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An attractive, functional outdoor living area can be one of the best features of the home, improving its appearance, increasing viability, and bringing pleasure to those who use the space. As more and more people retreat to their homes in search of relief from the fast pace of time, well-designed decks become preferred places to relax after work, entertain friends, and regroup with family. This article is about designing a deck, whether you're accessorizing an existing space or building one from the ground up. Many images accompany dozens of ideas on board, from timeless and classic designs to bolder, modern sets. Whether a new or improved outdoor space requires a deck depends on several factors: the site itself, the style and size of the house, the individual lifestyle and personal preferences and budget. And while the site may be a deciding factor in choosing the deck style and the budget can determine the number of amenities that can be included, other less tangible aspects should be addressed as well. Evaluating someone's lifestyle is a good place to start. Who will use this area and how many functions should they perform? Will the space serve primarily as a transition zone between the house and the yard, or will it serve as an indoor-outdoor room? Will the setting be an informal or formal, peaceful retreat, or a hub of activity? A family made up of toddlers, teens, pets and parents probably requires a different design than a couple who like to relax alone or have fun on a small scale. Personal taste is also an important issue to consider when planning an outdoor space – whether it's a preference for certain color spots on the floorboards or a particular style of railing to surround the deck. But a successful deck is much more than just a response to a particular place or need. A well-designed board integrates various elements into a functional and aesthetically pleasing whole that harmonizes with the house it serves and the courtyard that adjoins it. For example, materials may not exactly correspond to the façade of the house, but should complement it in style and mood. The goal is to create a uniform look that is balanced with different colors, forms, and textures to add interest and offset monotonous. The following pages offer a wide sampling of deck styles that serve as inspiration for the development and planning of outdoor living spaces. Portfolio of ideas rather than instructions, this article discusses the basic types of decks and presents a number of deck styles for both contemporary and traditional houses. For more decorating ideas away from home, see: Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Content When your deck ideas include steep up and down slopes, I know they are a little more difficult to tame than the finer ones, and multiple levels are one of the best solutions. Design-and construction-wise, gradually The level up or down climb is practical, visually exciting, and more in harmony with the natural environment. Since most houses are built at the top of the slope rather than at its base, most decks tend to start at a high level and continue down, sometimes as a straightforward split level, often as a cascade of several platforms. Of course, many houses fit on one deck at a high level, perhaps cantileered across the slope. High decks can pose problems, especially if they are large. They can shade the rooms below, and when someone from the bottom of the slope does it, they can dominate the house itself. Steep terrain usually dictates hefty understructure designed to withstand different soil conditions as well as to support the deck. Hiding these foundations from view with a grid, tod, or even bushes can give the deck and your home a more finished look. Advertising Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas If your site is level or just slightly bent, it might be a great idea to build an on-grade board. Whether they are attached to a house or freestanding, on-grade decks are relatively easy to design and build. They can be dimensioned and shaped in myriad ways. Since they rest quite close to the ground, they rarely require railings or stairs. On-grade decks are particularly suitable additions to single-story homes or those with low profile, where a raised or multilevel deck can look out of place or overwhelm an existing structure. Some on-grade decks are designed to sit in one plane with the ground, but their direct contact with the ground requires materials that are impermeable to decay, such as a pressure-treated lumber or non-wood product such as PVC (polyvinyl chloride) vinyl. However, most of the patterns are slightly elevated above the surface of the earth to compensate for uneven or oblique soil, and to allow proper drainage and air circulation. Advertising Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Freestanding Decks are great ideas for freestanding outdoor elements such as terraces or landscaping, as their materials and designs can be easily customized to blend or contrast with others. Wooden decks lend themselves beautifully to combinations with the many types of masonry and stone found in terrace structures such as bricks, cobblestones, and crushed rocks. When colors, shapes, and textures harmonize, the board and its immediate surroundings often become a unified outdoor space, each flowing into another. Contrasts, on the other hand, can be used to set different areas apart and help define activities. Here, the deck could fit comfortably into the overall landscape, but deliberately contrast