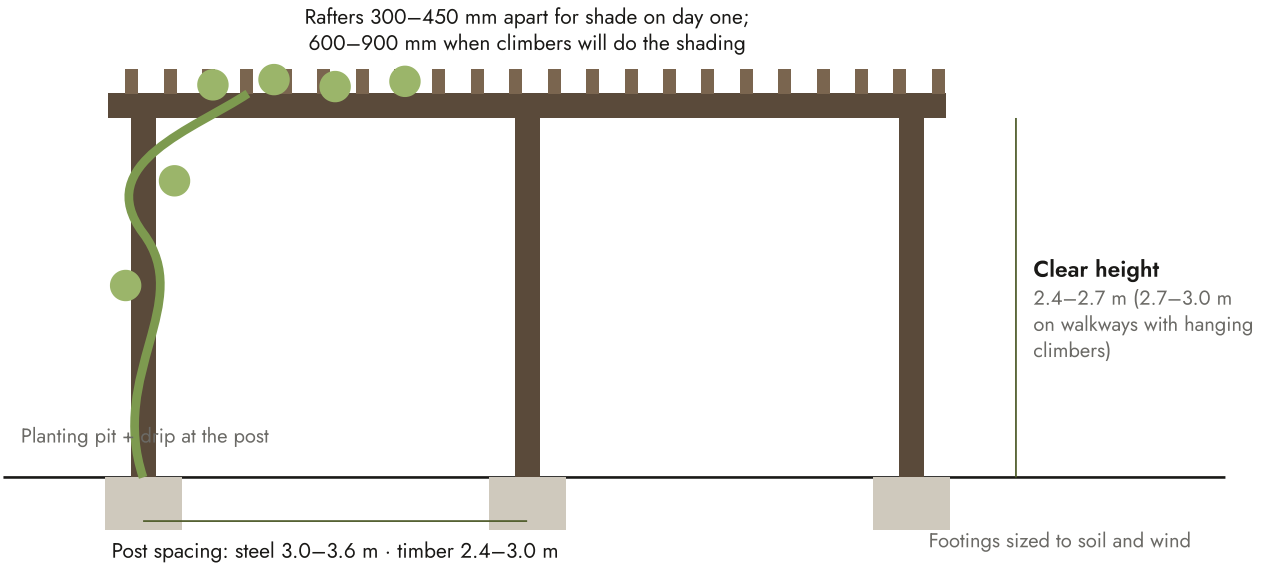
Pergola sizing sheet

The proportions we start from before a pergola is engineered for its site. Use it to brief a fabricator or carpenter.

Pergola proportions we start from



Element	Starting point	Notes
Clear height	2.4–2.7 m	2.7–3.0 m on walkways with hanging climbers
Walkway width	1.8–2.4 m	Wider at entrances
Post spacing	Steel 3.0–3.6 m · timber 2.4–3.0 m	Wider spans need deeper beams
Steel posts	75×75 to 100×100 mm hollow section	Powder-coated or galvanised, capped
Timber posts	100×100 to 150×150 mm	Treated, on a steel shoe off the ground
Rafter spacing	300–450 mm	Shade on day one
Rafter spacing with climbers	600–900 mm	Add tension wires for the climbers
Planting pit at a post	About 600×600 mm	Good soil, drip emitter, no paving over roots

Climbers for Indian heat

Climber	Use
Bougainvillea	Colour in full sun; keep lean, tie in regularly
Jasmine	Evening scent over seating
Rangoon creeper	Fast, scented cover

Curtain creeper	Fast screen; heavy, so size the frame for it
Grape vine	Summer shade, winter light, where the climate suits

Brief your fabricator

- [ ] Final post, beam and footing sizes from a structural engineer
- [ ] Footings sized for soil and wind
- [ ] Rafters run east–west for midday shade
- [ ] Coating specified for outdoor steel
- [ ] On a roof: no fixings through the waterproofing unless designed

Starting proportions only. Final sizes depend on span, wind, soil and the weight of mature climbers.

Full guide online: naturestouchlandscape.com/journal/pergola-design-ideas/