

outdoor living



planning outdoor spaces

Our backyards have always been important to us, and when planning these spaces we need to decide what sort of atmosphere we want to create, just as we would with an interior room.

Should the garden reflect the style of the indoors, such as formal or casual, minimal or busy? Does it need to look good and be on view all year around, or just during the spring/summer months when more time is spent outdoors?

Does it need to enhance the architectural style of the building, or does it need to conceal a utility area such as compost bins or a clothesline?

Even the smallest space can be made into an enticing spot to soak up some sunshine, snooze in a hammock under a shady tree, or just a place to sit and enjoy the fresh air and garden fragrances.

activities + functions

The garden may be a place where we entertain family and friends, where the children play or exercise, or a place to unwind after a busy day at work. With so many uses it is important to give it thought and attention, and allocate a budget so that it will meet all your needs.



Start by deciding exactly what the space should be for, and remember windows and doors often frame a view from within the home, so it needs to look good as well.

The condition of the soil, degree of sun and shade and the budget will all have an influence on the type of planting required. Another important consideration is the ongoing maintenance of a lawn, garden or outdoor pool, both in terms of time and expense.

The other main things to consider are your privacy, safety, security, lighting, drainage, vehicle and pedestrian access, and if council approval is needed for structures, fences and pools. It is sometimes worth hiring an expert landscaper to guide you through some of these processes.



privacy + security

Privacy is particularly important for seating or bathing areas and can be achieved with screening by a trellis, fence, plants or a hedge.

If privacy is required from above, such as for multi story dwellings, this can be achieved by a pergola with vines or climbing plants growing over it, but the natural light and fresh air still filters through to the area beneath.

If all-year alfresco dining is desired, overhead louvers or roofing will protect you from the sun or rain, and for additional warmth an outdoor fire or heater can be installed.

In your garden you are touched by the restorative power of nature - natural light, soothing cycles of the days and seasons, healing of flowers and foliage - so it is important to create an area where you feel safe and secure, and private.



colour combinations

There are many types of gardens, and often these are combined. A wild garden of grasses and flowers, a kitchen garden of vegetables and herbs as well as plenty of lawn for the kids or pets to play on.

Others may include a pond or water feature, a seaside themed garden at the beach, or a rock garden with minimal planting.

When devising the colour palette of plantings consider shades and tints of colours, textures and shapes, colour of foliage, berries, fruits and the garden furniture, walls, paving/decks and pool.

Plot your colour combinations in just one area or across the entire garden. Use the Resene colour wheel to design colours combinations - related, complementary or monochromatic - to achieve soothing harmonies, vibrant tones or an all-white flowered garden.



light + sound

The play of light adds to the vibrancy and subtlety of the colour contrasts created by plants and man-made structures in your garden. Varying qualities of light at different times of the day and seasons either suppress or enhance colours.

One way to enhance colour in your garden and to introduce form and structure is through the use of shade. All but the most vibrant colours will look bleached in bright sunlight, while dappled shade rests the eye and enables us to see the depth and contrast in lighter hues.

Ways of introducing light to enhance the garden include candles set in the earth or floating on water, flame torches, glass lanterns, electric spot lights and night lighting, or gas patio lights.

Contemplative thoughts are enriched by the sound of trickling water, the call of birds and the rustle of the leaves and grasses in the breeze.



outdoor flooring

Introduce variation of hard and soft surfaces, texture and levels to create a more interesting vista in the garden.

Choosing a hard surface can be difficult, and nothing surpasses the beauty of a local natural stone. Other choices include clay pavers or aggregates (gravel and stone) set in concrete. There are many shapes and sizes of paving materials and the scale of the area to be paved usually dictates the size and layout of pavers selected.

Floorings can be made of timber decking or reclaimed materials such as railway sleepers.

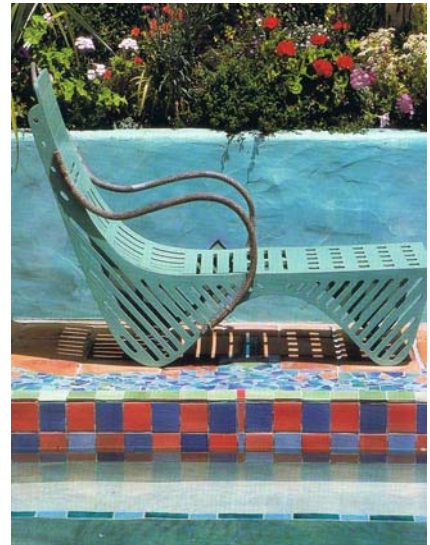
Remember outdoor flooring when wet can be slippery so consider using Resene Non-Skid Deck & Path treatment to increase traction.

