

Turn your yard into a vacation-worthy oasis

Warm weather means more time to relax outdoors. For those homeowners lucky enough to have entertaining spaces outside, spring and summer provides plenty of opportunities to enjoy fresh air under the sun or stars.

Over the last few years, families have become especially familiar with what works about their yards and where there is room for improvement. Pandemic-related travel restrictions and early stay-at-home mandates resulted in plenty of time spent in backyards on staycations. Even though many such restrictions have been lifted, homeowners may have seen the benefits of having functional respites right outside their doors.

A backyard renovation can cost anywhere from \$5,000 to \$50,000. The American Society of Landscape Architects suggests homeowners budget the cost of a major landscaping project at between 5 and 10 percent of their home's value. Large or small, here are ways to make an outdoor oasis at home.

Create living privacy
Living in close proximity to neighbors may make privacy harder to come by. Wood or vinyl fences, however effective, may not provide the all-natural look many people desire. Vertical gardening, which trains easy-care vines like English ivy, Clematis or various climbing roses to grow on trellis or fencing



OUTDOOR SPACE — Homeowners can expand their living space by moving out-

doors with decks and patios, comfortable seating and mood lighting.

adds greenery and privacy. Hedges and fast-growing shrubs also can be used for natural barriers.

Install a pool
Pools are the ultimate spots to cool off on hot days. An elaborately shaped inground pool can blend in with the landscape and offer the ultimate hang-out zone. However, above-ground pools also serve the purpose and are more budget-friendly. Stock tank pools are popular among those who want minimal pool expenditure or have small spaces to work with. Stock tanks are metal vessels traditionally used as watering holes for livestock. They also can be "adult kiddie pools" when combined with some

plumbing. Galvanized steel frames make them sturdy. With floats and other accessories, they can become the perfect oasis.

Provide outdoor atmosphere
Create a bespoke bistro vibe by using freestanding planters and posts along with hanging lights to make an intimate outdoor hangout spot at night. For those with permanent structures, like a deck or a gazebo, lights can be strung across the area or on railings or edging.

Extend the living space
Decks and patios can help make outdoor entertaining areas more comfortable by eliminating the need to sit on the grass or gravel. Plus, they add another "room" to

the home. When paired with weatherproof patio furniture, such as sofas, loungers and tables, a private seating area can be crafted and utilized for any number of entertaining desires.

Hang a hammock
Few things evoke feelings of relaxation better than a hammock. Fitted between two trees (or two posts if trees are sparse), a hammock is an ideal place to grab a nap or read a book.

Additional oasis-inspired ideas include outdoor kitchens, letting up lanterns, cascading water features, and bird feeders to attract the sounds of nature.

How to fertilize perennials

From Perennial Power
Just like people, perennials need nutrition to grow and bloom optimally, according to iVerde Perennial Power. This nutrition can be provided in the form of fertilization. But how and when is this best done?

Basic requirements
The basic requirements of perennials are light, heat, water and nutrition. A part of the nutrition is already present in the soil in the form of minerals; for the other part plants depend on fertilization. Fertilize twice a year: in spring and in late summer.

Extra boost
Spring fertilizing is the most important: it is the foundation. Fertilizing in early spring gives perennials an extra growth boost. Fertilizing in late summer (July/August) is necessary to give the plants strength before entering the winter period.

Top condition
Ask for organic fertilizer at the garden center or hardware store. Organic fertilizer has several advantages compared with chemical fertilizers. They allow plants to grow more gradually and improve the soil. Garden fertilizer, ornamental garden fertilizer or border fertilizer are suitable for perennials. Check the packaging for the correct dosage; too much fertilizer actually gives weaker plants energy. Sprinkle the fertilizer on the soil near the plants. The fertilizer will allow them to grow and flower optimally and allow the soil to remain healthy and fertile. In this way, residents can keep their perennials in top condition and enjoy them year after year.

Tips
• Do not fertilize when the foliage is wet; if the fertilizer sticks to the leaves, there is a risk of leaf burn.
• Also apply a thin layer of green compost to the soil.
• The foliage will tell you whether your perennial is getting sufficient nutrients. For example, smaller and lighter colored leaves indicate a nitrogen deficiency (N) and leaves that turn yellow between the veins indicate a lack of magnesium (Mg).
• You can find more practical tips and inspiration about perennials at www.perennialpower.eu.

4 popular colors for the year 2022

Home design trends come and go. The fleeting nature of such trends can make it hard for homeowners to commit to a particular style, especially if they want their home decor to stay as current as possible. Paint provides one way to stay current and refresh a home's interior without investing in new furniture and home accessories. Paint trends change, but these colors are already making the rounds in 2022.

- **Very Peri:** Very Peri is the Pantone® 2022 Color of the Year. A brand new shade of blue, Very Peri was designed to rekindle some of the qualities that the color blue represents while simultaneously complementing a modern perspective. The home design pros at HGTV recommend pairing Very Peri with neutrals like taupes and creams or deeper shades like navy or brown.
- **Evergreen Fog:** The paint experts at Sherwin-Williams note that this shade of green is symbolic of nature and a color associated with revitalization and growth. Those characteristics make it great for homeowners who are looking to create a new beginning with their home interiors, particularly in relaxing spaces like living rooms and bedrooms.

Did you know?

The Electrical Safety Foundation International reports that home electrical fires account for an estimated 51,000 fires each year. Those fires exact a significant human and financial toll, causing roughly 500 deaths and more than 1,400 injuries while leading to \$1.3 billion in property damage. Smoke detectors are an important safety feature that may not prevent fires, but they can prevent deaths caused by home fires. In fact, the ESFI reports that 65 percent of home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no working smoke detectors.

white, taupe, softened black, and nuanced pink.

- **Breezeway:** Breezeway from Behr® is another popular color that provides a soft look. Breezeway is the Behr® Color of the Year for 2022 and is described as a silvery green shade with cool undertones. Behr® touts the versatility of Breezeway, which the company indicates inspires awe in bedrooms, living rooms or hallways. Breezeway pairs well with creamy

Gilded Linen: Gilded Linen from Valspar® is ideal for homeowners who want a color to organize and connect spaces throughout their homes. Gilded Linen is a minimalist white that mixes well with natural elements like wood and greenery. The soft tone of Gilded Linen makes it suitable in a variety of rooms, which is one reason why it's so popular in homes with open floor plans.



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