

ASK THE DESIGNER: Ready for Summer

Getting your garden ready for summer

By Jean Bisnaire, Niche Decor

?Now that spring is here, I can't wait to get the outside of my house looking as good as the inside. Do you have any ideas for landscaping and tying it in with the rest of my home??

Feel free to send me your comments or questions to askjean@nichedecor.ca

First impressions are everything.

People often think that the signs of good design should be recognized the moment you enter a home. They want their guests to open the front door and be wowed by what they see. What people don't realize is how impactful it can be to let their personal style shine not just throughout the interior of their home, but right through the front door spilling out on to the porch, walkway, and into the garden.

The right garden accessories and plant species can set the tone for an incredible outdoor atmosphere. Our friends at Jack's Landscaping have given us some great tips on how to embark on your spring gardening adventure. Even though the weather is warming up a little, don't jump into things too quickly. Like all good designs, a little planning goes a long way. You want to make sure that there's no more chance of frost, which will kill young saplings. For this reason, the end of May or even early June is the ideal time to start your planting. This is the best time to plant new perennials or shrubs, it's also the best time to transplant making sure that your plants get plenty of water in order to grow successfully in their new location.

When it comes time for actual plant selection, try opting for plants that are native to the region. They are more beneficial for the environment and are more likely to thrive in your garden. Also, with the frequent water bans we see in summer, drought tolerant plants are a good thing to consider. Try Portulacas or Zinnias for continuous colour all summer long!

Once you've got your exterior looking great, bring that outdoor feeling inside. When inside meets out in the decorating world we see beautiful results. Shapes become more organic, colours become more natural and the overall feel becomes more zen.

Here are some of my favourite ways to marry the outdoors with your interior:

Colour

Keep your colour palette simple. Bold choices can add an unexpected pop of colour to any space, but having too many different colours can create a feeling of chaos and disorder. Yellow tulips scream spring and look beautiful when paired with whites and neutrals. White on white can be incredibly soothing. Try combining different types of white flowers for an eclectically elegant look.

Repetition

Repeat some of the elements you see outside, indoors to create harmony between the 2 areas. For example, use a similar fabric on your window treatments overlooking your garden as the fabric on your lawn chairs. Why not mimic the stone or wood you may have in a walkway or patio in your interior accessories?

Materials

Don't just stick to flowers. There are many ways to get that spring garden feeling indoors that go beyond the standard vase of flowers on a table. I love the mix of masculinity and femininity that is achieved by bundling lush branches together, or displaying leafy greens in a terrarium. Is pollen a problem for you? Don't worry, you can still achieve this hot look by hanging nature photography and using reclaimed wood pieces in your home.

Whether you're looking to enjoy your morning coffee surrounded by green refuge, or some well deserved time off after a hard day at work, Mother Nature can be the greatest source of design inspiration. Have fun with it, relax, and enjoy your spring garden oasis!