

PHOTOS COURTESY OF REFLECTIONS WATER GARDENS

Transform your landscape into a tropical oasis with a sand-bottom pond and beach.

Escape to Your Backyard

HOMEOWNERS HAVE REALIZED that the “new normal” is a lifestyle that revolves around the home and landscape, and with so many regulations still impacting familiar travel and entertainment hotspots, the backyard has become the new destination for relaxation and recreation. Illinois homeowners have taken their vacation funds and invested them into creating inviting spaces in their backyards. Now may be the right time for you to create your own private oasis of tranquility.

The look of your oasis can follow your vision for using the space, the amount of space you have available, and what type of landscape elements you value most. Here are some good questions to start asking:

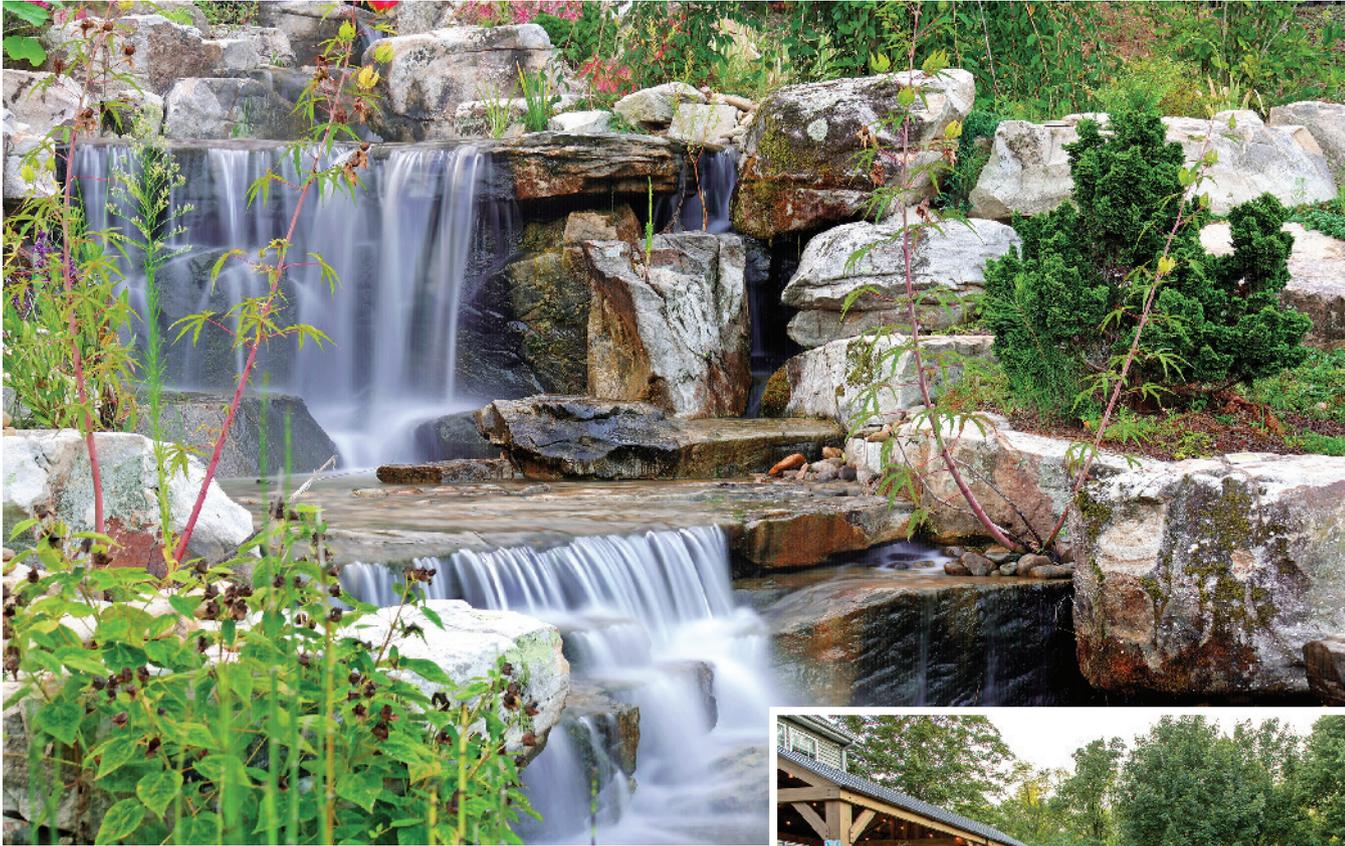
- Is this space mainly for me and my family, or will we be using it for entertaining guests?
- Do I prefer sun or shade?
- Do I like to be around wildlife, or do I prefer to keep my distance?
- Do I like lots of color, or do I prefer more natural earth tones?
- Does my ideal landscape look crisp, modern and manicured, or is it more rustic and natural?
- When I am planning an outdoor adventure with my family, do we head for the beach, the mountains, or the woods?
- Do I prefer peace and quiet, or do I like gentle sounds to soothe my spirit?

