



Backyard Design Essentials

Tips to turn your backyard or patio into the ideal outdoor space for your family.

Whether you have a smaller patio or an extensive backyard, there are several things you can do to turn it into a comfortable, outdoor oasis. In this guide, we take a look at backyard essentials, like fencing, shade structures, and furniture, that can turn a piece of land into a welcoming outdoor space for entertaining and relaxing.

The Right Fence for Your Function

There is a myriad of reasons to build a fence around your yard – privacy, setting the boundaries of your property, keeping your kids and dogs safe, and keeping critters and nosy neighbors out. Technology, taste and necessity have created a variety of fence types, in both look and material. There are options to match nearly every consideration and functionality.

Before you choose your fence, consider your need for functionality, and preferences for security, privacy and maintenance.

Security

A good fence will keep the things you want in – and the things you don't out. Of course, the level of security needed for each situation is unique. If you don't want your small dog to escape, you won't need a giant, steel-reinforced wall. A basic board fence should do the trick.

Security is also about keeping things out of your yard – like critters. For example, if you live near a canyon, your yard is exposed to coyotes, rattle snakes and even the occasional curious mountain lion. Skunks, possums and rats roam many neighborhoods as well. If you live in an area where critters are abundant, you'll want to build a fence that is snug to the ground and tall enough to deter intruders.



Privacy

Hopefully, you like your neighbors. Perhaps they're helpful, friendly and you often spend leisure time with them. You may not, however, want to share every detail of your private life with them. As the old saying goes, good fences make good neighbors.

When choosing your fence design, make sure to keep in mind the level of privacy you want – and how that will impact the look and feel. Find a happy medium between privacy and style.

Maintenance

If performing upkeep on your fence sounds like a great way to spend your Saturday, you're likely not the type of homeowner to be scared off by a little maintenance. However, if you're the type who would rather spend Saturday at the beach, or just relaxing, you'll want to choose a low-maintenance material for your fence.

How to Choose Fencing Materials

Once you have an understanding of what you need your fence to accomplish, it's time to choose your materials. The most popular choices are wood and vinyl.

Vinyl and wood fences each have their own pros and cons, and both are a great option for any home. But in the end, personal preference determines which option is right for you.

Wood: Classic, natural and affordable

The benefits of a wood fence are undeniable. Wood is sturdy, affordable and versatile. It's also easy on the eyes. There are a variety of woods to choose from: Softwoods, like Redwood and Western Red Cedar, are lightweight yet sturdy, and very affordable. Hardwood fences, like Brazilian Ipe and Mangarais, add a touch of elegance and an incredibly unique look to your fence, sure to be the envy of your neighbors. Wood also offers a variety of shades, since it can be stained to match each homeowner's preferences.

Wood does, however, require ongoing maintenance. Since your fence will be exposed to the elements, wood needs to be stained and sealed every couple of years to keep up its fresh appearance. Depending on where you live (wood tends to deteriorate more quickly in coastal climates due to salt air) wood may require more frequent upkeep.



Vinyl: Maintenance-free and built to last

If you're looking for a set it and forget it fencing option, vinyl is for you. Though it is a more expensive option than wood, vinyl's durability and lack of required maintenance can actually make the total cost of ownership over the fence's lifetime similar to that of a wood fence. Some manufacturers, like Duramax, offer lifetime warranties on their vinyl fences. The only maintenance required for vinyl fencing is a hose. Simply turn your hose on, point and shoot. And unlike wood, which will expand and contract with temperature changes, vinyl stands up to the elements, be they rain, sun, wind or salt air.

While vinyl can't always emulate the same beauty of a wood fence, emerging designs – like DuraGrain – do a great job of recreating the look of traditional wood fencing, without all that maintenance. Vinyl fencing is available in a variety of styles, from the classic white picket to modern horizontal slats.



Backyard Shade Structures

A combination indoor/outdoor living space gives you the best of both worlds. Get the most of your outdoor space with a shade structure. Shelter from the elements isn't the only reason to build a cover for your patio – it will look great and increase the value of your home as well.

Get Inspired: Pergolas, Metal and Customized Kits

When it comes to building a patio cover, you're working with an almost blank canvas. Your only limitations are the size of your patio and whatever local zoning laws may apply in your area.

From pergolas to Japanese-inspired Zen gardens to creative combinations of wood and corrugated metal, the options are nearly endless. The more “creative” you get, though, the more time and effort you'll have to spend searching for the right materials and hardware, designing your blueprint and building your structure. If you have the time and the funds, great. If you don't, consider a customized patio cover “kit” as it's an affordable, beautiful solution without the extensive labor and planning required to do it from scratch.