with the nearby lawn or the more distant terrace. As an extension of the house, detached decks should have some connection with the house itself, whether it is an informal gravel or bark path, a more formal walkway or a bridge or platform. In a large courtyard or remote the freestanding deck may not be in the direct field of view of the house, but it should look like it is only at arm's length. Advertising Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas When implementing deck ideas, you may come across dilemmas associated with outdoor living. These can be solved by multi-level decks. They can climb or knock down a steep or rocky slope to turn an impossible place into a useful one. They can be shaped into a progression of space-saving platforms to make the most of awkward or cramped outdoor areas or arranged in a number of broader levels to give a large uninteresting yard a new focus. By adding built-in seats, planters, places for sun and shade, and perhaps even a water feature, multilevel decks can become more popular living spaces than rooms inside. All boards look their best when they have a uniform look. In particular, multiple decks may seem uncomfortably busy if they lack continuity of materials or design. Repeating the detail of the railing, platform shape or bench style will help tie the different levels together. Advertising Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Multilevel decks are not always employed to solve web problems; often serves as an improvement on both the house and the garden. Often, multiple levels are designed as an integral part of home architecture to expand buildings and your deck ideas into the natural environment in a gradual and enjoyable way. Sometimes they prepare the ground for a particular style of landscaping or act as bridges or connectors in the landscape. The very large deck has a warmer appearance when divided into levels and is usually in better proportion to the range of the house. Built-in planters and seats can be incorporated to help signal a change in level, and if properly positioned, they can even take the place of conventional rails. Multiple decks also fit interesting patterns that can be repeated at other levels - changing the direction of floorboards on stairs, for example, shaping corners on a diagonal or implementing horizontal railings rather than the traditional vertical design. Advertising Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas For a house that is built on a practically level site, getting outdoor living space can be a fairly simple matter; an on-grade deck that lies in one plane with the ground or a concrete or stone patio might just be the right idea for the deck. But few places are perfectly flat, and the solution always requires a deck that is lifted from the ground on the column system. The term raised is quite broad, because it includes almost all types of decks that are not built directly on the ground. The elevated deck can swim about a foot above the stage - maybe just enough to keep the deck floor on par with the back door threshold. Or it could extend a few meters from the ground to be on the same level as the indoor room, then Step its way down the slope. The raised deck can be a free-standing structure in the yard or a wrapped element attached directly to the house. Decks built near the ground usually require a fairly simple support system. Larger or more complex decks, as well as those that sit above the ground, require a substructure designed for bearing stability and load. Advertising Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Contemporary houses often express a visual drama that is lacking in more traditional styles. Deliberately devoid of ornament and finges, many contemporary home and deck design ideas focus instead on integrating lines and form into striking compositions. In this design - the architect's own house - strong vertical and horizontal surfaces are softened by a curved wall, which is reflected in the curve of the midlevel deck and railing. Liquid lines of metal railings bear a nautical theme inspired by the pond, which sits near the base of the deck. Advertising Open frame metal rails and clear plexiglass inserts upper deck walls allow unlimited views of the surrounding trees and vegetation, whether sitting, dining, or soaking in the spa. Plexiglass also serves as a safety measure to keep children and their toys safely under control. The nautical theme also influenced the color scheme of the design of the house and deck - gray driftwood on the walls, a darker shade to accentuate the upholstery and railings, and conductive blue-gray on the deck. For more decorating ideas away from home, see: Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas page that is open for panoramic views provides great opportunities for ideas that call for orientation and styling of the house and its deck to take advantage of the magnificent views. The clean architectural lines and large expanses of glass that characterize many contemporary houses allow for virtually undisturbed views from indoor living spaces, and when there is room for decking, the pleasure extends into nature. Since the boards have flexibility in location, shape and size, they can be easily custom made to fit where they work best. When undisturbed views are a priority, one solution is to design a series of levels that spread down and away from the house. This arrangement allows those sitting inside and on the upper floors to look across and behind the areas below, usually without visual intervention of furniture or railings. When