



## Outdoor *living*

A utilitarian backyard is transformed into an attractive space that invites full enjoyment of this vital extension of the home.

Spring has arrived and many homeowners are starting to dream about the day they are able to enjoy their backyards again. The owners of this Delta house certainly are; they have been wondering how to make better use of their backyard and integrate it with their indoor living.

The homeowners have lived in their house for 15 years and have never been happy with the way the yard functions. The current deck does not allow enough room for a table so they have a small table on a lower patio on the other side of the yard. This means a long trek from the kitchen or barbecue for any outdoor meal.

With the orientation of the yard, the current location for the table also means they are eating in the shade at dinnertime as the second storey of the house blocks the sun at this time of day. They are looking for a more functional layout that will allow for easy entertaining and enjoyment of the yard.

With these limitations and goals in mind, it's important to consider the yard as a whole and plan out different areas for different purposes to create the best flow and function.

The first step is to enlarge the deck so that it can be used for dining as well as barbecuing. Adding a glass railing gives great sightlines to the backyard and a more open feel to the expanded deck. Enclosing the area under the deck visually anchors the structure and will stop unwanted critters from making a home here.

A large dining table with umbrella can now be accommodated on the deck, which is adjacent to the interior dining space just off the kitchen. This allows for the interior and exterior dining and cooking areas to be convenient and close.

A wide staircase allows for greater connection between the levels, yet gives definition to the different zones of the yard.



A larger deck is used for dining as well as barbecuing.

The lounge area has comfy seating around a natural gas fire pit.

A lower lounge area is added with a natural gas fire pit for more casual entertaining later in the evening. Comfy seating allows for a relaxed environment, and longer gathering.

Both the dining and lounge areas have views to a new koi pond, where the homeowners can enjoy the gentle water sounds and watch the fish swim amongst the lily pads. A stone border defines the koi pond, and a stone wall provides an architectural backdrop for this feature. Greenery is added with pond plants in large pots, and vines softening the stone wall.

Large pavers are placed between the pond, lounge and stairs to the deck to connect the spaces. Allowing space for greenery between the stones softens the area and provides visual interest.

When creating effective outdoor living "rooms," it's important to carefully consider the flow and function otherwise the spaces may not

be used. Consider the connection to other outside spaces, as well as the connection to indoor spaces.

Sarah Gallop is a registered interior designer and principal at SGDI, a full service interior design firm specializing in custom homes and renovations. A gallery of her work may be seen at [sarahgallop.com](http://sarahgallop.com).

### DO YOU HAVE DESIGN DILEMMA?

Tired of a dark, dingy bathroom? Frustrated with a kitchen that doesn't function efficiently? House Call columnist Sarah Gallop would like to offer some assistance. Email your design dilemma, along with photos of the space in question, to [housecall@sarahgallop.com](mailto:housecall@sarahgallop.com). Watch for Sarah's design suggestions in future issues of Westcoast Homes & Design.



**BEFORE: TOO-SMALL DECK LOSES THE SUN.**