Customize to Your Backyard or Patio

Patio kits aren't just out-of-the-box solutions. Your patio cover should reflect your individual tastes and needs. For example, the kits designed by J&W Lumber are constructed from the ground up, based on your needs, preferences, and dimensions. It's a process, driven by you. There are plenty of options, from wood type to level of shade.



Measure Your Dimensions

The first step in designing a custom patio cover kit is determining your space. Whether you have a concrete slab, a deck or even a flat space covered by artificial grass, you should be able to easily determine what you're working with. That's the beauty of a patio – the dimensions are easy. Once you have them, you can move on to the fun part - design.

Determine Coverage Needs

The Southern California sun is almost always shining. With a patio cover, you get to choose just how much of that sun you want to enjoy. From fully open beams, to lattice with 50 percent shade, shade cloth with 70 percent shade, to solid material full coverage, the sun is in your control.

Choose Your Design

The basics of patio cover design are pretty simple – posts and beams. However, there are numerous options for what those posts and beams will look like, from size to cut to materials to stain to hardware.

The kits created by J&W Lumber come in three different styles of wood and size, with varying options for hardware and stain. But your design is completely up to you. We can create a custom kit with whatever materials and dimensions you choose. So go out, get inspired.



Select Your Materials

The best wood options for patio covers are softwoods – [Rough Douglas Fir](#), [Redwood](#) and [Western Red Cedar](#). These woods are gorgeous, sturdy and insect resistant. Whether you choose a natural finish or [a stain](#), these woods will create the perfect indoor/outdoor space for your home. If you prefer a maintenance-free and long-lasting option, [Weatherwood patio covers](#) – which come in a variety of sizes, colors and styles – are a great option.

Pick Bracing and Hardware

Aside from their functionality of holding together your patio cover, braces and hardware are all about style. J&W Lumber offers four different milling options for braces, and a wide variety of hardware ranging from purely functional to classically ornamental. With hot-dip galvanized and stainless steel connectors, you'll get a stylish solution that stands up to corrosion over time.



Get Your Custom-Made Kit

You've chosen your materials, your hardware and your finish. Now it's time to put together your kit. J&W Lumber includes everything you need to construct your dream patio cover – pre-milled wood, hardware and project blueprints. We can also add in a [stain](#) of your choice and [Quickcrete](#) concrete mix to set your patio cover posts. If you've designed your own kit with special materials and dimensions, just bring in your plan and list and we'll get you set up. If you want a predesigned option, we offer three different patio cover kits:

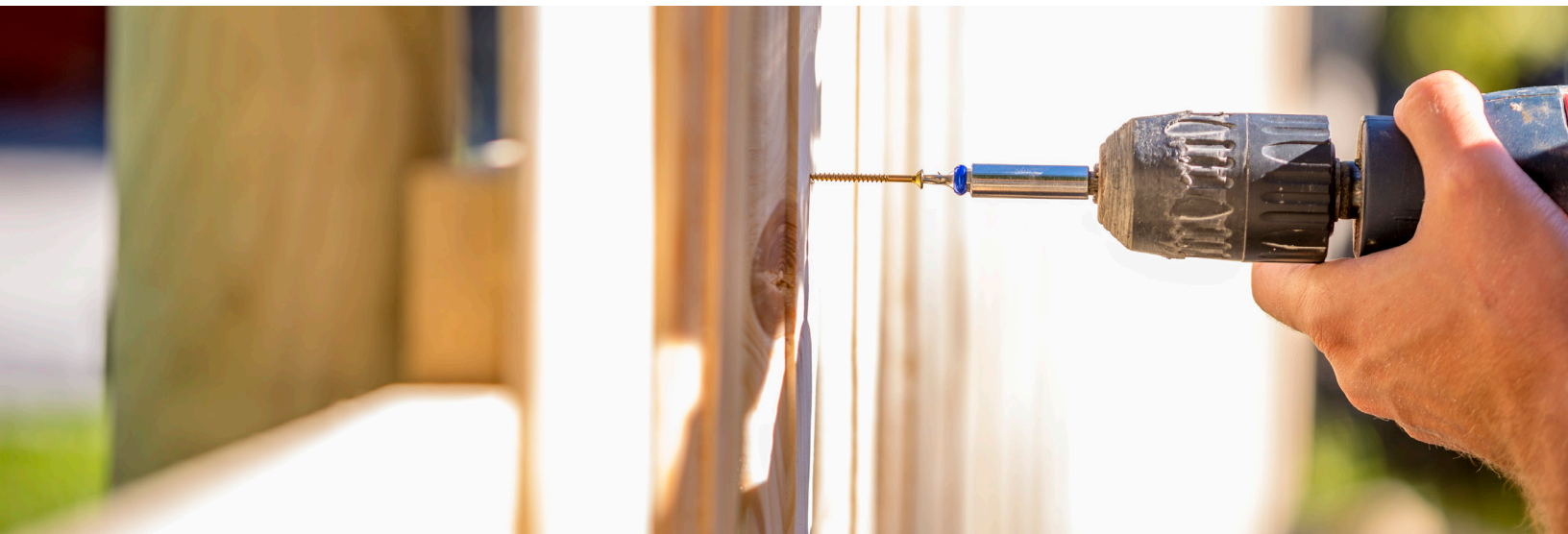
The Coronado: A light, open and airy style that provides both ample sun and ample shade. The Coronado features 4x4 posts with 2x8 wood beams.

