

Create space
for entertaining,
family or relaxation



Ideas for Outdoor Designs

INSPIRATION



A guide to
creating a
useable
outdoor
space

LIFESTYLE

PURPOSE

COLOUR

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Colour

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Colour in Design

Are you a morning person? Would you like contrasting colours to wake you up more quickly or a gentle wake up call using harmonising colours?

Are you someone who enjoys dining out late into the night? Do you want strong colours to add a sense of drama or create a sense of calm with soft colours?

By thinking about the routines in your day (and night) you can use colour outside to enhance your lifestyle and encourage more use of your outside space. Also carefully consider the size of space you have and the amount of light it gets before you use colour.

Inspiration can come from what colour clothes you choose to wear and how you have decorated your house interior. These are some of the clues as to what colours you will like in your outdoor space.



Colour can be used to great effect for making a small space feel bigger by using for example cool colours or in large open spaces using warm colours to create an inviting spot to sit. It's all dependent on the mix of colours and the shades you use.

Sources of outdoor colour can come from a variety of items starting with the most obvious plants, fencing, flooring, building walls to other objects such as ornaments, furniture, vistas (views), lighting etc.

Although colour choices are personal, there are a few hints available to help you select colours which work well together and enhance a positive mood.

Also watch out for colour clashes which create confusion by mixing too many colours together. To retain a sense of togetherness or purpose in a space, without reducing its appeal, a careful colour balance is needed.



Warm and Cool

Colours are mainly grouped into warm and cool harmonies or adjacent colours. Warm colours include the reds, oranges and yellows whereas the cool colours include the blues, greens and purples.



Strong and Soft

Then there is shading with strong colours being the deep, intense shades and soft colours being the paler ones.

The best colour mixes usually contain either strong harmonious colours for a bold look or soft harmonious colours for a subtle look.

Mixing a strong colour with a soft colour usually causes unbalance and cheapens the appearance of the effect but with every rule there are exceptions. Try out your ideas on a small scale first if you are not sure as different surfaces can change the appearance of a colour.

Buffers and Contrasts

When there are too many soft colours used in a scheme a bland appearance is created. This can be rectified by using contrasting colours (opposites on the colour wheel).

For example using a warm and cool mix (purple and gold) can work well when using a neutral buffer colour such as white, grey, cream (or green in outdoor spaces) that is woven through the design.

Hard Surfaces

The boundaries of a space and flooring are usually the biggest expanse within a space and form the backdrop for everything inside the space. As well as having a function they can be used to set the colour scene. You therefore need to pick the right shade of colour to compliment the other items you will be placing in the space.

Strong colours are a good way of making a design statement or a striking effect but if used in too large a quantity they can overpower a space or become dated quite quickly. Safe colours to use for large expanses include the buffers or soft shades.

Colour can be introduced by painting surfaces or by using the colours found in natural materials. You could use willow or bamboo for fencing and materials which match your house for flooring such as stone, brick or timber.

Dark, north facing spaces suit soft colours such as pale yellow and peach mixed with reflective surfaces making the space seem larger. Bright, south facing spaces can introduce stronger colours with a buffer of cream or grey. A white buffer however would reflect the sun becoming too harsh on the eyes.

Objects and Structures

Visual interest can be created by using arches, trellis, planting containers or pergolas etc. As there is such a variety of choice in objects to use, a strong colour scheme can be created with these items which integrate them into the style you are creating.

If however your planting scheme is the focal point, other objects can be used as the buffer wave such as a grey painted trellis or cream planting containers. You can also use objects to introduce contrasting colours between materials and plants.

Planting Schemes

Whether you are using foliage, flowers, bark etc for contrast or harmony, the colour mixing principles still apply. Choose a key colour to base your scheme on and then weave a buffer colour through the scheme. Don't forget to match it to your hard surfaces and structures for balance.

Plant Combinations

Your space conditions will narrow your plant choice but even using a select blend of different plant types the colour groupings can still be vast.

Create a colour board of plant images, pieces of material or painted boards and take this outside. Look for the different effects on your chosen colours caused by the changing light and shade in your space.

Think of foliage as the base colour to be built around with other plant colours and consider the changes within each season.

Most of all have fun with colour.

'Colour in Design' has been created as a starting point of information and ideas to help you make the most of your outdoor space.

Gardens123 would like to thank you for your interest in our free guide and would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few more of our products and services.

Free Guides

Please browse all our booklets in this series for more garden design inspiration. We hope you will find these booklets useful as we are looking to increase this inspiration range further so keep checking for the latest booklets.

Concept Consultations – (£45 consultation fee)

If you need design guidance, a little inspiration or a friendly chat about how to use your outdoor space to its advantage, book a visit with our Landscape designer.

By mixing your ideas and enthusiasm with the designer's passion and skills, a concept vision for your garden can be created in an hour's consultation.

Concept Designs – (start at £160) as of Dec09 subject to change see website

These designs are created specifically if you have strong ideas for your space and know the materials you would like to use or you have existing features needing simple makeover revamp.

Layout Designs – (start at £320) as of Dec09 subject to change see website

This design process has been created if you have a small garden and just need a contractor to 'do the tricky bits' e.g. paving.

Further Services

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Visit **www.gardens123.co.uk** for more information.

Gardens123 hope you have found this guide interesting. We wish you all the best with your design ideas and look forward to hear from you again soon.