

## TRENDS

From 11

decks and patios compared to one year ago, according to the 2006 American Institute of Architects Home Design Trends Survey. They also reported spikes in homeowners opting for upscale landscaping, more outdoor amenities—such as pools, tennis courts, courtyards and gazebos — and setting boundaries for their yards with fencing, walls and bushes.

“The outdoor living boom has clearly moved from being ‘just a trend’ to a lifestyle,” said Susan McCoy, an outdoor living expert and president of the Garden Media Group, in a public statement. The Garden Media Group recently released its 2007 picks for spring outdoor trends.

With the increasing popularity of water-resistant furniture and appliances, practically anything goes for the great outdoors and is now built to withstand rain and temperature changes. In fact, some homeowners are even opting to place flat-panel LCD or plasma televisions outside. Some TVs even have a wireless connec-

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tion and are able to communicate to indoor cable boxes or DVD players.

The most popular items homeowners say they plan to add to their outdoor spaces this year include lighting units, gas grills, mosquito eliminators, outdoor fireplaces or pits, and patio heaters, according to a national survey by the Propane Education and Research Council.

Here are some other popular outdoor trends:

■**Fireplaces:** Make them the centerpiece to your outdoor living space. They also can provide some heat, if necessary.

■**Fountains and reflecting pools:** They provide tranquility to a backyard. Add small fountains in your garden or even a small stream running throughout the

yard — viewable from inside your home, too. To get a spa feel, some homeowners are even installing outdoor showers near their pool areas.

■**Kitchens:** Upscale gas grills or even brick pizza ovens are on the rise for fancy outdoor cooking. Some outdoor kitchens are even complete with sinks, ranges and refrigerators.

■**Gardens:** The Garden Media Group predicts 2007 trends will include gardens with colorful foliage plants, such as elephant ears, ornamental grasses and ire-sine. Small gardens are also “in,” according to GMG. Squeeze a small garden on your patio or rooftop, wherever there’s plenty of sunlight. Also, consider a trellis with vines to create a natural canopy for your backyard.

## BACK YARD

From 11

president of Nags Head Hammocks.

### Comforting touch

Hand-woven rope hammocks can provide body-hugging comfort. This tactile soothing feeling gives great comfort while molding to the exact shape of the user. Hammocks, unlike patio chairs, offer the ability for full body lounging and quilted hammock styles also provide a “floating on air” feeling.

### Comforting motion

Even before birth, movement has been known to be soothing. In a hammock, a gentle sway or rocking provides that element of motion. “Hammock accessories today include such items as a hammock rocking kit, states J. R. Pelletier, manager of internet retailer, TheHammockCompany.com. “With such a kit, movement can be provided even when a soft breeze is no where to be found.”

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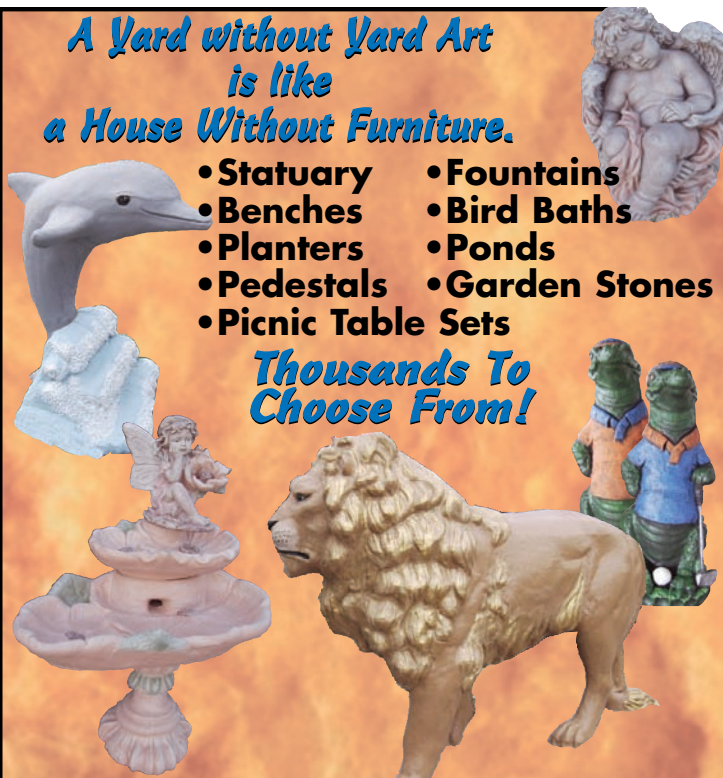


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