



# *back*yard RESORTS

## GUIDE



PRESENTED BY  
**ThermoSpas®**

# WELCOME TO THE BACKYARD RESORT GUIDE

***Have you been dreaming about redesigning your backyard but didn't know where to start?***

Well, there's no better way to begin creating your own personal Backyard Resort than with a ThermoSpas hot tub. ThermoSpas are not only the most relaxing and therapeutic spas available, they are also the most durable and are built with the highest quality components for a lifetime of enjoyment. With a ThermoSpas hot tub at the center of your private retreat, you can create the Backyard Resort of your dreams!

This guide will provide you with a number of ideas for enhancing your personal Backyard Resort with landscaping, seating areas, outdoor structures, water features, lighting, décor and more.

Let's get started by taking a look at the many great benefits as well as some important considerations of a Backyard Resort.

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# BENEFITS



## STRESS RELIEF

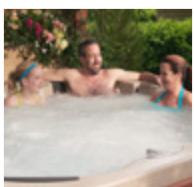
First and foremost, most people spend time in their Backyard Resort for **stress relief and relaxation**. Soaking in your ThermoSpas home spa, sitting on a garden bench listening to birds, or listening to a bubbling water fountain are just a few of the many ways a Backyard Resort can melt away stress and bring you some much needed peace – right in the comfort and convenience of your own backyard.

*The benefits of a  
Backyard Resort are  
practically endless!*



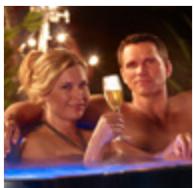
## HEALING & THERAPY

Beyond stress relief, a beautiful Backyard Resort can also provide a perfect environment for **healing the mind and the body**. ThermoSpas home spas, for example, are among the best sources of hydrotherapy (warm water therapy) and have even been honored with awards from the Arthritis Foundation. The warm, bubbling water and powerful, massaging jets relieve arthritis pain, back pain, improve muscle and joint flexibility, increase circulation, help achieve deep and recuperative sleep, and much more.



## FUN & ENTERTAINING

Many people also look to their Backyard Resort as the perfect place for having **fun with the family**. A Backyard Resort including a ThermoSpas home spa, play sets, games such as badminton or croquet, and fire pits for roasting marshmallows or making s'mores are just a few of the many great ways for the entire family to spend more quality time together. Backyard Resorts also make ideal locations for **hosting parties and entertaining guests**. Barbecues, pool parties, holiday get-togethers, and birthdays are all great occasions for your Backyard Resort!



## ROMANCE

Backyard Resorts can also provide a private, **romantic place** for couples. Whether enjoying each other's company in a ThermoSpas home spa, lounging in a hammock for two, or just quietly holding hands while stargazing, a Backyard Resort can bring you and your partner closer together. And with the growing trend of taking "staycations" instead of full vacations, you can save an immense amount of time and money right in your own Backyard Resort.

# CONSIDERATIONS

*Before getting started on creating a Backyard Resort of your own, there are a number of important considerations.*

## BACKYARD SIZE

First, the **size of your lot** will dictate how extensive your Backyard Resort can be. People with smaller yards must prioritize which features can and should be included in their space. Although many yards may not have enough room for large amenities like a swimming pool, there are still many ways to turn smaller yards into Backyard Resorts. For example, ThermoSpas hot tubs are available in a number of sizes and can easily fit into any backyard space. Other options like landscaping, seating areas, art, and even water features are also possible ways to turn a small yard into a personal retreat.

## RESOURCES

### CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

Another consideration is the **climate and geography** of the region you live in. Colder climates in the north may not be appropriate for some of the following ideas, such as Koi ponds. Also, colder climates will have a more limited seasonal timeframe since low temperatures may make it impossible to use and enjoy your Backyard Retreat during the winter. Warmer climates in the south offer a far greater opportunity for year-round enjoyment of your Backyard Resort. They also offer a wider variety of landscaping and foliage options, including many tropical plants and citrus trees.

