

Things to Consider Before Creating Your Outdoor Living Space

As a homeowner, you understand that your house is more than just an indoor space. It extends beyond those four walls to include the environment surrounding it. In Springfield, MO, we're fortunate to experience a variety of seasons, each one showcasing nature's beauty in a unique way. This connection with nature is what makes a well-designed outdoor living area so crucial. Kevin, the owner and chief landscaper at our company, firmly believes in this sentiment.

Kevin often states, "An outdoor living area is like an extension of your home, providing the perfect setting for relaxation, social gatherings, or simply a quiet evening spent under the stars." He's spent his career turning backyards in the Springfield area into stunning outdoor oases, and in this article, we'll walk through the process he uses for designing and building these incredible spaces. From the initial planning to the final construction, Kevin ensures each project reflects the homeowner's unique needs, style, and budget. By the end, we hope to inspire you to imagine what your own outdoor living space could become.

Understanding outdoor living spaces

At its core, an outdoor living space is an area outside your home designed for regular use, similar to an indoor living room or dining area. But unlike these interior spaces, outdoor living areas beautifully blur the boundaries between the comforts of your home and the natural beauty of the outdoors.

These spaces come in all shapes and sizes, depending on the preferences and needs of homeowners. They might include a [cozy patio](#) with a fire pit, an expansive deck with a summer kitchen, a lush garden with comfortable seating, or even a pool area complete with lounges and an outdoor shower.

In recent years, the popularity of outdoor living spaces has surged, especially here in Springfield. Kevin recalls, "When I started in this business, most requests were for simple patios or garden improvements. But now, homeowners are realizing the potential of their outdoor spaces. They're asking for [elaborate outdoor kitchens](#), custom water features, and even specialized areas for yoga and exercise."

Why the increased interest? It could be the allure of extending the living space or the joy of spending more time outdoors, particularly given our area's pleasant climate in the spring and fall. Perhaps it's the growing desire for a personal retreat amid the hustle and bustle of modern

life. Regardless of the reasons, it's clear that a well-designed outdoor living space can significantly enhance your home's appeal and functionality.

Initial planning and considerations

Creating an outdoor living area isn't an endeavor to rush into. It requires thoughtful planning and consideration of various factors. Let's look at some of the initial steps that Kevin often emphasizes when working with clients in the Ozarks.

Understanding your needs and wants

What's your vision for the space? How do you plan to use it? Maybe you dream of hosting family barbecues, relaxing with a book, or creating a play area for the kids. It's essential to understand your expectations from the outset. Kevin once worked with a client who loved bird-watching, so he incorporated elements that attracted local bird species, transforming the area into a personal wildlife sanctuary.

Assessing the available outdoor space

The amount of space you have can dictate what's possible. Size, shape, and topography all play a part in the design process. For example, a sloping backyard could be turned into a terraced garden with multiple levels for different activities.

Importance of local climate in design decisions

Springfield's temperate climate offers the opportunity to use your outdoor living space for most of the year. Still, it's important to plan for all types of weather. Incorporating shade structures, outdoor heaters, or even a cozy fireplace can ensure the area remains comfortable and usable no matter the season.

Budget considerations

Creating an outdoor living area requires an investment. Some features like outdoor kitchens or custom-built fireplaces can significantly increase the budget. Allocating a definitive budget from the beginning ensures that the design aligns with your financial comfort zone.

Legal considerations and permits

Depending on the scope of your project, you may need to obtain permits. In Springfield, MO, for instance, larger projects like decks and structures often require approval from local authorities. Other nearby counties may not require any permits at all. It's essential to understand these requirements upfront to avoid future complications.

Designing the outdoor living area

Once you've done your initial planning, it's time to delve into the actual design process. Kevin often likens this phase to painting a picture, where your backyard is the canvas. Below are some key elements he considers when crafting a unique, functional, and beautiful outdoor living area.

Basic principles of landscape design

These principles, such as unity, balance, and proportion, ensure that your outdoor space is aesthetically pleasing and functional.

Choosing a theme or style

Are you drawn to modern, minimalist designs, or do you prefer a rustic, natural look? Your style preference will shape the overall feel of your outdoor space.

Selecting features

These could include seating areas, an outdoor kitchen, a fire pit, or even a water feature. If you like to entertain, consider a fully equipped outdoor kitchen and dining area, making your backyard the perfect venue for social gatherings.

Importance of vegetation and garden elements

[Plants](#) add color, texture, and life to your outdoor space. They can be used for privacy, shade, or even as a focal point. In one Springfield home, our team created a vibrant perennial garden that provided beautiful colors and fragrances throughout the year.

Consideration for lighting and heating

[Proper lighting](#) can highlight your outdoor area's best features and extend its usability into the evening hours. Heating elements, such as fire pits or outdoor heaters, can make the space more comfortable during cooler months. Kevin recalls a project where strategic lighting transformed a simple garden pathway into a magical, twinkling walkway at night.