The steps above are constructed from bricks with hardwood timber stair risers, and lead down from a paved patio. The ground cover planting is designed for easy maintenance.

decks + paving

Giving your steps or porch a fresh coat of paint enhances the look of your entrance way. Resene Sidewalk Paving paint gives maximum durability and abrasion resistance on timber steps, decking, or concrete surfaces. For addition slip-resistance, Resene SRG Grit can be added to the coating.

To enhance and protect a timber deck or outdoor furniture use Resene Kwila Timber Stain. This will add colour to the new or weathered surface but still allow the natural timber grain to show through.



For a natural look, add colour to concrete surfaces with Resene Concrete Stain which penetrates the surface and gives a tough, low sheen finish and enhances the natural texture of the concrete. This product can be used on concrete driveways and paths, paving stones, cobblestones and around pools or water features.



timber colours

Fences, screens, pergolas, outdoor furniture constructed in dressed or rough sawn timber can be coloured and protected with Resene Woodsman which is a penetrating oil stain that gives a natural finish and comes in a good range of colours.

Be a little adventuresome with colour and make a statement - fences and furniture do not need to be brown! Red or orange contrast strongly against green foliage, and a deep blue or green look great around water features or pool areas.

Using colour on exterior finishes is also an effective way to link colours used on the interior of a home to the outdoor living areas.

While the exterior fence colour needs to work with the exterior house colour, it does not have to be boring and introducing a colour can individualise the exterior colour scheme of the property.



finishes + effects

Another innovative way to add excitement to exterior colours and finishes is to use Resene Metallics and Special Effects. These are metallic and pearlescent finishes in a range of shimmering colours that add dimension to exterior concrete and steelwork.

The colour of a concrete or plaster fence, or a metal pergola or gate, will change according to its surroundings to give the illusion of colour movement.

This works particularly well in a garden setting as nature is always quietly moving and changing in response to the breeze, sun or play of shadow on the foliage and flowers.

Other finishes that can be achieved on exterior surfaces, with a combination of product and application techniques, include colourwashing, dragging and limewashing. These give a weathered look which also works with nature and outdoor living.



gates + doors

Depending on where they are, garden gates and doors have different functions. Front gates welcome visitors and direct them to the front door. They should be easily visible and are sometimes painted in a stronger colour so that visitors can quickly find the public entrance to the property.

Gates and fences at the side of the garden leading to the more private outdoor living spaces are usually designed to deter intruders and keep children and pets safely contained within the area.

As well as their function, the style and colour of gates and doors can reinforce the theme or colour scheme of the building or garden.



garden structures

Trellis screens are great for creating privacy or breaking up larger spaces as they still allow some light and view through them. Anything that divides the garden lends extra perspective because it defines space.

An arch that forms the entrance to the garden governs the visitor's initial impression as it frames the scene beyond to entice them further into the garden.

Walkways are really an elongated archway, and maybe a leafy tunnel to direct people to the garden beyond. A bit like a hallway in a home.

Pergolas are often fixed to one side of the house and work well to provide covered access to the house or larger sized pergolas are often transformed into an outside 'room' for dining and entertaining.

This thatched gazebo provides an outdoor dining room by the pool



collections + treasures

Any outdoor building adds to the framework of the garden, whether it is a garden shed, pool house, playroom or detached garage or studio.

They can be transformed with paint and colour to make them part of the exterior concept, or they can be concealed with climbing plants if they are less attractive.

Adding wall decorations can also inject life and interest into a boring shed wall - see the grouping of galvanised metal preserving pans and cream cans against the cottage wall in picture.

A collection of shells, rocks, fishing nets and driftwood might look equally as interesting on the fence of a seaside home.

Outdoor art, mosaics panels, mirrors or woven pieces also decorate and add colour to a bland wall surface in the garden.



conservatories

Conservatories provide a transition from the house to the garden, as well as an inviting place to spend time in a nice, warm area amongst plants and trees.