Your **geographical location** also carries stylistic considerations. For example, those who live in New Mexico may decide to incorporate a Spanish theme into their Backyard Resort, while those living in Massachusetts may prefer a New England theme. On the other hand, you may want to do something completely different or unique, such as a Japanese style retreat.

For the do-it-yourselfer, there are a number of **resources** available that can help you plan, visualize and build your dream Backyard Resort. See the Appendix: Resources at the end of this guide.

### BUDGET

When beginning to plan, determine what your available budget is and what elements are financially feasible. But remember – your Backyard Resort can be broken down into **phases** in order to make it more manageable. For example, you may start with a ThermoSpas hot tub, and add other features such as landscaping or fencing at a later date. Many, if not most, Backyard Resorts are ongoing works-in-progress versus being finished all at once.

### WHO'S DOING THE WORK

Similarly, you will need to consider which elements of your Backyard Resort you are capable of **doing yourself** and which you will need to **hire a professional**. All homeowners are different in terms of physical capability, skill level, time availability, and number of helpers. Any of the following ideas may be a DIY project for one individual but require hiring a professional for another.



# LANDSCAPING

FLOWERS, SHRUBS, TREES & MORE

*Landscaping is one of best ways to dramatically change the overall appearance and environment of your backyard as well as beautifully highlight specific features like a ThermoSpas home spa. The well-thought-out placement of plants, flowers, trees, ground cover, rocks, paths, and more can instantly transform a stark, boring backyard into a beautiful sanctuary.*

## FLOWERS

Flowering plants are one of the most popular elements of landscaping for their dramatic range of beautiful colors, shapes and smells. Flowers are relatively inexpensive and easy to plant and maintain for nearly anyone and may be the simplest, yet most effective first step in creating a Backyard Resort. Bear in mind that flowers should be carefully selected according to climate as well as by annual or perennial type. **Annuals** such as geraniums, morning glories, and snapdragons bloom nearly all year while **perennials** like peonies, daffodils and chrysanthemums bloom for only a portion of the year.

Aside from the typical, commonly used flower species, many people also choose to incorporate **wildflowers** into their landscape design for variety and additional ground cover. Wildflowers offer extremely dramatic mixed colors and shapes with a very natural appearance – like a meadow – and are usually very low maintenance.



GERANIUMS



MORNING GLORIES



SNAPDRAGONS



PEONIES



DAFFODILS



CHRYSANTHEMUMS



**TREES** come in an equally wide assortment of species and offer many benefits including beauty, shade, and food. Some species commonly incorporated into landscaping for their **beauty** are flowering Dogwoods, Tulip trees, White Orchid trees, a variety of palm trees, and Japanese Maples.

**Shade** trees can provide just the right amount of shade on hot, sunny days making your Backyard Resort more comfortable and enjoyable – especially when relaxing in a ThermoSpas hot tub! Among popular shade trees, maples and willows grow well across many regions in the continental United States.

Trees offer a fantastic array of edible **fruits, nuts and seeds**. These treats are not only healthy, but are also a completely free (beyond the cost of the tree itself), ongoing source of food for you and your family to enjoy. Tropical and citrus trees such as orange, lime, and banana are all fairly easy and fun to grow in warmer climates. Other fruit trees, like the many varieties of apple, can grow in a far wider region, extending well into the northernmost areas of the country. Many people also choose to include edible varieties of nuts such as pecan, almond, and walnut trees. Before deciding on a particular tree, be sure to confirm that it is appropriate for your climate and has enough room to grow.



## SHRUBS, BUSHES & MORE

Shrubs, bushes, hedges, and other plants also offer a variety of benefits for a Backyard Resort. They can be used for **visual appeal, creating boundaries within a space, ground cover, privacy**, or even in some cases for **berries**. While the options are too extensive to be covered in this guide, begin by considering the purpose of each type in regards to your own needs, and then you can determine the specific shrubs and bushes to include in your landscaping.

