

Prepare a yard for evening entertaining

Even when the sun goes down, the opportunity to entertain outdoors is still possible. Transforming a backyard into an evening oasis does not necessarily require major renovations, but it should involve adjusting the atmosphere to facilitate comfort and visibility. The following tips can help hosts optimize outdoor spaces for nighttime events.

Layered lighting

Lighting is the main priority when hosting at night. Lighting establishes ambiance and creates safety in the space. Hosts should avoid floodlights which can be too harsh

and create a clinical feeling. Instead, melding different lighting options together can set the scene. String lights provide a warm, even glow that can outline the perimeter and “ceiling” of an outdoor room. Low-voltage LEDs or solar lights can make walkways more visible and call attention to changes in elevation. Accent lighting, such as small spotlights uplighting trees or architectural features, will create depth and keep the yard from feeling like an abyss beyond the patio or deck.

Create focal points

Individuals will gather around various focal

points in the yard. These established zones will encourage conversation and other activities. A fire pit is a natural magnet for outdoor events. Arrange seating around the fire pit to keep conversation flowing. An outdoor bar also is a great place for people to gather, whether it's stocked with alcoholic or non-alcoholic drinks. Mark off an area where people can mingle and dance. Set up an outdoor speaker in this area.

Outdoor comfort

Contending with bugs and weather is a natural side effect of spending time outdoors, particularly in the evening.



Citronella candles can keep mosquitoes and gnats at bay. A simple electric floor fan also can be effective against mosquitoes, which are weak fliers that can't fly against the breeze. A fire pit, propane patio heater and a basket of blankets can help tame the chills if the temperature drops. Keeping pop-up canopies

at the ready will help if rain starts to fall.

Accessibility to food and drink

Beyond the bar, having self-service stations in various spots enables guests to grab food or drink as needed instead of having to trek indoors. Make sure these spots are well-lit. Space drinks away from the food to

prevent traffic jams. Invest in some covered containers that will keep food safe from ants or flying insects and trays to easily transport glassware and other items back into the house.

A yard can be a magical place to entertain at night when hosts take a few extra steps to ready the space.



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