a site allows a class or slightly elevated deck, another solution may be to build a wide platform that uses low benches and planters to ensure safety while maximizing both near and far views. Advertising Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas As suburban populations grow and homes adapt to smaller plots and other constraints, the idea of building a deck comes into its own as a functional, enjoyable alternative to a traditional backyard. Unlike lawns most terraces, decks can run up to the door on the same level as the inner room, becoming a true extension of the home. They can watch lying on the ground, or set off on an individual course that creates their own landscape. Decks can also be made and completed in exactly the same materials, colors and textures as the houses that adjoin, bringing coherence to the entire indoor and outdoor space. The two-stage redwood deck pictured here was designed as a friendly takeover of an uninteresting but high maintenance yard that sat deep under the house and had little connection to the indoor living quarters. Stretching the width of the plot, the new deck includes amenities the former space could only dream of: an above-ground pool, conversations and dining areas, built-in planters requiring little maintenance, and trellis to provide afternoon shade and privacy from neighbors. Advertising Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Many houses built in the last 25 years included a deck in the original construction plan. While the deck was usually functional, the idea was ordinary in terms of appearance. The typical deck consisted of an ordinary rectangular platform lined with cot-style railings, which were usually projected from the rear façade and only ever included stairs to the ground. If that sounds too familiar, sometimes rebuilding is just what the deck needs to lift it from mundial to extraordinary. The dramatic deck seen here fits this simple description of Jane before it was rebuilt. She had no access to the backyard at all, and worse, distracted from the remarkable contemporary architecture of the house. The dynamic redesign of the board reflects the exact lines and clean sharp style of the building and connects the deck with the lawn. After a sloping plane, three levels make the transition from living quarters to yard a pleasant experience, with built-in benches and planters to accompany the train. Clear plexiglass railing inserts provide safety and allow unobstructed views of the surrounding countryside. For more decorating ideas away from home, see: Decorating Ideaspatio ideas deck may not be limited to all-wood design to complement a wood-clad house. One idea for an easy change in the appearance and mood of the deck is to change the material of the railing. A tubular rail, for example, can inject a hi-tech note and lend a more modern feel to the overall design. The 50s-era home here got a racy facelift with a redwood spare deck of high-lit railings made of steel-pipe and ended up in lush red. To give a fairly narrow deck a little more room for elbows, two triangular popouts were added along with a built-in seating area, eliminating the need for bulky furniture. The new French doors replace aluminum windows and allow access from three main parts of the house - the living room, dining room and kitchen. Series and landing separates various activities, such as dining or relaxing in the hot tub, and provides an easy way to the backyard. The painted redwood train at the bottom of the deck blends in with the existing house, while its diagonal pattern updates the appearance of the building. For more decorating ideas away from home, see: Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Whether due to the nature of the site or simply because the outdoor space is at a premium, there may be limited space for the deck. A spatial challenge like this requires creative solutions to your ideas on board. One approach that can work well with hard-to-reach or enclosed outdoor areas is a modular on-board system. The modular deck consists of sections pre-prepared in the shop (or garage) and then assembled on site. Often only the floorboard itself is a modular component, but stairs, seating and railings can also be prefabricated into sections that are useful for transportation and quick assembly. This versatile approach can also save on construction work and costs. Another solution to the dilemma of small space is to adjust the deck to a precise fit using all available inches. This could mean sandwiching a simple platform deck between a fence and a house or shaping a more complex design into a series of closely linked levels. Renovating a small bland area can also be the answer. For example, converting narrow back stairs and a concrete walkway into several wide landings with built-in benches and planters would still provide access to and from the house while promoting outdoor living. Decorating IdeasPatio Holiday retreats in the mountains are often tucked into rustic settings that are perfect for a variety of deck ideas. An abundance of trees, nearby wildlife, brisk starry nights, and an informal approach to life are part of an outdoor experience that you can enjoy from the deck. This redwood house enjoyed the mountain atmosphere, but originally built without a deck lacked functional outdoor space for the owners to enjoy the sights and sounds of the seasonal stream and small waterfalls that lay a short walk from the house. The place, although picturesque, was rocky, steep and closed. The solution was a two-level redwood deck that sits low to