Beyond the basics of backyard foliage, there are several additional options for the more adventurous ThermoSpas owner! Decorative **topiaries** – or even the more extreme art of Karikomi (shrub sculptures) – can add an air of elegance to any space. In the same way, **bonsai** and **cactus** varieties can add a very unique element to your space. And, although sometimes difficult to control, **ivy** and other climbing vines can add a certain amount of maturity and charm to your landscaping.



## GROUND COVER

Aside from the plant life in your Backyard Resort, there are plenty of options for ground cover. **Mulch** is a popular material that helps to lock in moisture and prevent weeds. Mulch is available at any home improvement store in several colors and in many types of materials from bark chips to recycled rubber. Unfortunately, organic mulches eventually discolor and need to be replaced. More permanent materials on the other hand, such as **gravel, river pebbles, sea shells, and lava rock** require little to no maintenance and rarely need to be replaced.



## ROCKS & BOULDERS

Large rocks, or even boulders, can also be easily incorporated into landscaping to create a more mature, natural looking environment. Apart from merely looking nice, these rocks and boulders can also be practical when used as seating.



## EDGING

To finish off your landscaping, consider delineating the borders of your design with **edging**. Edging has the same effect to landscaping as a picture frame does to a painting. Medium sized **stones, brick pavers, railroad ties, pylons**, and even **continuous concrete** are just a few of the possible materials that can be used as edging, but feel free to be creative!



## PATHS

One simple way to add visual interest to any Backyard Resort is by creating paths. Regardless of whether a path is actually practical or just for show, a path of any size will break up the ground surface area and make the entire space look more dynamic. And like edging, there are a number of materials to choose from.





# SEATING & RELAXING

OUTDOOR DINING, BARS, HAMMOCKS & MORE

*When it comes to relaxing in your Backyard Resort, it's important to have a comfortable place to sit, lounge or nap. And when spending time with the family or entertaining guests, you'll need to have plenty of comfortable places to sit, eat, or just hang out.*

## OUTDOOR DINING

There are a number of types of **seating options** available as stand-alone furniture specifically intended for the outdoors. Among the most common are outdoor dining sets that can be purchased from any home improvement store, discount superstore, or even some grocery stores. These sets usually cost **less than \$200** and are typically made from weatherproof aluminum and tempered glass. Some are also conveniently equipped with a shade umbrella in the center and are perfect for family meals on a deck or patio. Some of these dining set manufacturers have additional pieces that can be purchased separately or as a match set, including reclining chairs and lounges.

## OUTDOOR BARS

Adding an outdoor bar with several stools to your Backyard Resort is always a big hit. Outdoor bars can be simple and make use of a cooler to keep drinks cold. Or, more elaborate bars can include a dedicated refrigerator and even plumbing. Outdoor bars are commonly themed, for example tiki bars, to be even more fun.





### BENCHES

Outdoor bars and dining sets are usually located fairly close to the house. For seating at greater distances, consider adding benches or swinging rockers in more isolated parts of the yard. These provide a quiet place to sit and relax.



### PICNIC TABLES

Also excellent for family fun are picnic tables and seating around a fire pit for roasting marshmallows. Picnic tables offer plenty of seats for family barbecues as well as for larger gatherings and parties. Picnic tables can be purchased as a kit and assembled at home, or easily built from scratch.



### FIRE PITS

Fire pits typically require some kind of seating to be set up. Simple lawn chairs may suffice for this, but also consider a more permanent, built-in seating area to surround the fire pit.

A photograph of a white garden arbor with decorative columns and a curved roofline. It is situated in a lush garden setting with a large bush of pink azaleas in the foreground. A paved walkway leads towards the arbor. The background is filled with dense green foliage and trees.

# STRUCTURES

OUTDOOR KITCHENS, GAZEBOS, FENCING & MORE

*Many homes are built with decks, patios or lanais. While these are all a great start, a Backyard Resort can go even further with the addition of several other kinds of structures.*

## OUTDOOR KITCHENS

An existing deck or patio can be supplemented with a dedicated outdoor kitchen with **built-in grill**, and **countertop space** for meal preparation. Outdoor kitchens seamlessly extend and blend your indoor living space into your outdoor space, creating a comfortable, natural flow to your home.



