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Yard'n' Garden

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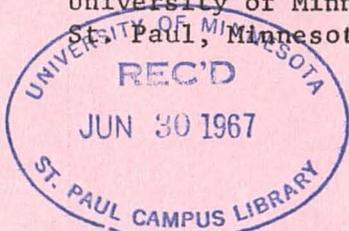


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PATIO CONSTRUCTION

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The patio can enrich out-of-door living for most Minnesotans. The patio can also be an economical way to expand the living space of the home. It can be used as a living room, recreation room, a place for sunning or a ready-made kitchen for out-door picnic and barbecue.

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The patio can be located anywhere within the private area of the landscape development. However, it should have some shelter from wind and sun during the hottest part of the day. Wind screen helps to extend the season both in early spring and in fall. Screen fences and shrubs for background help to provide shelter. It's best to have the patio near the house for convenience to the kitchen, electrical outlets and storage of equipment.

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Surfacing materials for the patio are grouped into two classifications - soft and hard surfaces. Soft surfaces include turf, loose aggregate gravel, washed sand or granite chips. Hard surfaces may be concrete (block or brush surface), stone, wood block or decking, compacted clay or gravel aggregates. These materials can be used in many patterns and textures. Combinations of materials are also popular.

Soft surfaces have the advantage of not requiring a subsurface fill or base. A disadvantage is the maintenance requirements for keeping them smooth, level and clean.

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The first step in patio construction is preparation of the subgrade. Drainage should be away from the house. There should be at least 1 inch of slope for each 10 feet of surface area. For hard-surface construction, 4 inches of sand should be used as a subfill to prevent frost heaving.

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With stone or patio block construction, sand can be used to fill the inter-spaces or they can be mortared.

Wood preservative is recommended for wooden blocks for decking.

Since the patio must meet legal construction standards, it is wise to get a copy of building codes for your locality before starting.

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