Hillside Planting Sheet

Offset spacing and installation steps for a stable, terraced slope.

Taming a steep backyard is absolutely possible when you build a solid foundation and plant from the top down. Use this guide to calculate exact offset spacing and secure your hillside.



Key Hillside Measurements

0.87× horizontal distance
Vertical drop between plant rows

6 in / 14 in
Stair riser and tread dimensions

Half the block height
Bury the first foundation course

3 inches
Washed drainage gravel behind blocks

Every 3 feet
Landscape staples along mesh seams

12 inches
Path lights away from step edge

Berm a downhill smile

Shape a crescent soil berm on the lower side of every new plant to hold a small, life-saving pool of water, then cover with a light mulch layer.

Foundation Trench Sizing

Find your row: **Planned Wall Height**

Planned Wall Height	Your pick	Why
12 inches	8 in depth	4 in gravel, 4 in stone
18 inches	10 in depth	4 in gravel, 6 in stone
24 inches	12 in depth	6 in gravel, 6 in stone

Top-Down Planting Sequence

1. **Mark the first row** Stretch a level mason line at the top and flag your primary horizontal plant spacing.
2. **Calculate and drop** Measure down by the calculated vertical drop distance and shift horizontally by half the primary spacing.
3. **Flag the offset** Plant the second row of flags to form perfect equilateral triangles with the first row.
4. **Plant through coir** Cut a small X-slit in the protective mesh exactly at each flag to insert plugs.
5. **Mulch and water** Spread natural wood mulch over the netting and slowly fill each crescent basin by hand.

Site Checks Before Starting

- [ ] Verify the back edge of stair treads sits a quarter-inch higher.
- [ ] Check that trench gravel is tamped until it feels like concrete.
- [ ] Ensure you have bright survey flags to visualize the staggered drifts.
- [ ] Leave a small loop of slack lighting wire at fixture locations.

Project Notes

Enjoy watching your beautiful, stable hillside garden flourish for years to come!