## PERGOLAS & GAZEBOS

Other structures such as pergolas and gazebos also help transform your backyard space into a **living space**. Pergolas are perfect over a ThermoSpas home spas or outdoor kitchen, and provide a comfortable amount of shade while preserving an open, natural feel. The addition of flowering vines can also help to make it appear more elegant and mature. Similarly, gazebos add both old-world charm and practicality with built-in or added seating. While cost and space-restrictive to some, gazebos are one of the most impressive and beautiful structures for a Backyard Resort.

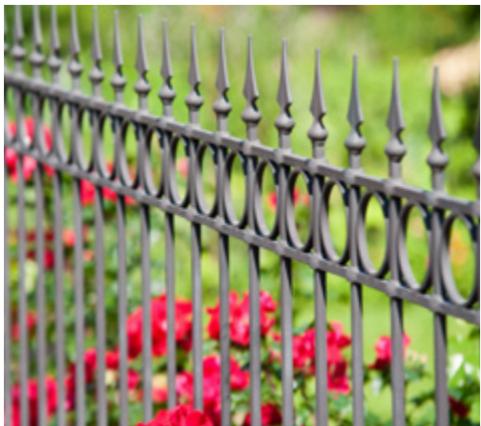


## FENCING

Fencing is a simple type of structure that can radically alter the appearance of your backyard. Beyond simply surrounding the perimeter of your yard for privacy, fencing can also be used to create **private areas** within your space. Plus, fencing can be utilized as **décor**, with decorative iron work, intricate lattice or tropical bamboo to help create the perfect mood for your Backyard Resort.

## EVEN MORE

Of course, for those who wish to go even further, there are several other types of structures to consider. Adding a **trellis**, **archway** or **arbor** (especially dressed with flowers or vines) can make an already beautiful yard even more lovely. For those with small ponds or streams, a small, decorative **bridge** can also be a gorgeous addition.





WATER  
SPAS, FOUNTAINS & MORE

*The calming and healing effects of water are undeniable. Whether it's soaking in a ThermoSpas hot tub or napping in a hammock near a bubbling fountain, water has a profound ability to calm us. Adding a water feature to a Backyard Resort takes it to another level: a sanctuary.*

## HOT TUBS

The bubbling, warm water of a ThermoSpas home spa offers a perfect way to **relax** in your Backyard Resort. And when **healing or therapy** is needed, ThermoSpas also offers deep hydrotherapy and can help relieve a number of physical ailments including headaches, insomnia, arthritis, and many more.

ThermoSpas come in a wide variety of models, sizes, and shapes that can easily compliment any backyard space to become the **centerpiece** of your personal retreat. Plus, ThermoSpas offer more jets than any other manufacturer and are fully customizable with numerous color, cabinetry, stereo, and lighting options to create a unique spa that's perfect for your needs, lifestyle, space, and budget.

And since ThermoSpas require less maintenance and are manufactured with only the highest quality components, you'll be able to enjoy relaxing in your hot tub in your Backyard Resort for many years to come.



## FOUNTAINS

Another simple way to incorporate a water feature into a backyard space – even a small space – is with a water fountain which can be purchased from most home improvement stores. Fountains are available in a variety of **designs** and **sizes** and can be filled with a standard garden hose. Most fountains require an electrical outlet for the pump, though solar options are also available.

## PONDS

For those without naturally occurring bodies of water in their space, pond kits are available though they may require an electrical outlet for a pump or filtration system. These kits are intended to merge **seamlessly** into your landscaping and appear to be a natural body of water. Many of the larger kits are also appropriate for **koi**, a decorative type of carp that look like large goldfish.

## WATERFALLS

For those who appreciate more extreme landscaping, it is possible to install larger scale water features such as cascading waterfalls. Generally speaking, a project of this magnitude requires hiring professionals and can be somewhat expensive.





