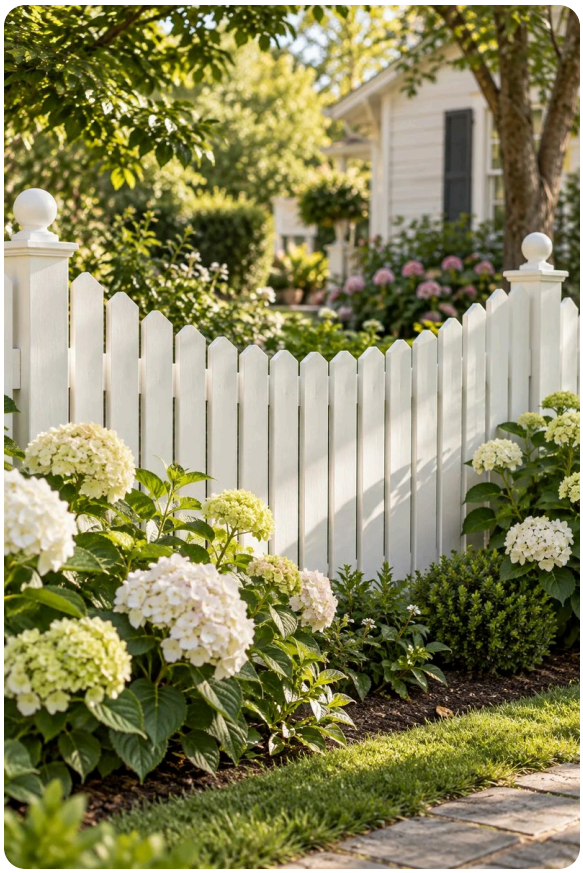
Scalloped Wood Fence Layout

Transform plain pickets into a stunning custom curve with a simple rope swag.

Mark, cut, and seal a perfectly symmetrical scalloped curve across your existing flat-topped fence. This layout guide helps you find the exact dip depths and cut lines for a professional finish.



Key Layout Measurements

2-3 inches
clearance so posts rise above peaks

4 feet
level length to check plumb posts

0.5 inches
max error tolerance for center mark

2 coats
exterior acrylic latex paint finish

Find The True Center

Count your total pickets first! If you have an even number, the true center falls exactly in the gap between two boards, rather than on a single picket.

Cutting Your Scalloped Bays

1. **Rope swag draws curve** Hang a flexible marigold rope between the posts and trace its top edge for an organic arch.
2. **Clamp a batten behind** Lock vertical pieces together with a rigid horizontal board below the cut line to prevent dangerous vibration.
3. **Cut the wood profile** Glide a variable-speed jigsaw with a clean-cut blade smoothly along the line without forcing the pace.
4. **Prime the fresh cuts** Work exterior acrylic primer deep into the exposed end grain immediately to block moisture and prevent rot.

Scallop Layout Sheet

Find your row: **Your bay spacing**

Your bay spacing	Your pick	Why
Standard post spacing	4-inch dip, 8-ft bay	Graceful curve that maintains privacy
Narrower post spacing	3-inch dip, 6-ft bay	Scales depth to match width
Intermediate pickets	Trace rope swag line	Creates a perfect catenary arch
Sloped terrain	Step the posts	Follows yard's natural grade evenly

Pre-Cut Site Checks

- [ ] Inspect posts for rot and tighten loose fasteners on horizontal rails.
- [ ] Measure the exact distance between the inside faces of both posts.
- [ ] Pull your height marks from a level string line, never sloped ground.
- [ ] Confirm vertical supports stand perfectly plumb before finalizing horizontal height marks.
- [ ] Tie back delicate garden shrubs and cover beds with a drop cloth.

Project Notes & Measurements

Enjoy your stunning new custom architectural feature and beautifully framed garden views!