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# Living Inside Out

More homeowners are turning ordinary yards into extraordinary living spaces.

by Sharise Cunningham

Once upon a time remodels involved the idea of “bringing the outdoors in” as people wanted to open up the spaces in their homes by knocking down walls or adding glass doors, larger windows, natural woods, plants and other environmental decor. The idea of being surrounded by nature still prevails, but now the remodeling is taking place on the outside as homeowners turn unused, unattractive yards into fun and functional outdoor extensions of their homes.

The well-manicured yard is becoming less about curb appeal and more about utility. Don't fret if you just don't know what to do with an oddly shaped or limited access yard; professional landscapers or nurseries can get you started in the right direction. A well-planned new landscape will not only give you an additional place to enjoy, but could add to the resale value of your home. And that's very entertaining!



Photos courtesy of Pond Doc.

**THIS OUTDOOR** makeover transformed a dull backyard into a gorgeous extension of the home.



### Blades and Blossoms/Pond Doc

Project manager: Neil Boyce of B&B

Architect/designer: Neil Boyce of B&B

Duration: 7 to 10 days (pond only)

Price range: \$12,000 to \$14,000 (pond only)

Duration: 5 to 6 weeks (entire project)

Price Range: \$60,000 to \$70,000 (entire project)

Granted this landscape plan was already beautiful, but these homeowners had more grandiose ideas in mind for their yard. They wanted to bring a unified look to the pool and pond, which was accomplished by the addition of a small waterfall that flows into the pool and the pond. "The new plan gives the appearance that [the pool and pond] are of the same body of water," explains Cecil Ferguson, owner of The Pond Doc.

The pond was only part of a full yard renovation that also included the addition of an outdoor stone and cedar fireplace, large Tennessee fieldstone walkways, stacked-stone walls, a large arbor and lighting.



Photos courtesy of Pond Doc.



## Piedmont Landscape

Project manager: Eric King

Architect/designer: Eric King

Duration: 3 months

Price range: \$30,000 to \$40,000

The backyard in this project began as what landscape architect Eric King called an "unusable, barren wooded slope." The new landscape provides not only privacy, but also much-needed environmental protection and functionality. Working with the existing slope, King created a circular open deck that connects via catwalk to the home's patio. The deck floor is constructed of anti-slip, low maintenance Belgard Dublin Cobble pavers, which come in a variety of colors and varying soft shapes that work well with non-linear designs.

The deck wall is made of Tennessee stacked stone with a flagstone cap and stainless steel cables for visual access. The dog-proof waterfall is also made of Tennessee fieldstone and the re-circulated water flows from under a log found on site. "The homeowner's goal was to re-create the feel of the North Georgia Mountains," King says, explaining further that his favorite feature is that the sounds of the waterfall can be enjoyed from within the house.

They also curved the angles of the front yard, added aquatic plants to the resident creek and installed shade-loving plantings such as hemlock and ferns throughout the whole yard giving the home that extra touch of distinction.







AFTER



BEFORE

**Ed Castro Landscape**  
 Project manager: Martha Goodman  
 Architect/designer: Ed Castro  
 Duration: 6 months  
 Price range: \$140,000 to \$150,000

This project started with a typical backyard with less than attractive landscape timbers and plenty of overgrown ivy. The backyard proved to be inhospitable and was only used for exterior access to the basement. To help create a more formal



## The Virtual Makeover

landscape, Martha Goodman had two main goals: improve access to the yard and remove all of the ivy.

The timbers were replaced by 4 x 4 slab steps, which were set in a jogged pattern to achieve the necessary elevation. They added a concrete block retaining wall topped with blue capstone and a custom-made iron fence. Beyond the wall are more native plantings. New irrigation and lighting systems were also added to accommodate the new design.

The stone walkway partially encircles a terracotta pot that doubles as a fountain (Goodman's favorite design feature) especially when it's fully drenched by the spraying water. Throughout the rest of the yard, bed and lawn lines were redrawn and some existing trees and shrubs were relocated. The formal feel was completed with the addition of a flagstone seating area near the driveway.

Want to see how your yard would look after a makeover? Well, DeAnna Hohnhorst of Angel Gardens offers her clients the option to see a computer-generated rendition of their new landscape. The resulting images save on design cost by reducing the time spent on drawing plans, and provide a more realistic picture of the possibilities. Design changes are more easily made with just a few clicks of the mouse.

Her preferred professional program includes a library of 11,000 images and allows the designer to create her own custom libraries. Hohnhorst offers a two-hour consultation for \$150, plus \$100 per view. This amount is deducted from the price of installation. She offers the do-it-yourselfer the virtual redesign printouts plus a list of suggested plants and care instructions. Landscaper's considering using a design program can contact Hohnhorst who also teaches photographic design using any of the four leading commercial software programs.







AFTER

### Scapes

**Project Manager: Evan Rogers**

**Architect/designer: Jim Lespi**

**Duration: 6 months**

**Price Range: \$190,000 to \$200,000**

The goals of this large scale, front and backyard remodel were to create a better space for entertaining and improved access to the dock.

Evan Rogers explains that the backyard was engulfed in English ivy. An enormous gray wooden deck swallowed the backyard, rendering it virtually useless. After making 16- to 18-foot grading changes, the yard pops with color and vitality from layers of evergreen shrubs, annuals and perennials. The new plantings account for nearly \$60,000 of the total project cost.

Varying shades and types of crab orchard fieldstone were used to create all of the stone features including walls, patios, the outdoor grill and the circulating paths that now meander through-



out the landscape. Standard crab orchard's consistent thickness, relatively smooth surface, and gritty, non-slip texture make it a popular choice for walkways and wet areas, such as pool and hot tub decks. A new waterfall near the main patio provides the perfect touch of serenity.

The biggest challenge according to Rogers was the grading change but the effort was definitely worth it. "We made a horrible, overgrown backyard into a [functional space]," he says. "It's beautiful."