SOOTHING WATER FEATURES

When most people think of an oasis, they picture themselves relaxing under warm rays of sun, lounging in white sand, dipping their toes in cool water, and resting in a comfy chair with a thirst-quenching cocktail in hand. If rest and relaxation is what you desire most, incorporating a water feature into your backyard landscape may be the best way to enhance your enjoyment of your outdoor living space.

Water features transform the visual, auditory, and spatial qualities of the space surrounding them, and significant research has been conducted to examine how moving water generates negative ions which improves mood, stimulates better performance in the classroom or workplace, and is essential for high energy and a positive state of mind. People are instinctively drawn to water because it accommodates emotional, cognitive, and physiological needs that replenish our mind, body, and spirit.

Water features vary in size and effect. Small bubbling urns and frothy fountains add a soft and calming sound to your outdoor patio. Vibrant streams and captivating waterfalls create restorative environments and meditative moods. Elegant ponds and water gardens are full of vibrant and colorful plants and fish that dance and sparkle in the sun. Gorgeous chemical-free natural pools adorned with stunning lilies, crystal clear water, and luxurious white sandy beaches offer a clean space to sunbathe, swim, and stimulate your senses.



Streams and waterfalls make a large visual impact and provide soothing sounds.

You don't need a huge amount of space to have a water feature that makes a big impact and transforms your backyard into a haven of relaxation. A small, yet effective fountain could be no bigger than your office chair, and a pond with a waterfall might be as large as your sectional sofa. Of course the sky is the limit when it comes to water features and landscape, and if you have ample space, then perhaps you might consider a large recreational pond for swimming, boating, or fishing, a kind of water feature that offers all the appeal of a year-round vacation away from home but just a few paces from your doorstep.

No matter what size or type of water feature you choose, you should expect to do some seasonal maintenance throughout the year. Different types and scale water features will have different maintenance requirements, but typically in the springtime it will be necessary to remove debris, add products to clear up the water, and start the pumps and other mechanical equipment. During the summer and fall months you may need to fertilize and trim plants just like you would for a flower garden, clean the filter, and skim leaves from the water. When cold weather sets in, some water features can be left running while others must be winterized, drained, or covered.

Whatever your vision might be, your private oasis is well within your reach. Imagine gathering with family and entertaining friends in a truly unique and relaxing natural sanctuary without the stress of wearing a protective mask on an airplane for hours on end while traveling to your destination. Picture yourself creating lifelong memories with your children or grandchildren as they learn to swim, chase frogs and dragonflies, and cool off in the pure waters of a natural pool. Visualize the calmness and serenity



A natural pool is an eco-friendly swimming experience.

you'll discover after a long day of work as you unwind and recharge next to the tranquil sounds of a stream or fountain, while soft lighting accentuates the trickling waters as it dances between the rocks at nightfall.

It's been a tough year under quarantine. You're stressed, frustrated, feeling fenced in, and you deserve a vacation, but if you can't go to the beach, bring the beach to you and escape to your backyard. 

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