Designing for privacy and noise control

In crowded neighborhoods, privacy can be a concern. Using elements such as fences, walls, or [strategically placed plants](#) can help. Noise control, particularly in city environments, can also be addressed through the use of water features or sound-absorbing plants.

The design phase is all about creativity and personalization. With careful consideration of these factors, your outdoor living space can become a true reflection of your lifestyle and personality.

Choosing the right materials

After the design is complete, the next step is selecting the materials to bring your outdoor living space to life. There are numerous options to choose from, each with their own benefits and considerations.

Types of Materials

Materials can range from natural stone, blocks, or pavers for a rustic or classic look, wood for warmth and versatility, to concrete for durability and low maintenance. Consider the style of your home and outdoor space when selecting materials. For instance, a traditional home might pair well with a paver patio, while a modern style could benefit from sleek concrete.

Sustainability Considerations

Eco-friendly options are increasingly available and could influence your choice of materials. Recycled composite decking, for example, is a durable and sustainable alternative to traditional wood.

Durability and Maintenance

Each material has different longevity and maintenance requirements. While hardwood might provide a beautiful finish, it often requires more upkeep than synthetic options. Likewise, certain types of stone and concrete products can resist weather changes better than others.

Kevin often finds that a combination of materials works best in many Springfield homes. This can provide not only a rich and varied look but also the flexibility to use each material where it performs best. For example, stone could be used for high-traffic areas due to its durability, with wood or composite bringing warmth to seating or dining areas.

Choosing the right materials is crucial, as it can greatly influence the look, feel, and durability of your outdoor living space. By taking the time to consider your options, you can ensure your space will be enjoyed for many years to come.

Building your outdoor living area

Once the design is in place and the materials are chosen, it's time to bring your vision to life. This phase, while exciting, requires careful attention to ensure that the result aligns with the initial plan.

Overview of the building process

The building process can vary depending on the project's complexity. Typically, it starts with [preparing the ground](#) and laying the foundation, followed by constructing the main features, and finally adding the finishing touches like plants, [lighting](#), and furnishings.

When to DIY vs. when to hire professionals

Some parts of the project might be feasible to do yourself, especially if you have some home improvement experience. However, more complex tasks like electrical wiring, plumbing, or extensive masonry are often best left to professionals. Knowing your limits and when to call in experts can save time and prevent potential issues.

Common challenges and how to overcome them

Like any construction project, building an outdoor living area can come with unexpected challenges. Weather, material delays, or unforeseen site conditions can impact the timeline. Having a contingency plan and a flexible mindset can help navigate these obstacles.

Safety considerations during construction

Safety should always be a priority during construction. This includes everything from using tools correctly, following safety guidelines, and ensuring the site is secure from children and pets.

Kevin often highlights that, while it's exciting to see the project taking shape, it's important not to rush the building phase. Taking the time to ensure each aspect is done correctly can save future headaches and maintenance issues. It's also the only way to get things perfect!

Ongoing maintenance and care

After your outdoor living area is built and you've begun to enjoy it, ongoing maintenance becomes essential to keep your space looking its best. This involves regular upkeep and awareness of seasonal needs.

Routine Maintenance Tasks

These might include cleaning outdoor furniture, trimming plants, and ensuring structures are in good repair. Depending on your space's elements, you might also need to clean your [outdoor kitchen](#) appliances, maintain your fire pit or fireplace, or service your water features.

Seasonal Considerations

In Springfield and the Ozarks, the changing seasons require homeowners to adapt their maintenance routines. Spring might be a time for planting and refreshing your landscape, summer may require more frequent watering and protection from heat, autumn is usually for preparing plants for the colder months, and winter may involve protecting your space from harsh weather conditions.

Long-Term Care and Upgrades

Over time, you might want to upgrade or add new features to your outdoor living area. Perhaps you want to add an outdoor sound system, a pergola, or a built-in grill. Regularly reviewing your space and thinking about potential improvements can keep it fresh and appealing.

An outdoor living area is a living, changing space that requires ongoing attention. But this maintenance should not be a chore; rather, it's an opportunity to continually engage with your space, helping it grow and adapt with you. The pride and satisfaction that come from caring for your outdoor space make all the hard work worthwhile. Not into doing it yourself? We also offer [Landscape Preservation](#) so you don't have to lift a finger.

We've walked you through the process of creating an outdoor living space, highlighting the steps from the initial planning to design, construction, and ongoing care. The journey to create your own outdoor oasis might seem challenging, but as we've seen, it's entirely achievable with the right approach and a dedicated team of professionals by your side.

Our team, led by Kevin, is ready and excited to help you bring your outdoor living dreams to life. From crafting a personalized design that fits your lifestyle and preferences to carefully selecting materials and carrying out the construction, we'll be with you every step of the way. Whether you have a clear vision for your space or are just starting to explore possibilities, we invite you to [reach out to us](#).

Together, we can create an outdoor living area that not only enhances your home's appeal but also becomes your personal retreat in the heart of Springfield, and all of the surrounding areas

in Southwest Missouri. [Contact us today](#) to get started on the journey towards your dream outdoor living space.