

DECK IDEAS YOU CAN USE

**CREATIVE DECK DESIGNS FOR EVERY HOME &
YARD**

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Introduction

No deck design is perfect for everyone. Every home, yard, and homeowner is unique. That's why your ideal deck is particular to you. It should accommodate the way you want to use and enjoy your outdoor space, and it should complement both your house and the particular contours of your yard. Design your perfect deck and you improve your home and the way you live.

That deck design begins with function. What do you want to use it for? Are you looking to revel in the liquid luxury of a spa tub, or make your pool more accessible? Do you love to cookout for friends and family? Or are you just hoping to create a platform for stargazing and unwinding after a busy day at the office? No matter what purpose you intend for the structure, that use will radically affect the design you choose.

Of course, decks are highly visible structures, so your deck design needs to also take into account the architecture of your home and the contours of your yard. Any deck should be a handsome addition to a house—or at least blend inoffensively—and should be a natural partner to the terrain of your yard.

Combine your ideal function and form in the deck design, and you'll wind up with your perfect deck. It may be a multilevel structure with comfortable sitting areas and a fire pit for large outdoor parties. Or it might be a single-level surface surrounding your pool, with a small outdoor kitchen off to one side to serve your penchant for cooking out almost every night in good weather. Regardless of what your perfect deck design entails, you'll find all the ideas and inspiration you'll need in the pages that follow.

Choose from among the different decking materials, select a configuration that makes sense for your house, your yard and your budget. Then pick from a bevy of features big and small—from hot tubs to built-in seating and planters—that will make the deck your own. It's true that no single deck design is perfect for everyone, but there is a perfect deck design for you. And it's waiting for you somewhere in this book.



The unmistakable beauty of real redwood provides the perfect backdrop for a luxurious outdoor spa. The large tub has been positioned as the centerpiece of the deck, a place where the homeowners can unwind after a long day, looking out over an expertly landscaped yard. The "clear heart" rated boards used here not only offer an unrivaled appearance relatively free of knots and imperfections, they also resist rot and insects.



Although they require more involved design and construction (and significantly higher cost), multilevel decks are great for serving multiple purposes with one structure. The upper level of this deck has been divided into a dining section and casual seating area defined by built-in planters. The spa tub is more naturally located on the ground level of the deck, where it's weight is more easily supported and the tub itself is visually linked with the pool.



One of the requirements of a successful deck design is that it merge fluidly with the structure of the house. This modest, ground-level backyard deck tucks in attractively next to a bump-out in the architecture. The white vinyl decking and railing not only provide low-maintenance deck surfaces, they also match the home's siding. Use low-growing foundation plantings, like the plants bordering the perimeter of this deck, to further blend a deck into its surroundings.



You'll rarely go wrong with a deck design that takes its cues from the shape of the house. The semicircular shape of this deck mimics the arcing brick bump-out, creating an inviting semi-circle that opens out into the yard. The deck visually nests into an inside corner, and the color of the composite decking perfectly complements the house siding and trim. An arbor overhead provides dappled shade.



A deck doesn't need to be elevated to be a powerful graphic element. This deck sits at surface level, creating a handsome area right next to a pool. Entirely waterproof, the composite decking is ideal for a site such as this, and the neutral color allows the alluring blue of the pool to dominate the backyard scene. Always have an idea of what you want to showcase—garden features, a pool, a view, or the deck itself—before you settle on a final deck design.



A multilevel deck is a great way to make a severely sloped yard more usable. The design of this deck features dual octagons that create a wealth of seating in a small amount of space. A handsome stairway provides access to the more level portion of the backyard. Notice that the more structurally important handrail on the staircase is supported with iron balusters, while the balusters on the top deck rail are impact-resistant Plexiglas.



Two-tone color schemes can spice up even the simplest of decks. Both colors in this deck—created of composite materials—complement the weathered siding on this coastal home. Rather than using a freestanding pergola, the pergola joists have been attached to the house itself, creating a better visual flow from the main structure out onto the deck.

If you live in the midst of nature, you can go one of two ways with your deck design: blend in or stand out. Here, the homeowner has chosen the former, opting to build a modest lower deck around an existing evergreen, and using synthetic decking the exact color of the home's siding. Sturdy, simple, built-in benches make this the perfect area to sit, reflect, and simply enjoy the forested location.



Use a poolside deck as a fantastic opportunity to go beyond the staid traditional stone patio surface. The deck around this pool spells luxury with a capital L, including two built-in pergolas that define and separate sitting and dining areas. The rest of the deck is left uncovered to allow for unrestricted sunbathing, and to exploit an incredible wooded vista on the other side.

