASK THE TAFE TEAM\*\***

**With TAFE Queensland South West Horticulture Teacher, Paul Luck  
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**Question:** *What is a deco path, and how can I make one at home?*

**Answer:** Decomposed granite, often called “deco”, is generally a light brown coloured filling material that is quite fine (about 3mm and less). If you can picture the finish on a clay tennis court, then that will give you a good idea as to what it looks like.

To lay a deco path you must first lay out the location of your path. To contain the decomposed granite, you must install a brick/paver header course or timber edge along your pathway. The timber should be H5 rated for timber used in-ground (ask your supplier for advice) or plastic extruded materials for use in the ground. Then excavate the soil along your planned path to a depth of 100mm and install your edging, anchoring the timber with stakes about every one meter.

The next step is to estimate how much decomposed granite you will need to fill the area between the edges. To make this easy on yourself, have a calculator available. Measure the length and width of your path and multiply these two numbers together. This will give you the square meterage of your path. Multiply the total by the depth to work out the volume in cubic metres. This is the number that you will need to have delivered from your local supplier. Pro tip: don't forget to add 10% extra to allow for compaction.

The next step is filling the area between the header boards with the decomposed granite. The decomposed granite must be installed in thin layers, moistening and compacting each layer as you go. If applied all in one layer, the entire profile of the decomposed granite does not compact.

Apply a layer of decomposed granite and thoroughly soak the material with water. Allow the moist decomposed granite to sit for about eight hours, and then compact it with a heavy roller or a vibrating plate compactor. If the deco is already damp you can skip this step and go straight to the compacting.

If your path is on a slope and subject to erosion then you can stabilise it by mixing in 10% off white cement. Mix it in as you go, or thoroughly rake the cement into the top 50mm. Compact and sprinkle with water to set the cement. You can use the path as soon as it's compacted, there's no need to wait before you enjoy your new path.

Why not have a go this weekend? It's a great project for Spring time!

For more information about TAFE Queensland South West's horticulture and landscaping offerings or for any other courses, please visit [www.tafesouthwest.edu.au](http://www.tafesouthwest.edu.au) or call 1300 914 754.

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