

Blending Indoors & Outdoors



By Jill Sands

Here is a look at some of the most recent trends in outdoor spaces and how they resemble what's happening inside the house.

Lawns and gardens have forever been in our lives, but as places to walk around, work in or admire. Today we've internalized our outdoors with a desire to keep it with us as long as possible. As early in spring and as late into winter as we feasibly can, so we don't turn into snowpeople.

Your customers are realizing that green spaces are stress reducers. They give us a healthier outlook and attitude. Take a walk in a park, or the yard, and your mind opens to new and fresh ideas.

Taking my white lab, Ollie, for walks, especially on fall or winter days, I often create haiku about nature's beauty that I see and hear, plus the emotion it emits.

Lawn and garden décor used to be a design trend unto itself with its own colors and designs of fabrics and furniture. It was big, chunky and masculine or metal-framed and not particularly curl-up comfortable.

Today is a new beginning. There's a seamless transition from the inside to out ... and the outside to inside.

Flowers and florals transition indoors while geometrics transition outdoors. You're finding both in both venues. And, they all look great wherever.

That's because the heart is in it, not what someone else is telling you what should be.

Our gardens and the outdoors have become our "third place." We have our interior, or home place, our work place, and the outside has become our third place.

The third place can be a comfort zone to find solitude when one craves being alone, and it can be your entertainment zone when one wants to be with friends and family.

We want this third place to exude the same comfort and design with the same thought process as the inside rooms of our homes. Nowadays, exterior designers are spending as much time on exteriors as interior designers spend on interior kitchens and living rooms.

Another spot gaining great outdoor attention is the "She Shed." It's the female version of a Man Cave. Most She Sheds are separate buildings and feminine in both the architecture and interior with soft flower gardens, of course.

They are a quiet time retreat ... a "self-imposed timeout" for mom, a place to meditate, read, write, paint, do yoga or whatever makes mom happy and shifts her gears back to neutral.



Being aware that downsizing baby boomers and millennials are space-deprived in their living environments with smaller homes and apartments and minimal to no storage space, they want their purchases to be of lasting high quality (in addition to being comfortable and looking good) such as this teak furniture that can be left outside 365 days a year. (Photo: Three Birds Casual)



She Sheds are the female alternative to the Man Cave and are transforming outdoor spaces and gardens. (Photo: House Beautiful)



Natural, tactile and organic gardens utilize organic plants along with organic shapes and natural materials that appear more real and authentic. (Photo: Women's Weekly)



One unique take on the multifunctional garden includes spaces for flowers, veggies, and herbs that are used for dyeing fabrics and yarn. (Photo: Mother Earth Living)

Some other garden trends that are in the future — and already popping up — are more multifunctional gardens, organic gardens, indoor gardens, active exteriors, more natural and tactile materials and sustainability.

Multifunctional Gardens

Multifunctional gardens will include spaces for your favorite flowers, veggies, herbs, plus multifunctional veggies and herbs that are used for dyeing



A fire pit allows people to feasibly extend their outdoor living spaces into the colder months. (Photo: Jatex)

fabrics and yarn. For example, yarrow and mums produce yellow tones, purple basil give us lilac and marjoram turns fibers a bronzy yellow.

In addition, we will see more plants that invite friendly insects and ward off others (as marigolds protect your tomatoes).

Natural, Tactile and Organic Gardens

Natural, tactile and organic gardens include organic shapes and natural materials along with organic plants.

We're seeing an uptick of more natural stone and wood, and more curves versus the linear lines that traditionally shape most gardens, decks and yards. The mood is toward more real, natural, authentic and inviting looks.

Active Exteriors

People are more active today and they want their exteriors to allow them enjoyment of the activities of their choice.

This might include a boules court, pet spaces and areas for kids to create and build in a natural setting, versus a square sandbox or a rigid climbing structure. A place for kids to literally think outside the box!

Remember that reading, thinking, pondering or contemplating the beauty of nature are all definitions of activities. Create several surprise hideaways with comfortable seating for one or more for these restorative activities.

Technology and Sustainability

With water becoming scarce as our environment changes, there will be an increase in the number of gardens and yards using native plants and trees, especially in water-threatened areas of the country.

Watering per se is becoming a wasteful luxury. Going forward, watering will be tech-controlled on an as-needed basis; similar to your smartphone

already controlling your home's thermostat in saving fuel.

Indoor Gardens

With boomers downsizing and millennials not yet up-sizing, the majority of the country is living in smaller spaces and in urban environments.

This coincides with a greater year-round desire for fresh, organic and local veggies. And, you can't get much more local than your own kitchen countertop!

Thirty-three percent of millennials and boomers are growing indoors, from basic herbs to exotic veggies. With the aid of new technologies and less costly hydroponic methods, indoor gardening has become a \$1 billion industry.

With a shift toward reduced consumption, consumers are discovering happiness in what they do, rather than in possessions. Homeowners and renters alike, both today and tomorrow, want Hygge, or coziness of the soul (pronounced "hug-gah").

Hygge is an 18th century Danish word that describes a quality of Danish life and culture. Hygge cannot be translated to English using a single word because there's too much personal emotion within each definition.

Hygge includes the pleasures we associate with everyday living, our wellness and quality of life ... relaxing with friends, enjoying good food, a candlelit dinner, or a snowy evening by the fire. Hygge truly is coziness of the soul.

Have fun helping your customers create their own definitions of Hygge in their homes, their gardens and their third place. **LGR**

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