

Creating Outdoor "Rooms" to Maximize your Home's Space

With more and more homeowners trying to maximize their home's living space, it is no wonder home construction and renovation companies are recording record profits. But by assessing what you have and with a little creativity, new outdoor living and entertaining spaces or "outdoor rooms" can be had without spending the thousands of dollars it would take to actually add rooms to your existing home.

Late fall through early spring is a great time to assess how space is used in your home. Often, decks and patios go unused or underused. These areas are becoming "standard issue" add-ons in new home construction, and new homebuyers many times will not be prepared to furnish these areas after moving in. Obviously, these areas are great places to begin the creation of outdoor rooms. Also, places you wouldn't normally think of for use in entertaining - flat, shady spots in the yard, for example - may also lie empty and waiting for use. In other words, when you think of your "home," think of your entire property and how you can utilize each area to its fullest. Many times, there are ways you can create "backyard retreats" in these underused areas without much trouble or cost, and truly bring the "indoors-out."

The primary focus of a new or existing outdoor room could be a pond or falling water feature, fire pit or flowerbed. In most cases, however, the heart of an outdoor living space is an outdoor furniture grouping, either large or small. Lately gaining in popularity, groupings of "Adirondack furniture" including Adirondack chairs, tables, loveseats and rockers, are an excellent choice for creating seating groups. Naturally at home in the outdoors, wood furniture offers durability, comfort, and the natural look that you expect from a natural material. Adirondack furniture is exceptionally comfortable, and has a design that has withstood nearly a century of use. Thus, furniture groupings including Adirondack chairs and other Adirondack furniture will certainly give long, comfortable service during the warmer months of the year!

In addition to the seating and table grouping you choose, strategically adding plants or small shrubs, either in planter boxes or large terra-cotta pots (for mobility and flexibility) can help to define the seating area of an outdoor room and create a more intimate "escape" just meters from your home. Small boxwood shrubs are extremely attractive when potted and placed around a furniture grouping. They are also very easy to maintain. Potentilla shrubs are equally as nice when potted, hardy in many climate zones, and will flower in yellow, white or orange throughout most of the summer. Erecting a cedar arbor or cedar pergola at the entrance to your patio or backyard retreat is a wonderful way to add a welcoming touch as well. Plant some climbing flowers or vines at the base of your arbor or pergola, and the setting will become that much more rich and lush.

As you take time to assess your increasing need for living space during the upcoming warm months, also take into account traffic flow from one area to another: from a deck to a patio and then on to a set of Adirondack chairs on the lawn, for example. Creating "hallways" from one to another with plants (either in pots or in the ground) or temporary or permanent stepping stones (either natural or cast concrete) will help tie each living area together visually as well as physically.

Finally, the most important suggestion in creating your outdoor living rooms: enjoy the experience! From brainstorming to planning to finding the furniture and accessories to the actual creation of your new living areas, have fun and be creative. The best outdoor living areas, like the best indoor living areas, are personal reflections of the owner filled with warm, inviting seating and objects that make visitors feel at home, and the owners relaxed and comfortable.

About the Author

The [Iowa Adirondack Company](#) offers a number of superior handcrafted [Adirondack chairs](#), rockers, loveseats, chaise lounges, tables and more in cedar and pine in many different styles and designs. All furniture is ready to ship free to your door and is covered with a money back satisfaction guarantee and warranties from 5 years to a lifetime.

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