These days conservatories are available in many shapes and styles and can instantly add a room to a small home. Even a glass roof without sides will often provide enough protection and warmth for plants that would not survive outside in the cold months of winter.

Don't overlook lighting, access to water for plants and additional heating if needed when planning a conservatory. You will also need to invest in large pots and tubs to hold the plants and climbers, and comfortable furniture so the space is useful and enjoyable.



patios + roof gardens

Defined terraces or patios around the house help to integrate it with the rest of the landscape. The best place for a sitting area is in the sun, although some shade may be needed in summer months by using an awning or umbrella.

Groupings of potted plants help to define the space and sculptures or collections of treasures immediately add personality and charm to the patio or terrace.

As land becomes more expensive, roof gardens are increasing in popularity. They also bring health benefits to people living or working in high-rise buildings.

You will need to check that the building can accommodate the weight of a roof garden. Most paving is too heavy for a roof-top, but lightweight turfs are being developed for use here. Plants and trees are usually potted in containers, and shade can be created by growing climbing plants over a pergola. Wind can be a nuisance, so screens may be needed to filter the worst of the gusts.



outdoor furniture

To make your garden a space that you will really live in, it must be furnished with comfortable pieces to tempt you to go outside and enjoy the sunshine or cool off in the shade. Firstly decide if you want your garden furniture to be a permanent fixture or moveable.

Lightweight furniture is less expensive, e.g. folding canvas chairs, plastic or cane, and can be easily stored away under cover when not in use. It will not last if left outdoors all the time, and very lightweight pieces may be blown over by the wind.

Hardwood, metal, stone or concrete furniture on the other hand will sustain the weather all year around and can be left in place. Squabs and umbrellas may need to be stowed away in winter to protect them from rotting in very wet weather.

Some timber furniture requires maintenance with penetrating oils to keep it looking good.



outdoor seating

Chairs and seats are available in lots of styles and as with interior seating one of the most important factors is comfort and support.

Groups of chairs around a table represent dining and entertaining, so need to be the correct height for table and support the back while sitting, as well as provide some comfort on the seats - this can be assisted with loose cushions. They are usually constructed out of timber, metal or composite materials.

For sitting and lounging for longer periods of time there are canvas deck chairs, wicker or cane reclining loungers and hammocks or day beds.

And then there are the benches and outdoor sofa's to accommodate more than person one at a time.

Tired timber or cane furniture can be treated with a coat of colourful paint to give it a new life, choose bright, tropical colours or wash the timber with limewash effects for an aged look.



outdoor tables

Dining outdoors when the weather is balmy and the evenings long always seem more relaxed and enjoyable than eating indoors.

Choose a table that is substantial but not too large and dominating, solid and not wobbly, and if possible weatherproof so that it becomes a permanent fixture in the garden or outdoor room.

The table and chairs of a dining setting are normally selected to compliment each other, but they do not always have to match perfectly. An old weathered wooden table blends nicely into the landscape, but it can easily be dressed up with brightly coloured table linen and crockery when entertaining.

Other outdoor table tops are made from mosaic tiles, wrought iron, natural stone, concrete or woven materials.



outdoor accessories

Awnings and umbrellas shade us from the sun and shield us from misty rain. For added protection from wind and rain, there are roll-down screens.

There are also overhead louvers that can be open or closed when needed, and vertical sliding louvers which are basically moveable walls.

Then there are the outdoor kitchens, barbecues, fireplaces, heaters, bars, refrigerators - just about everything for outdoor cooking, including the kitchen sink!

Outdoor decorations to set the scene include tiled art pieces, clocks, birdhouses, birdbaths, wind chimes, mobiles and a huge array of colourful crockery and glassware to compliment the table.

Resene

the paint the professionals use



garden toys

These range from playground equipment for young children to sports equipment for older children and the adults.

Swings and slides, climbing frames and tree huts are always loved by kids and encourage exercise and physical activity outdoors.

Bat and ball games are just as important for older children and teenagers, and then there are all the water toys for the swimming pool.

And for the 'big kids' there is petanque, croquet, putting and hopefully lots of fun playing with the kids and grandchildren in the backyard.

compiled by

- Colourwaves - Jill Carroll