the ground and lowers the soft part of the glass to land near the creek. Connecting stairs, oblique to fit between the existing rocks and along the stone wall, seem to float as they gradually narrow and descend to the ground. Built-in benches and integrated railings have been designed in a bright, open style so as not to block external views from indoor rooms. For more decorating ideas away from home, see: Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas For maximum enjoyment and pure practicality, nothing can beat a deck that contains a few ideas for moving back and forth from the outside to the interior. S Access points also provide on-board flexibility in the way it operates and underline its role as an extension of the house and its living quarters. The deck, which is accessible from many areas, can reduce some of the wear caused by pedestrian traffic that would normally travel down the corridor, for example, and cut through the family room to get out. When two or three rooms open on board, the total space can be divided into informal zones that host different functions. Comfortable furniture can be grouped near the living room; the grill can be placed outside the kitchen and not far from the dining table and chairs. And when the design of the deck contains more than one level, each accessible from a different location, the outdoor space can be home to individual rooms focused on specific activities. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Looking to classic architecture is a great idea when working with boards. Architectural styles adapted from the classical orders of Greek and Roman design have appeared in American buildings since 1700. The early southern colonial settlements were decorated with colonnades that provided shade but were open to light and wind. Georgian designs included large entrances with a pediment roof supported by columns. Roman villas such as Thomas Jefferson's Monticello included outdoor walkways and pergolas. The Greek revival style became so popular in the mid-1800s that carpenters brought it into America's new homes. Today, architects continue to integrate classical principles into their designs – some boldly, others with just a legacy. Decks can do particularly well on the classics, too, whether it's maintaining the right proportions for the size and scale of the house, bringing balance or symmetry to the shape of the floor, or adding details to the top cover. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Artisan style architecture appeared in the early 1900s. It was a movement dedicated to bringing simplicity, beauty and honesty to building houses through traditional craftsmanship and materials. It had its strongest sequel in the American West and produced both large and small houses of various design, including the famous bungalow. This style tried to use wood expressively, exposing beams and shaping and fitting them together in bold but rhythmic lines. Many artisan designs have also adopted a comprehensive approach to the house and its surroundings, involving gardens and outdoor living spaces as a planned extension of the home - a common theme now, but not widely practiced in other styles of the era. In addition, a great interest in Japanese art and craftsmanship among craftsmen and architects brought a Japanese taste to many of these designs. Based on principles honored by American and Japanese artisans, the style synthesized into a comfortable hybrid that characterizes a number of houses built in newer For more decorating ideas outside the home, see: Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Building Deck often means taking into account the original idea of the house. The regional house relates to its setting more intimately than most, fitting not only on the site, but adapting to local geography and climate using materials that are native to the region and often includes styles that historically belong. American regional or folk architecture has evolved over the years as a sensible response to the climate and a place that has also taken advantage of any materials that were readily available. Wooden whipped-cream houses in New England had small windows and large fireplaces that helped minimize the cold; Adobe Designs southwest employed extra-strong walls to keep warm. The regional styles of the Pacific Northwest reflect the compound shapes, materials, and moods that are influenced by its diverse history and culture. Although the styles of the houses listed here are somewhat different, they react to local conditions in

a similar way. Plenty of decks suggest comfortable temperatures and sunny skies for most of the year, while large expanses of glass compensate for the cloudy period by having light and views of the interiors. They all have local western red cedar shed and decks ready to make the wood's natural beauty shine through. For more decorating ideas away from home, see: Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Consider the style of your home before adding a deck to it. For example, at the beginning of the 20th century, a number of traditional architectural styles were revived throughout the country. Many of these proposals were rooted in certain periods of history, both American and European. One of the most popular contemporary styles was the Tudor, usually a simplified version of the Elizabethan house and features a stucco or stone exterior, exposed semi-period beams and small leaded windows. In addition, the redwood deck here shows blends richly with the picturesque style of the Tudor home. The saddle structure