

10 Backyard Blunders and How to Fix Them

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You love your house, but your backyard—or lack thereof—could use an open-air overhaul. To help you create an outdoor oasis, we've identified 10 backyard blunders and how to fix them so you fancy up your outdoor space.

- 1. Your yard is more of a stone, rock and gravel graveyard.**
How to fix it: Instead of loathing your lack of greenery, embrace it by continuing the theme with a stone fireplace you can enjoy year-round. Choose a variety of flowers that flourish in rocks, decks and even in concrete crevasses, such as Columbine (a pretty perennial that blooms in two shades per plant), Geranium, Iris, Coreopsis and ornamental grass.
- 2. Your swimming pool and concrete deck is all-consuming.**
How to fix it: Planter boxes are the key. Choose a variety of free-standing containers—try clay for full-sun plants, plastic for all-year round, metal for drought-loving plants, or wood to allow plants to breathe. Remember, the closer the flowers are planted, the more water they'll need. Place them around the pool to create a garden oasis. Update your pool cover for a flat top you can walk on in the winter that will cover with snow and look pretty.
- 3. The sun always shines—and you and your plants can't take the heat.**
How to fix it: Purchase a large, retractable awning or shade covering that blocks the sun and UV rays but not the light. Choose one that affixes to the side of your house to cover an entire deck or choose a free-standing awning for a larger yard. In your sun-exposed gardens, look for cactus-family flowers. These bloomers don't look like cactus, but need hardly any water and thrive under constant sun.
- 4. Your outdoor space is a rooftop or balcony.**
How to fix it: Make up for lack of ground space by unleashing your creativity upwards and outwards. On walls, mount brightly painted coffee cans or small pots in which you can grow a variety of herbs to use in cooking. Create depth with a variety of heights and sizes of planter boxes, pots and containers. Purchase an extra tall post for your rooftop umbrella with a heavy iron base to keep it rooted in high winds. On a balcony, forgo the unnecessary umbrella for a ceiling trellis and let a Virginia creeper or Silver Lace Vine take root.
- 5. Your patio furniture is worn but you can't afford to replace it.**
How to fix it: Patio furniture sets can be pricey, so look for end-of-season sales, or discounts on odds, ends and discontinued pieces. Scour yard sales and antique shows for comfy and unique pieces in a variety of colours and texture you can mix and match to create an amazing outdoor setting. To fix up your existing pieces, pick up fabric remnants and create slip covers, cushions and tablecloths that will hide any flaws.

6. **You love to entertain but you don't have space for a large table.**
How to fix it: Create a French bistro setting with small, wrought-iron or wicker tables and chairs that can be arranged as necessary to accommodate many or few guests for a formal sit-down meal (add white linens for effect) or an impromptu cocktail reception.
7. **You have a raised deck, but no yard.**
How to fix it: Use the existing fence to create a secluded oasis by affixing wrought-iron hooks to hold hanging baskets. Then, intertwine white lights throughout the fence. Large, looming trees overwhelm a small space; instead, plant a Japanese or Amur maple in a large upright planter, which will add charm without consuming your deck.
8. **The kids no longer use the sandbox or kiddie pool, but the grass underneath is dead.**
How to fix it: Transform an old kiddie pool or sandbox into a makeshift garden. Set the pool on top of wood or bricks, then drill holes into the bottom for drainage. Fill the pool or sandbox with potting soil and plant shallow-rooted plants, keeping in mind the right plants for wind, shade and sun factors.
9. **Your yard lacks privacy.**
How to fix it: To quickly seclude your space, purchase large container plants to create a makeshift fence, or anchor two stepladders side by side and let overflowing flowers such as morning glory and passionflower roam wild. For a long-term solution, be sure to plant fast-growing plants and trees such as Leyland cypress or cherry laurel, which can grow 3 or 4 feet in one season.
10. **The grass is always greener in your neighbour's yard.**
How to fix it: Try not to compare your space to the one next door. Instead, focus on creating a backyard that you can maintain. And if the grass won't grow—or grows quicker than you can cut it—opt for a fish pond or fountain that can be low-maintenance with a high enjoyment factor.

For more tips on making your outdoor space more livable contact The Gia Lucchetta Team 519-824-9050