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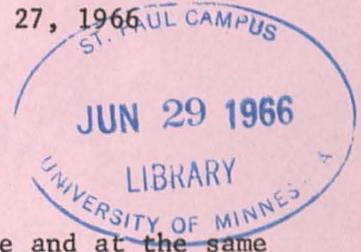
# Yard 'n' Garden



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PATIO PLANS

A well planned patio can extend the living space of the home and at the same time provide for comfortable entertaining out-of-doors. Many gardeners are constructing patios themselves and need some suggestions on proper construction.

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Patio construction generally is based on two types of materials: the soft materials such as turf, sand or loose gravel, and the hard surfaces, which would include the patio block, patio stone, concrete and decking.

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When the gardener begins construction, it is best to design the patio so it can be built in small units. Larger units are much harder to execute alone.

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The soft-surface type patios do not need to have a base for the surface. Where turf grass is used, the soil should be very resilient such as a sandy-clay loam, rich in organic matter. The grass should be a combination of creeping red fescue and Kentucky bluegrass, depending on the amount of shade where the patio is to be located. Graveled surfaces should be at least 3 inches in depth and may be laid over a plastic film. Sand surfaces need be only 2 inches in depth.

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For hard surface construction there should be a base of coarse sand or fine gravel 6 to 8 inches deep in order to prevent frost heaving and provide under drainage. The hard surfaces are then laid immediately over this base. Be sure to slope the patio to afford surface drainage as well. Half an inch of slope on a 10-foot width would be adequate.

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In constructing the patio, keep the size consistent with the number people to be using it. Generally 30 square feet per person are recommended for a number under five. For over five, the square footage can be reduced proportionately.

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It's wise to compute the size of the patio based on your family needs with enough room for expansion. For large group entertaining one area adjacent to the patio should be level so that tables and chairs can easily be set on the expansion area.

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