**LIGHTING**  
PATH, POLE & MOOD LIGHTING

*Enjoying a Backyard Resort oftentimes extends into the evening hours. Without daylight, we are in need of other light sources – first and foremost for visibility but secondly to establish mood.*

### PATH LIGHTS

Path lights are very practical lights that can be purchased and installed by almost anyone. Path lights come in two main types: **solar** and **low-voltage**. Solar powered lights are self-charging and require no additional wiring to the home's electric. Low-voltage lights are generally brighter than solar, but must be plugged into a home power outlet.



### POLE LIGHTS

Similarly, pole lights are decorative lights that can illuminate a **large space** but requires digging a shallow trench and running a power cable to your home. Pole lights can be placed nearly anywhere and look especially nice near larger items such as gazebos or a ThermoSpas hot tub.



### MOOD LIGHTING

Mood lighting can turn a simple space into a rich, warm inviting space. **Candles** are perhaps the easiest and least expensive form of mood lighting. **String lights**, also known as café lights or fairy lights, create a very casual mood and are ideal when entertaining guests.





DECOR  
ART, URNS & POTTERY



*As with your home's interior space, you can design and decorate your outdoor space in a variety of ways to your own individual tastes to truly make it your own.*

## ART

One popular addition to a Backyard Resort is art, especially **statues** and **sculpture**. Subjects like angels and cherubs and Greco-Roman columns can lend a romantic, classical feel to any outdoor space. For a more light-hearted or fun atmosphere, there are a number of humorous garden statues, colorful garden knick-knacks, and garden elements inspired by modern art.

Another possibility lies in repurposing **unused** or **antique elements** such as wagons, wheelbarrows, and even old doors or wrought-iron gates. The décor of your Backyard Resort is a fun and creative way to personalize your space.

## URNS & POTTERY

You can also supplement natural landscaping with potted plants. **Decorative pots** range in styles, colors, and sizes and make it possible to move and change the arrangement of your plants as you see fit. Placing potted plants near the home's entrance on a deck or patio also helps to blend the indoor living space with the outdoors. And don't forget, potted plants are a great way to adorn or highlight other backyard elements, such as a ThermoSpas home spa.





# WILDLIFE & PETS

BUTTERFLIES, BIRDS & MORE



*With the addition of landscaping and water features to your yard, wildlife will naturally follow.*

#### **WILDLIFE**

Flowers naturally attract a variety of animals. Some particular species of flowers such as Liatris and Delphinium are commonly planted specifically to attract **butterflies** and **dragonflies**. Others, like Honeysuckle and Columbines, are intended to attract birds such as **hummingbirds**.

Water features are also known to attract animals. Besides intentional animals such as koi or birds, ponds and fountains can also attract frogs, geckos and even turtles.

Consider also incorporating **bird feeders** and **baths** to attract even more beautiful bird life such as cardinals and blue jays. Bird song is always a wonderful sound in a Backyard Resort!

#### **PETS**

A Backyard Resort can also be designed with family pets in mind. Dogs can be given a dog house of their own, a dedicated kennel, or even a fenced-in area of the yard, or “dog run”, to play.





FUN  
CHILDREN, ADULTS & FAMILY

***Backyard Resorts are a great place to have fun with friends and family, especially with a ThermoSpas home spa and any of the following fun ideas.***

#### **ADULTS**

For the grownups with a decent sized lot, a fun yet practical use of the space can be your own personal ***putting green***. For real turf, bentgrass is identical to professional putting greens but requires a significant amount of maintenance and upkeep. Synthetic turf is maintenance-free but slightly more expensive than bentgrass. A putting green provides a convenient way to practice at home and start reducing strokes off your short game!



#### **CHILDREN**

If you have mature trees in your space, consider building a ***tree house*** for the children. If you don't have an appropriate tree or construction isn't possible, pre-fabricated ***play sets*** are available from most home improvement retailers and discount superstores. Some kits come with all necessary pieces including hardware and lumber, while other kits contain only the hardware and require you to purchase the lumber separately. Most kits can be assembled in a day or two with a little help, and will provide years worth of fun.