above the French doors reflects the shape of the roof lines, its construction made of wooden frame is also a reminder of tudor characteristic dams. Neatly wrapped with redwood siding, the well-integrated deck design visually anchors the house to the ground and puts the presence on a sideyard that has been ignored before. Dark-colored surfaces tie to the lining of the house and shingle upper walls, giving the deck a more traditional look. For more decorating ideas away from home, see: Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Verandas, unlike decks, are usually associated with older houses and bygone eras, but many contemporary house design ideas integrate the front and back porches into the original plan as a way to expand the living space without adding another indoor room. With more and more families following an informal lifestyle and discovering the pleasures of relaxation and fun on the verandas are connecting decks and terraces as multifunctional indoor-outdoor spaces. And while verandas most often accompany traditional designs - shingle Victorians, Midwesterly farms, disparate ranches - they also found a place among more modern styles. Since the verandas are constructed as an integral part of the house, often sharing the same foundation and roof system, they adapt to the same conditions of the place. They can sit a-grade with the floor only slightly above the ground, or they can be increased the distance from the ground and attached to the yard with stairs. Like most attached decks, the veranda floor almost always lies on or very close to the same level as the inner room, making it easier to transition between inside and out. Unlike many decks, however, the porch usually remains on one continuous level because of the edges of the house. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Privacy screen is often a crucial idea in the deck plan, especially when neighboring houses sit too close for comfort or have a direct view of the deck. Screens can be goofy in appearance, for maximum privacy, or more open in design to allow light and air to filter through. When paired with the ceiling cover, they can create the impression of an outdoor room. The open construction of simple trellis offers a degree of privacy; however, when leaning on shrub or covered with vines, it can be as effective as a solid fence. Vertical screens are useful additions where the windy conditions or the angle of the sun overheats the deck from the side. Around the pool or spa, they can prevent leaves and dirt from blowing into the water and reduce the wind's cold, making the deck area a more pleasant place to use and easier to maintain. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Nothing can dampen ghosts more than a rainy-out barbecue – if it's fighting annoying insects that come rain or shine. The projected cover is a great idea for lightening the less desirable aspects of deck living while providing a pleasant breeze, sights and sounds. It is an ideal play room for children tied to a house on a rainy day and a welcome place to camp on hot summer nights. Projected verandas were common features of houses built earlier this century, especially in warmer areas of the country. Once the deck and terrace replaced the lawn as the primary outdoor living space, though, the steeded porch often gave way to other indoor rooms. The existing veranda can be easily projected; if sitting on the side or at the back of the house or near the kitchen, it can serve as a truly private outdoor room for dining or entertainment. Closing the part of the deck that lies near the house is another option and a way to enjoy the safety of screening just steps from the great nature. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Whether you think of soaking in a spa as therapeutic or simply fun, integrate the spa into the idea can be achieved with relative ease. Unlike swimming pools, the spa takes up little space and can be incorporated into small space decks tucked into a tight corner or narrow side courtyard. They are most enjoyed when located in a quiet place not far from the house, tinged in front of the wind and neighbors. Although the typical spa lies almost in one plane with its surroundings, it can be designed to rise above the floor, jacuzzi style. Despite the appearance, baths and hot tubs are rarely supported by the decking itself, usually rest directly on the ground or on parts of the supporting structure of the deck. Since they are not structural, the deck surrounds can be laid out in myriad ways to create dramatic floor patterns, highlight soaking areas, or simply echo the shape of the spa. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Refreshing, stimulating and fun for all ages, pools add hours of pleasure to outdoor living. Since pools are often the dominant element in the yard, the way they are surrounded can make the difference between just an adequate deck idea and just an amazing one. Due to its versatility, wooden decking is an excellent choice for all or part of the pool. Wood integrates well with other materials that are often found around the pool - tiles, bricks, natural stone - and decking can be designed to adopt almost any shape that the area requires. If the soil around the pool is uneven or oblique, wooden decking is sometimes the best solution. Generally speaking, the space should be at least the same size as the pool area (preferably larger) to allow enough space for a table, chairs, and various seating options. A shady place nearby to seek sun relief is desirable as well. The space, which covers