



What's the difference between a pergola, an arbour and a gazebo?

Adrian Valentine, the MD of bespoke online pergola supplier Perfect Pergolas, says "I am constantly surprised by the number of phone calls I get from people confused about the difference between pergolas, gazebos and arbours. There ARE differences, and knowing them will help you choose your garden structure with confidence."

What is a Gazebo?

A [gazebo](#) is a stand-alone structure, usually with sides and a roof, frequently situated to maximise available views, of the garden itself or the landscape beyond. They are often hexagonal or octagonal in design. Some have lattice-work sides and built-in seating, giving them a sturdy, enclosed feel. They are structures in their own right, and are rarely vehicles for plants.

What is an Arbour?

An [arbour](#) is a short 'walk-through' arched structure, usually made of wood, that connects one part of a garden with another (say, the vegetable garden to a formal lawn area). These are often used as a frame for climbers, particularly roses.

There are also smaller, stand-alone arched arbours with latticed sides, backs and built-in seating, for secluded contemplation of the garden. These arbours with seats are sometimes referred to as [Bowers](#). They can carry climbing plants for additional sensory and romantic appeal.

What is a Pergola?

There are two types: Lean-to and Stand-alone.

The traditional ['lean-to'](#) pergola is frequently made of wood and built against the house to provide a transitory area from the inside to the outside. During the Renaissance period in particular it gave ladies the opportunity to take the air without damaging their fair complexion.

The ['stand-alone'](#) pergola, again made of wood, features uprights but no solid sides or roof. These can be positioned attractively in the garden and allow some protection from the harsh rays of the sun, particularly if planted up with shading climbers. These freestanding pergolas are sometimes referred to as 'canopies'.

Both types of pergola are, in effect, frames for climbers and vines that surround the occupants with foliage, flowers and aromas and offer a measure of protection from the weather and some privacy in urban areas.

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