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Survey Shows Top Outdoor Living Trends for 2011

Hottest living and garden features include lighting, fire pits and low maintenance landscapes

WASHINGTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Homeowners want function, efficiency and fire pits in their outdoor space, according to the 2011 [American Society of Landscape Architects](#) (ASLA) Residential Trends Survey. The survey asked residential landscape architecture professionals to rate the expected popularity of dozens of different outdoor living and landscape features for this year.

For 2011, the top outdoor living features are some of the most basic: light, fire, food and a place to sit and enjoy it all. Overall, 96.2 percent of respondents rated exterior lighting as somewhat or very popular for this year, followed by fire pits/fireplaces (94.2 percent), seating/dining areas (94.1 percent), grills (93.8 percent) and installed seating like benches or seat walls (89.5 percent).

While the most popular outdoor features reflect an enduring sensibility, the interest in modern technology like stereo systems (58.3 percent), Internet access (46.3 percent) and televisions (45.4 percent) adds to the growing trend of taking what we enjoy inside to the outdoors – up to a point. Only 10.4 percent of respondents thought outdoor sleeping areas would be popular this year.

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“Despite the economic climate, homeowners continue to reconnect with their outdoor space. However, expect many households this year to either phase in projects over time or carefully select fewer features,” said ASLA Executive Vice President and CEO Nancy Somerville, Hon. ASLA.

When it comes to landscape elements, efficiency and sustainability reign supreme. The most popular for 2011 include low maintenance landscapes (94.2 percent), native plants (87.2), water-efficient irrigation (83.1 percent), ornamental water features (81 percent) and food/vegetable gardens (80.3 percent). Other popular sustainability features for 2011 include permeable paving (77 percent), reduced lawn (72.6 percent) and rainwater harvesting (63.6 percent).

Additional information on residential landscape architecture, including high resolution images, can be found at www.asla.org/residentialinfo.

Outdoor Living Features (Percent rating somewhat or very popular for 2011)

Lighting – 96.2%
Fire pits/fireplace – 94.2%
Seating/dining areas – 94.1%
Grills – 93.8%
Installed seating (benches, seat walls, ledges, steps, boulders) – 89.5%
Weatherized outdoor furniture – 83.6%
Counter space – 74.2%
Utility storage – 61.3%
Stereo systems – 58.3%
Sinks – 54.7%
Refrigerators – 50.2%
Wireless/Internet connectivity – 46.3%
Televisions/projection screens – 45.4%
Outdoor heaters – 44.4%
Showers/bathing – 42.1%
Outdoor cooling systems (including fans) – 36.7%
Bedrooms/sleeping spaces – 10.4%

Outdoor Recreation Amenities

Decorative water elements such as ornamental pools, splash pools, waterfalls, grottos, water runnels or bubblers – 84.7%
Spa (hot tub, Jacuzzi, whirlpool, indoor/outdoor sauna) – 75.9%
Swimming Pools – 69.4%
Sports/recreational spaces (tennis courts, bocce ball, etc.) – 47.7%

Landscape/Garden Elements

Low maintenance landscapes – 94.2%
Native plants – 87.2%
Fountains/ornamental water features – 81.0%
Food/Vegetable gardens (including orchards/vineyards etc.) – 80.3%
Organic gardens – 65.5%
Ponds/streams – 62.5%
Rain gardens – 56.6%
Xeriscaping or dry gardens – 56.3%

Sustainable Design Elements

Native/adapted drought-tolerant plants – 88.8%
Drip/water-efficient irrigation – 83.1%
Permeable paving – 77.0%
Reduced lawn – 72.6%
Recycled materials – 64.5%
Rainwater/graywater harvesting – 63.6%
Compost bins – 49.4%
Solar-powered lights – 48.8%
Geothermal-heated pools – 23.2%

Structures

Fencing (includes gates) – 85.1%
Arbors – 83.8%
Pergolas – 82.6%
Steps – 79.3%
Ornamental water features such as fountains or splash pools – 77.5%
Decks – 74.4%
Porches – 72.3%
Art (sculpture etc.) – 60.7%
Utility shed (tool shed, garden shed etc.) – 59.3%
Play structures (tree house, swing set, etc.) – 58.9%
Pavilions – 52.9%
Awnings, including retractable – 49.6%
Gazebos – 49.6%
Columns – 40.9%
ADA-accessible structures (ramps, bars, accessible shelving etc.) – 23.5%

About the Survey

The survey asked residential landscape architecture professionals about the estimated popularity of various design elements for 2011. The survey was fielded February 8 to 24, with 245 responding.

About ASLA

Founded in 1899, ASLA is the national professional association for landscape architects, representing more than 15,000 members in 48 professional chapters and 68 student chapters. The Society's mission is to lead, to educate and to participate in the careful stewardship, wise planning and artful design of our cultural and natural environments. Members of the Society use their "ASLA" suffix after their names to denote membership and their commitment to the highest ethical standards of the profession. Learn more about landscape architecture online at www.asla.org.

Photos/Multimedia Gallery Available: <http://www.businesswire.com/cgi-bin/mmg.cgi?eid=6632165&lang=en>

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Smart Multimedia Gallery

Photo

A fireplace atop an urban rooftop. Photo by Marion Brenner Photography, courtesy of the American Society of Landscape Architects. (Photo: ASLA)



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