

OH, THE POSSIBILITIES



WHEN IT COMES TO DESIGNING AND DECORATING OUTDOOR SPACES, FOLLOW YOUR HEART AND LISTEN TO MOTHER NATURE

BY PATRICIA WILSON

We're never too old to spend time outside. Whether working or taking it easy, people are enjoying their backyards more than ever.

Being outside connects us to nature, which supports our sense of well-being in many ways: we are inspired, uplifted, soothed and rejuvenated. We enjoy the sounds of nature and laughter and lively gatherings with friends and family.

While fresh air, water, wind and fire are nature's gifts, great design of outdoor living and play spaces is up to us.

When designing for the outdoors, listen to your heart, make a plan and be open to exciting possibilities!

If your project is large, make a master plan that takes into account the big picture of what you want to accomplish and why? Think about your goals, values, lifestyle, room for growth, budget and time.

Also think about the mood of the space. Do you want it to be a woody retreat, urban oasis, tropical escape, sophisticated playground, timeless veranda or cozy porch?

If you live in a condo or an apartment with a small deck, bring nature inside through fabrics, accessories, accents and art. Don't forget to appreciate your view. It's nature's finest and it's free.

GETTING THE LOOK

Stay true to your tastes. Style comes from within yourself. Your favorite color is part of you.

Furniture: Choose furniture made especially for the outdoors. Woven materials, meshes, resin and coatings are engineered to withstand strong sun, high heat, sea salt air and moisture. Some umbrellas and tables have built-in USB ports so

you can easily use your electronic devices outside.

Fabrics: High performance outdoor fabrics resist stains, harsh cleaning agents, UV rays, fading, mold and mildew. Popular patterns — reminiscent of the garden itself — include butterflies, dragonflies and leaves. Exuberant and bright florals add lively pops of color.

Color: Shades of green and yellow are fashionable and versatile. Bright reds, corals and fuchsia add spark. Inspiration from water offers shades such as aqua and sea blue. Choosing neutral textiles that blend with the background allows nature to be your art.

Pools: Knife-edge pools, in which the water level is flush with the deck, are gorgeous. Marble, natural stone and iridescent glass are timeless elements to use. For even more fun, create a grotto, cascading waterfall or floating spa.

Scapes: Natural pools and ponds, filtered by plants instead of chemicals, can be integrated into a landscape and are one with nature. Xeriscaping and natural vegetation require minimal upkeep and respect the planet. Colorful container pots are great to use on courtyards and decks. Pergolas with greenery or scented vines offer shade, beauty and fragrance.

Double Duty: Add value with design features that perform double duty. A generous overhang on a pool house will protect you and your furniture from the elements and provide a place for ceiling fans, lighting and speakers. 

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