Distinctive architecture calls for a distinctive deck. The signature look of this Tudor-style home would have been poorly served by a traditional front deck; this surprisingly ornate custom redwood deck answers the call perfectly. Curved and detailed balusters, a gabled pergola-style overhang, and lattice skirting all add to a Swiss-village look that enriches the home's exterior appearance. With fast-growing plants trained up the support posts, the newly installed deck fits so well with the house that it looks like part of the original construction.



A deck can easily be the star of the landscape. In this case, however, the stunning, oversized spa tub is the main character. The color of the deck was chosen to blend the space with surrounding rock-strewn jungle landscaping. The directional pattern of the boards was specifically designed to draw the eye toward the spa.





Use a deck to turn a beautiful view into a usable sanctuary. This bilevel lower deck transformed a large, densely forested, hilly backyard into a secluded outdoor hideaway perfect for recharging your batteries and entertaining well away from the pressures of the outside world. Subtle but effective wired-in lighting makes the space enjoyable night or day, and complementary browns in the border boards, level transition and field of the deck provide a measure of visual interest while blending into the surrounding



You can make even a small deck seem special with the right materials and architectural details. The designer of this deck achieved a stunning look with the grain and color of the ipe hardwood used for the decking. He accented that beauty with finely detailed post molding that replicates the appearance of milled footing.



Curving shapes are eminently pleasing to the eye, and often suit landscaped yards better than a square or rectangle would. In addition to creating a pleasing shape, the designer of this deck used white composite legs for the benches, making them stand up visually as well as physically. The benches also provide an obvious edge border, creating a more defined and formal area between house and lawn.



Designing a deck for your house often means marrying old and new to avoid the deck looking like it was tacked on. This older brick house is perfectly complemented by the new composite deck, which was designed as an extension of the existing porch. A border of lighter colored boards establishes the connection with the porch, and the color of the decking and railings work well with the brick facade.



Contrast can be a powerful tool in designing a deck. It's all about how and where you use contrasting materials and colors. The unique appearance of this redwood decking is set off by sparkling, bright white railings and stair risers. White is a great accent or detail color for most decks, creating a sharp, clean look against most types of decking. White risers are practical as well, providing a visual depth indicator to prevent tripping when the sky is overcast.



Pools and decks are natural combinations, and the deck can often serve as a whole-yard solution. Decking most of the backyard around this pool and spa provides a nice feel underfoot and lets the pool be the center of attention. The composite decking is waterproof, solving the problem of potential rot inherent in such a wet location.



Deck builders make use of modern technology in the form of hidden deck fasteners and low- or no-maintenance synthetic decking. This deck uses both, with curving fascia boards that attractively conceal the structural components of the deck, and a built-in privacy screen around the spa tub that will never need to be painted or refinished. This deck will look just as new years from now, and requires very little maintenance on the part of the homeowner.

Decking Materials

The biggest choice you'll make in designing a deck is the material used to build it. The decking material you pick will affect how easy or hard your deck is to build, how much time you spend maintaining it, how long it lasts, and the final cost. But perhaps more importantly, the substance you choose will—to a large extent—determines the deck's appearance.

You'll select from four basic options: pressure-treated wood; synthetics and composites; softwoods including cedar, redwood, and pine; and exotic hardwoods such as ipé, tigerwood, and cambara (often grouped under the general term "ironwood" for their hardness and durability). Start with the look of different options. You'll be living with the deck for a good long time, and it should ideally complement the colors and textures around your home. Your choice will also be affected by how much maintenance you're willing to do; a composite deck requires little or none, while a cedar or redwood deck may entail yearly staining and sealing to avoid deterioration. Of course expense will be a big part of the decision as well. These materials range wildly in cost. The difference between building a deck of pressure-treated wood (often the least expensive option) and high-end mahogany can be thousands of dollars.

Some choices will naturally pop to the top of list. Where moisture is a constant—such as around a pool, spa, or in a wet part of the country—high-quality composite decking will hold up well without rotting. If your yard is a densely landscaped naturalistic setting, the alluring natural appearance of a hardwood or softwood may make these your preferred materials. Choose the right decking material for your tastes and physical site, and you'll enjoy years of a great-looking outdoor recreation area with a minimum of hassle.



Homeowners choose redwood for its sheer beauty. Given the relatively high price, it's smart to design the deck to show off the wood's loveliness as much as possible. This small backyard deck showcases the material grandly, using it in the lattice skirting, decorative top rails and post caps, and layered fences on the far side. Those details—and the redwood color and grain—create a captivating appearance far out of proportion to the deck's small footprint.

Redwood



Redwood was the original decking material, chosen for its incredible color and enthralling grain patterns. There are 30 different grades of redwood but only a handful are used for decks. The better the grade, the fewer visible imperfections such as knots, and the more resistant the wood will be to insect and moisture-related problems. Look for clear all heart (shown above), clear, or clear heart grades, to construct a high-quality, lasting deck.

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