

ADDRESS

Designer tips for inviting outdoor spaces for fall

By **Melissa Rayworth** Associated Press, October 28, 2016, 3:58 p.m.



(KRISTINA CRESTIN)

Outdoor decorating often focuses on turning decks, patios, and porches into summer destinations, but some people love their outdoor entertaining space even more when the weather turns colder.

“Being outside with friends and family on a slightly chilly evening is about as good as it gets,” said Andrew Howard, a Florida-based interior designer. “I have a lot of great memories with drinks and good friends sitting around a fire. Often I don’t remember the weather, but more that we enjoyed each other’s company.”

Young Huh, a New York interior designer, agrees. “I love being outdoors as the air becomes crisp and cold,” Huh said. “The light seems brighter and glows more golden in the evenings.”

We’ve asked Howard, Huh, and Massachusetts-based designer Kristina Crestin for tips on the perfect mix of accessories, colors, scents, and firelight to make an outdoor entertaining space fall-friendly.

Small additions

Crestin has decorated her patio in shades of turquoise and chartreuse, which look cool in summer. Then she easily updates the look for fall by adding throws and other accessories in plum tones.

The same concept works if you’ve got a crisp blue-and-white color scheme: It looks nautical and cooling all summer long, but with the addition of throws in navy and camel fleece or woolen plaids, the space feels right for fall.

To make these transitions easier, keep a set of outdoor pillows specifically for colder weather, Huh said. Or change the pillow covers out for warmer tones as the weather cools. Consider your current color scheme, then get creative. Huh suggests patterns like a brown-and-white check, a tartan plaid in shades of brown, orange, and cream, or even orange polka dots.

Fall plants can also change the space. Huh loves yellow, orange, and red chrysanthemums in rustic baskets and uses hay bales at different heights to create displays for dahlias and chrysanthemums, dried corn, pumpkins, and other items.

Another powerful transformer: scented candles. Howard recommends them year-round; they can keep mosquitoes at bay in summer and scent the air in fall, winter, and spring. Cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and pine are great choices.

Table accessories can also signal the transition of seasons: “Fall is the ultimate ‘eat outside’ season,” Howard said. Opt for table linens and dishware in fall colors that complement your outdoor table and chairs. Huh said touches like bowls of apples with walnuts and pecans can finish the look.

Furniture

If you’ll be buying any new outdoor furniture at end-of-summer sales, look for pieces with thick, deep cushions. They “allow for more pillows and blankets,” Crestin said, and let you nestle deep for warmth and comfort on cold nights.

Another consideration when buying seat cushions and pillows for use in the fall: They might get sooty if they’re close to a fire pit, so choose items that are machine washable or easily replaceable, Crestin said.

She also suggests looking for flexible seating options that are durable but also easy to relocate if guests want to move closer to a fire or cluster together in cooler weather. She uses ceramic stools that are “heavy enough that they’re not going to blow away” but are easy to lift.

Firelight

A fire pit is often the most crucial piece of an appealing outdoor space in colder weather. “I would rather have a fire and a great conversation than worry about pillows and changing them by season,” Howard said. Even in Florida, “I put in fire pits all the time.”

Beyond warmth, a fire offers beauty and a focal point.

“An outdoor fire is like nature’s TV,” Huh said. “Wood fires are mesmerizing to watch, smell good, and give us a wonderful sense of coziness and well-being.”

Fire pits come in a wide range of styles and sizes. “I love a simple copper-kettle fire pit,” Huh said. “They look warm and lovely even in the daytime without a fire. Of course, if you can manage it, having a built-in stone fire pit can fit in both modern and traditional styles.”

Just remember to check municipal codes regarding fire pits.



On this backyard patio in Essex, deep upholstered seating and thick pillows create a space where guests can nestle comfortably while enjoying a fall evening. (KRISTINA CRESTIN VIA AP)

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