



Landscape Design

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Alfresco Living

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In the Bay Area, we are blessed with the weather that makes *alfresco* a way of life. “In the open air” describes how many of us spend our time at home. Numerous parts of the country just look out the windows at their yards; we LIVE in ours. And that adds another dimension to landscape design for us.

When designing your yard, make sure to give yourself places to be IN it. And make sure these places are large enough to be useful. One common mistake I see is patio and deck spaces that are too small. Granted, hardscape materials like wood, stone and tile can be pricy, but when you think about it as adding an additional room or two to your house, the price per sq. ft. is well worth it: don't scrimp here.

A good rule of thumb for sizing your deck or patio is to allow at least 3' around all sides of your table. This allows for chairs—and people—to move in and out with ease. If there's a step, give yourself 5' of space along that edge, so you don't feel like you're teetering on the edge. If space is at a premium, look at creating built-in seating, for example with a railing/bench combo on a deck or a seat-height wall along a patio. Built-in seating not only increases the usefulness of your space but also helps to define it, so you can get the most out of your landscape.