a large area, seems friendlier as it splits to a level and is treated like a few outdoor rooms. Changing the direction and pattern of the plates can help to reduce even a large deck. By contrast, the space that must be comfortable in a tight spot seems larger when lined with built-in benches that take up little space but provide space to sit or stretch in the sun. For more decorating ideas away from home, see: Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas On a warm summer day when the kitchen feels like an oven, it's a great idea to cook on board. Even if the temperature is right, the outdoor grill is the perfect place for casual meetings and food with family and friends. Whether it's built into a part of the deck or located nearby, the grill/cooking center works best when it's not too far from the house - transporting dishes and food can be tedious - but not so close that smoke and smells can drift inside. It is also wise to place the grill distance from the overhanging limbs. This will prevent heat damage to the leaves and help with fire safety. Simple kettle-style units that use charcoal briquettes and built-in masonry construction work Well, gas grills have become a popular alternative. However, regardless of the equipment, extending the cooking area with counters, racks, storage and perhaps even a sink can be a real bonus for frequent entertainment. Even if the deck plan can not accommodate a mini kitchen, the addition of space for storing essentials such as charcoal and dishes, cooking outside can breeze. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Without ceiling shade, sunny decks can be unbearably hot in the summer months, and if sitting near the house, they can reflect heat into the interior. If the deck has large deciduous trees nearby or overhanging roofs, it's a good idea to have some shelter or shelter spell relief. The shielding structure should be designed to soften the sun's rays without blocking light, air or desired views from the deck. It should also be compatible with the style of the house and the size and scale of the deck they protect. Most overhead screens are made of wood – boards, slats or grilles – but can also be made of other materials such as bamboo or crafts. Canvas awnings and translucent plastic are also a good choice when elements - both rain and sun - interfere with the use of the deck. Overhead shelters can also serve as a privacy screen, obscuring the view from the rooms above or the building next door. When the plates are tightly laid out or covered with vines, the deck below can feel as closed and inviting as the indoor rooms. For more decorating ideas away from home, see: Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Basically a gazebo with an open roof, pergola is an excellent idea for providing a presence on a part of the deck or garden that lacks visual interest or highlight special features such as a spa or conversation area. Rafters and crosses that are so prominent in many pergola designs can also add height and weight to otherwise flat parts of the deck. Often, pergolas are intended to serve exclusively as decorative or architectural elements in the design of the deck. With a few minor changes to the open roof system, though, and perhaps the addition of a climbing vine or two, the pergola can become a dramatic overhead shelter. Pergola can also use a number of separate vertical structures visually connected with a strip of horizontal plates at the top. This elongated design works well to unite different areas of the deck, delineate the walkway, or give the impression of a covered passage from one part of the garden to another. When it is interwoven with greenery overhead, it can feel like a gazebo. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas In Victorian times, the most popular deck idea was a gazebo: an airy summer house or garden structure set well away from the main house, often on a hill where views were particularly pleasant. As was fashion, they were intricately stylized and decorated with complex worries. gazebos perform the same function and provide an open-air retreat. Although most modern gazebos are more easily styled than their predecessors, they often have the same traditional octa-sided shape, tower roof and decorative details. As a structure that complements both the home and the garden, the gazebo can serve as a more than attractive focal point or seating area with a view. It can function as a children's play room or a charming place for Sunday brunch. Partially enclosed, it could act as a dressing room by the pool, studio or storage space for garden tools. However, it suits your specific needs, the gazebo can bring old-fashioned pleasure in the yard. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Pro decks, which are raised more than a few meters above the ground, railings are essential safety features. They are also one of the more prominent elements in the deck plan and lend custom treatments and ideas that can improve the entire design. Although the well-known cot-style railing has great appeal for its basic, simple lines and straightforward construction, it can have its own effects with several variants. Narrow pipe pipes can replace the stairwell between the posts, for example, or the posts (the vertical part of the rail) can stop short of their usual height, leaving a hole under the highest horizontal railing, or a cap to give more open views when sitting. If the main goal is undisturbed views, the railing design can include plexiglass inserts, stainless steel cable or wire mesh shielding (welded