

Title:

Eating, sleeping, storing and working Al Fresco

Word Count:

501

Summary:

Outdoor and indoor furniture require different properties in order to best suit and withstand their environment. Garden, patio and all other outdoor furniture can come in all shapes, sizes, colours, weights and materials to fit these needs.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

Outdoor and indoor furniture require different properties in order to best suit and withstand their environment. Garden, patio and all other outdoor furniture can come in all shapes, sizes, colours, weights and materials to fit these needs. They are also often available in matching sets to complement the outdoor environment.

The most common outdoor furniture pieces are patio tables with three to six chairs and a collapsible parasol. Other garden furniture includes rocking chairs, benches, arbors (latticed structures providing shelter and seating), storage boxes and benches, glider seats and plant boxes. When placed outdoors, certain furniture pieces can provide a very practical and attractive centre piece, allowing the user to enjoy their garden to its full potential during every season. For example, an open area in a garden that has little in it would benefit greatly from a table and set of chairs when the family wants to be outside enjoying the sun and not have to come indoors to have lunch. Outdoor furniture often comes with available material furnishings such as cushions for seats and parasols for a bit of extra shelter which can be removed and stored inside during harsh weather conditions. There is no reason why outdoor furniture can't be treated the same as its indoor counterparts.

The primary concern for consumers of outdoor furniture is that it needs to be able to withstand certain weather conditions and last throughout all seasons come rain or shine. The materials most suitable for such furniture are cedar

woods, teak woods, cast iron, stone, poly resin and aluminium. Each of these materials can be crafted into almost any shape with a variety of decorative features, but some are more labour intensive to create than others are. Cedar and teak woods are easily crafted and contain their own natural resins and oils which protect themselves against harsh weather conditions, rot, damp and insects. This makes them ideal for use in areas receiving a lot of rain. They do however require occasional varnishes (every 2-3 years) to seal the wood and prevent it from ageing or weathering.

Aluminium and iron furniture is also easily and cheaply manufactured. It is very sturdy and almost completely resistant to scratches, chipping and damp. However, the surface of aluminium can sometimes be damaged by acidic substances and it is only available in one colour.

Stone is the most labour intensive material to work with regarding furniture. It is heavy and tricky to sculpt into certain shapes, but the end product is very attractive, unaffected by weather conditions and requires no maintenance.

Finally, poly resin furniture is the most environmentally friendly material used for outdoor furniture as it is made from recycled plastic. It is incredibly durable, easy to mould into almost any shape or colour and is light in weight and cheap.

Whether natural or manmade, placed on a patio or outside a café, outdoor furniture always serves both a practical purpose and an attractive look, which is very easily incorporated into an existing outdoor décor.