

Expand Your Living Area Without Moving Any Walls!

One of the biggest trends in landscaping is expanding the home's indoor living space with an outdoor room, and there are lots of ways to do this.

FIRST THINGS FIRST - PRIVACY

To ensure that your outdoor room offers ample privacy, you may need to incorporate a screen around the perimeter. Combining a variety of trees, shrubs and perennials is an effective way to do this and will generally be more pleasing to the eye than traditional fencing materials. However, keep in mind that it may take several years for your screen to grow in fully depending on the plant species you choose.

NEXT, ADD THE IMPROVEMENTS

Depending on your needs and desires, there are all kinds of additions you can make to your outdoor room. Among the more popular:

DECKS AND PATIOS

You'll need plenty of room for deck chairs, and maybe even built-in benches for additional seating. Consider where your grill, any other kitchen-type appliances and any container plantings will be situated too. Brick, stone or interlocking pavers are good materials to use for patios, as well as traditional or stamped concrete.

WATER FEATURES

From simple birdbaths and small ponds to gurgling fountains and cascading waterfalls, every outdoor room can benefit from the sights and sounds of a water feature.

FIRE PITS OR CHIMINEAS

These are perfect for nighttime entertaining, and can help to extend the use of your outdoor room into the colder months.



LIGHTING

Low-voltage lighting fixtures are a must if you want to use your outdoor room at night. They increase safety by illuminating steps and can light up the leaves above. Include lights to increase visibility, while enhancing the room's nighttime visual appeal.

SPAS OR HOT TUBS

These make any outdoor room enticing and come in various sizes depending on how many people you need to accommodate. Remember that some regular maintenance will be necessary.

AWNINGS OR ARBORS FOR SHADE

Awnings can be fixed or retractable and will provide solid shade along with a convenient escape from any summer showers that may pop up. If you'd rather go with partial shade, a vine-covered arbor and trellis structure can filter the sun without blocking it out completely.

Pulling all of these different elements into a pleasant and unified whole is the job of a good landscape and hardscape designer. With a carefully designed and constructed outdoor room, you'll be enjoying your property a lot more while increasing the overall value of your property. That's an investment worth making!