#### **FAMILY**

Other activities that can be enjoyed by the whole family are ***croquet*** and, space permitting, ***badminton***. Another fun activity for nighttime relaxing and learning is creating your own private ***observatory*** for stargazing. Simply choose a dedicated spot for your observatory and set up an inexpensive amateur telescope or even install a permanent, more powerful telescope.





# BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

We hope you've found this guide useful! As you can see, regardless of the size of your yard or your budget, any yard can become a beautiful Backyard Resort. Best of all, there's no right or wrong way to combine the many ideas presented in this guide to create your own perfect, individual retreat. But regardless of which ideas you ultimately choose, remember that a ThermoSpas home spa is the ideal starting point for creating the Backyard Resort of your dreams!

## GET STARTED NOW!

**Schedule a FREE On-Site Inspection** and find out how **easy** and **affordable** it can be for you to begin **your** Backyard Resort with a ThermoSpas hot tub!

Call **1-800-876-0158** or visit **ThermoSpas.com**

# APPENDIX

## RESOURCES

Design Software:

### Free/Online

- Google Sketchup Landscape  
[sketchup.com/3Dfor/landscape-architecture](http://sketchup.com/3Dfor/landscape-architecture)
- DreamPlan Home Design Software  
[nchsoftware.com/design](http://nchsoftware.com/design)
- SmartDraw landscape  
[smartdraw.com/software/landscapedeck.asp](http://smartdraw.com/software/landscapedeck.asp)
- Better Homes & Gardens Plan-A-Garden  
[bhg.com/gardening/design/nature-lovers/welcome-to-plan-a-garden](http://bhg.com/gardening/design/nature-lovers/welcome-to-plan-a-garden)
- Artifact Interactive GardenPlanner  
[smallblueprinter.com/garden/planner.html](http://smallblueprinter.com/garden/planner.html)
- Eldorado Outdoor Design Tool  
[outdoor.eldoradostone.com/outdoor/tool](http://outdoor.eldoradostone.com/outdoor/tool)

### Purchase/Download

- Idea Spectrum Realtime Landscaping Plus  
[ideaspctrum.com/rls\\_plus\\_overview.php](http://ideaspctrum.com/rls_plus_overview.php)
- Artifact Interactive Garden Planner  
[smallblueprinter.com/garden](http://smallblueprinter.com/garden)
- Punch! Landscape Design Series  
[punchsoftware.com/c-14-landscape-design.aspx](http://punchsoftware.com/c-14-landscape-design.aspx)
- VizTerra  
[vizterra.com](http://vizterra.com)

## WEBSITES FOR INSPIRATION, EXAMPLES, HOW TO'S AND REVIEWS:

- hgtv.com
- diynetwork.com
- bhg.com
- about.com Landscaping
- backyardmakeover.org
- landscapeideasanddesign.com
- homeadvisor.com
- sunset.com
- houzz.com
- gardenideaspicture.us

## SOCIAL MEDIA/NETWORKING FOR INSPIRATION AND EXAMPLES:

- Pinterest
- Oh My Bloom
- YourGardenShow
- The Garden Geek
- Folia
- YardShare
- DigTheDirt
- Gardening Social Network
- Gardenology
- The Garden Network

## BOOKS FOR INSPIRATION, EXAMPLES & HOW TO'S:

- Backyard Design: Making the Most of the Space Around Your House by Jean Breskend
- Backyards: A Sunset Design Guide by Bridget Biscotti Bradley
- The Backyard Landscaper: 40 Professional Designs by Home Planners
- The Practical Step-By-Step Guide to Patio, Terrace, Backyard and Courtyard Gardening by Joan Clifton & Jenny Hendy
- Great Garden Designs: 40 Adaptable Plans to Create Your Ideal Backyard Oasis by Tim Newbury
- Designing and Planting the Backyard by Kathy Sheldon
- New Backyard Idea Book by Natalie Ermann Russell
- Dream Backyards: From Planters to Decks, Over 30 Projects to Create a Beautiful Outdoor Living Space by Reader's Digest
- Backyard Idea Book by Lee Anne White
- The Big Book of Backyard Projects: Walls, Fences, Paths, Patios, Benches, Chairs & More By Lark Books



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