fabric) - all safe, modern alternatives to traditional railings. If more privacy or less street noise is needed, the railing may take the form of a solid half-tiled or low lattice fence, possibly topped by planters. With a little planning and imagination, the choices are endless. For more decorating ideas away from home, see: Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Every package needs a place or two to sit, whether to read, relax after a long day, or chat with friends. And while grouping chairs can do the job nicely, built-in wooden benches provide an alternative idea that suits the look and mood of the deck. Built-in benches also consume less space, and when placed around the perimeter, they can free up parts of the deck for other activities. These practical accents can be used as focal points to show off unusual design or beautiful crafting. Or they can be styled to blend silently, allowing some additional features to take center stage. Since the built-in benches can not be pushed in or out of the sun, it is necessary to carefully consider their location. A good solution could be to place benches strategically in areas that receive both sun and shade at different times of the day. The well designed bench is comfortable and spacious enough for two people. If it's not deep enough, it will feel like an okouch rather than a A long, deeper than usual bench can serve as a platform for sunbathing, and with pillows is a great place to stretch for a nap. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas As opposed to stairs and railings, the basic ingredients for most decks, fireplace is an idea for accent deck, which is designed for pure enjoyment of outdoor space. Like a bonfire in the woods or on the beach that serves to warm hands and feet and stimulate friendly conversations between those gathered round, the fireplace brings warmth and conversation closer to home. The fireplace can be especially welcome when the evenings cool down or the days become brisk, which extends the life of the deck as an outdoor room. Fireplaces are often located on a piece of land near the deck and its activities. However, when integrated directly into the deck structure, fireplaces require careful planning. Due to their weight and also as a safety measure, the base should sit directly on the ground. It works best with on-grade decks; with an elevated deck, the base can be built to the desired height using concrete blocks or masonry materials. The fireplace should also be lined with a heat-resistant firebrick, although a more decorative brick or natural stone can be used for edging or edging. Finally, the sides of the fireplace should be high enough that the surrounding deck slabs will not be damaged or burned by fire. An alternative to the strange fireplace is a free-standing, metal wood burner. Often in the form of a bowl stands on its feet and can be placed on a protected surface. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas As rewarding and versatile as the deck can be, sometimes its expanse of wood needs a splash of color to brighten things up. Planters, built or standing for free, are among the simplest – and cheapest – ideas on how to dress the deck and visually tie it to the house and the rest of the landscape. Planters may be incorporated into the structure of the railings at the top of the post, the column connecting sections or as part of the railing itself. On a deck that sits near the ground, planters can be grouped together to follow the edge and provide a definition of the area. They can be positioned to mark staircases, indicate a change in levels and divide the deck into zones. On-grade decks can use the pot theme in yet another way, with holes cut into the floor deck to accommodate the plants and allow them to root directly in the ground. Planters bring more than color on board. With proper drainage and a little attention, annual and permanent flowers can provide a smell and flowers for a long time. Vegetables and fruits that grow well in an enclosed space, such as cherry tomatoes, peppers and strawberries, can deliver a little fresh summer products. Even in winter, small berry bushes in a pot can add seasonal color and cheer. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Built-in pots may be the best idea for a small deck, especially when paired with the built-in and maintained on a scale with a small area size. They can be grouped into a space-saving group on one side of the deck or with level changes that provide additional open space and improve traffic flow. Flower pot wall can be designed as a backrest for benches; its cap can also double as an improvised shelf to set the plate and glasses. Of course, large decks can benefit from planters, often without the restrictions imposed by smaller areas. Large planters can be especially useful as privacy screens when filled with tall or bushy plants or combined with vertical trellis. A pot of any shape or size should be made of wood that is resistant to decay and retains its good appearance over time. Redwood, among a handful of other species, is a popular choice for many deck projects. However, it is important to choose the right lumber class for this work. Heartwood, which is cut from the center of the tree, is strong and naturally resistant to rot, which can develop when wood comes into contact with water and soil. Each degree, which includes the heart in its name, such as the building heart or all-heart, is an ideal material for planters. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas For night activities on board it's good to have the right lighting to help with tasks like cooking and dining to make socializing more enjoyable, and to increase safety, especially on stairs and at the level of change. Often, the outdoor house lights will do their job, especially if the deck lies near the building; but for aesthetics and maximum enjoyment, lighting specially designed for the deck is a detail worth having. Low-voltage lighting is recommended on board, terrace or anywhere outdoors. It's safe - even wet or bare wires don't shock - economical running and relatively easy to install. In addition, there are a number of options among low-voltage luminaires that can suit any deck style. Surface/on-board lights are, for example, low-profile luminaires that can be attached horizontally or vertically to the wood surface, such as railings, stairs, flower pots or benches. Layer lights that evenly distribute light over a given area can be strategically mounted on the deck floor, at the top and bottom of the stairs and near the seats to illuminate the overall space. Headlights can be used in combination with other lighting to draw attention to the function of the deck design, such as a pool or spa, or to tie the deck area to the surrounding yard. In fact, as well as the universal decks that illuminate, outdoor lighting offers endless possibilities. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Whether central to the courtyard or simply drawing attention to existing landscapes, freestanding decks are another way to get outdoor living space. They can be welcome additions when the configuration of the house excludes the attached deck or when the ideal place - a grove of trees, close proximity or overlooking the garden - is at a certain distance. The freestanding deck is the perfect way to dress drach it, previously ignoring the corner of the yard by transforming it into a secluded haven for reading, a live playground for children, or a stage to display colorful ceramics and plants. Although the term freestanding may indicate a flimsy or temporary solution, separate decks are usually permanent accessories that meet the same design requirements as other deck types. The design can be as simple as a low-level platform floating just above the ground or as complex as a multi-level system of platforms and connectors that climb up or down a slope or stretch across the yard. Plain or fancy, however, detached decks can offer outdoor living at best. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Although wood has traditionally been associated with decks, it is a material that requires maintenance to be healthy and look its best. In a humid environment, wood can be exposed to decay; where it is hot, wood can crack and splinter from exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays. A deck which is not properly closed may host mold. Painted surfaces require additional maintenance. And the natural color of almost every wooden board disappears over time. One practical alternative to the disadvantages of wood is synthetic board material such as PVC vinyl. Weatherproof and virtually maintenance-free VINYL PVC records are durable, do not crack or crack and never need painting. This type of decking is available with a traditional or modern look and offers a variety of railing designs that can harmonize with different styles of the house. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas One of the most famous, attractive and practical structures for supporting plants on board and around it, trellis need a small introduction. Usually made of thin wooden strips nailed together in an open-wobly or mesh design, trellises display a fairly slim profile. They can be attached to the wall, separately on a solid base, or they can be used overhead as support for climbing vines and parasol. Trellises can also serve as a privacy screen or simple, cheap fencing to mask a utilitarian sideyard or distract attention from an unsightly view. Arbors, too, are usually built of wood and serve as plant supports. Unlike trellis, however, the gazebo is a freestanding garden structure with space underneath where you can walk, sit or simply tend to shadow-loving plants. A gazebo covered with grapes or blackberries can be a welcome companion to a vegetable or flower garden and a wonderful place where adults and children come together to reap the fruits. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Trees have a special place in the home landscape that provide privacy, shade and wind protection while adding color, texture and natural beauty. Extrusion of mature trees to create space for outdoor space, can solve the problem but create another one. Fortunately, the flexibility of wooden decks to adapt to different places provides the opportunity to include trees in their design. Unlike many terraces, decks can narrowly surround a tree without interfering with the root system or cutting off its air and water supply. However, the hole around the trunk should be large enough to allow further growth, especially if the tree is a young or fast grower. It seems that the benches and tree surroundings are designed for each other, whether separate benches sit near the base or one seat is encircles. The surroundings can also take the form of a low wall raised above the floor of the deck, wide enough for comfortable seating and often high enough to double as railings full of shadow-loving flowers and tiny shrub - if they and the tree require the same soil and water conditions. Decorating IdeasPatio Ideas Ideas

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