The Catalina: Large beams, 4x4 posts and 2x6 fascia give the Catalina a defined, substantial and finished look. The Catalina is our most popular patio cover.

The Capistrano: Heavy beams and rafters with an undeniable architectural flare make the all-timber Capistrano a sturdy and gorgeous addition to your home.

Build Your Shade Structure

Your kit is ready to go. Now it's time to gather some tools and some helpers (offering pizza and beer is a good way to get friends and family on your construction crew) and get to work!



Backyard Furniture, Screens, and Accessories

You can put virtually anything on your backyard slab or patio area. But if you're looking for some inspiration, the following options are guaranteed to make your backyard a beautiful, functional and livable space.

Patio Furniture

Creating a functional outdoor space for entertaining can be as easy as simply adding furniture. From picnic benches to rocking chairs to Adirondacks, there are plenty of options for functionality and style. If you're looking for a "natural" style of furniture that blends the beauty of the outdoors with your space, beautiful Redwood and Cedar furniture offer durability, quality and beauty. Easy to assemble, these pieces give your patio a rustic feel.

If you're looking for a maintenance-free option, composite material furniture is for you. Trex, a leader in composite decking, offers a variety of furniture collections varying in style to fit any taste – all of which come with a 20-year warranty.

Patio Heaters

Don't huddle inside because the nights turn a little chilly. A portable, free-standing patio heater allows you to enjoy your patio long after summer and sundown. With a patio heater, you'll have a year-round space to entertain, relax and enjoy the great outdoors.

Fire Pits

Turn your patio into a gathering spot and backyard campsite with an outdoor fire pit. Roast marshmallows, tell ghost stories or simply relax and listen to the crackles and pops of burning logs. With multiple options – from outdoor fireplaces to portable fire pits – you can find the right option and style for your needs and tastes. You can even turn your fire pit into a BBQ with flip-over grates. Available in easy-to-build kits, you can install a fire pit that will last for years in a single afternoon.



Barbeques

There's nothing quite like the taste of grilled meats and vegetables, and nothing brings together friends and family like a good old-fashioned cookout. There is a large selection of barbeque grills from leading manufacturers, including PGS and AEI, that offer durability, style and unmatched cooking prowess. These grills, which are commonly used in golf clubs, apartment complexes and the country's finest restaurants, are built to last – and only available through specialty dealers, like J&W Lumber.

Concrete Countertops

Add a more permanent touch to your patio or backyard with a concrete countertop. Whether you use the countertop as a standalone structure, or as part of an outdoor kitchen around your barbeque grill, a countertop turns your backyard into a true outdoor living space.

If you're not familiar with building concrete structures, it's probably best to hire a professional. For those who prefer to build their own custom countertop, there are plenty of DIY concrete countertop products, including the [QUIKRETE Countertop mix](#).

Privacy Panels

There's a good chance that your patio or backyard is a bit “exposed” when it comes to privacy. Privacy panels can help you create a personal oasis in an otherwise populated area – and make it look great.

Manufacturers like [OUTDECO](#) offer a variety of interesting styles that are easy to assemble, easy to upkeep and easy to customize. The panels are made with Weathertex, a durable and sustainable material with a hardwood exterior that will give your patio a truly natural feel.

Eco-Style Screens

Like privacy panels, modular screens offer your patio, your pool or even an indoor room in your home a measure of privacy and beauty. Functional, elegant and modern, these “eco-style” screens add a touch of style and class to any personalized space – especially your backyard.

Constructed from a hybrid mixture of rice husks, rock salt and mineral oil, these panels are fully waterproof. Since the panels are modular, the options for design are nearly endless, allowing you to fully customize them to your personal preference.

Don't let your backyard or patio go to waste or sit unused. Maximize your living space and create a personal, functional living and entertaining space for you and your family.

If you're looking for more inspiration or ideas, visit www.jwlumber.com or visit our showroom!

Contact J&W Lumber Today!

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