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HOMES

For Homeowners During Covid, It's What's On the Outside That Counts

Large, landscaped outdoor spaces have become a top priority during coronavirus

By Christina Poletto

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Covid-19 and long stretches at home have turned owners' attention to creating expansive, landscaped outdoor spaces. Keith Williams, co-owner of Nievera Williams, a landscape architecture firm in Palm Beach, Fla., says his business has been very busy. "Clients are focusing more on their gardens and how they use their exterior spaces, and just want a better and more functional experience altogether," he says.

One priority for clients, says Mr. Williams, is creating a space for items like pools, fountains and tennis courts. "Most of our clients have more than one home and are moving to one location and combining all of their favorite elements," he says.

Properties with gardens and outdoor gathering spaces are of particular interest to buyers. According to an October analysis by Realtor.com, single-family homes in the 100 largest metro areas displaying outdoor-related keywords such as garden, courtyard, deck, greenhouse and backyard sold 27%, or 12 days, faster than similar homes lacking those keywords. ([News Corp](#), owner of The Wall Street Journal, operates Realtor.com under license from the National Association of Realtors.)

Landscaping and gardens are investments that require year-round attention, says Mario Nievera, co-owner of Nievera Williams. "Many people who live within apartments in large cities are surprised to learn that you have to maintain and upkeep the landscaping," says Mr. Nievera.

Christian Douglas, a landscape designer based in San Rafael, Calif., suggests hiring the home's existing garden team or hiring a competent crew with a skilled supervisor. "The design and installation is the easy part," says Mr. Douglas. The critical piece, he says, is deciding "who is going to nurture and take ownership once it's all done."

On The Market: Five Homes With Lavish Landscapes



PHOTO: JIM BARTSCH

Santa Barbara, Calif. // \$8.95 million

This classic Montecito 1912 Spanish Revival estate has six bedrooms, five full bathrooms and three ½ bathrooms within 8,306 square feet of living space.



PHOTO: JIM BARTSCH

The property spans 2.72 acres, and features formal gardens as well as a meditation garden and Koi pond. The home is listed for \$8.95 million and is represented by Maureen McDermut of Sotheby's International Realty.



PHOTO: GABE BALAZS

Akron, Ohio // \$2.95 million

Originally commissioned by Harvey S. Firestone, Jr., son of the founder of the Firestone Tire & Rubber Company, this 1927 Neo-Classical French chateau features nine separate gardens with three fountains, a private arboretum, waterfall and large pond on 3.3 acres.



PHOTO: GABE BALAZS

Within the home's 13,927 square feet of living space, the single-family residence contains seven bedrooms, six full bathrooms and two ½ bathrooms. It is listed at \$2.95 million. Ross Lauria of Sotheby's International Realty is representing the property.



PHOTO: JAKE DONAHUE/PORTLAND PICTURE

Vancouver, Wash. // \$2.995 million

Terraced landscaping, a Zen garden with two extensive water features and a life-size Buddha statue, along with a covered patio and fountain are just some of the outdoor amenities on this 1-acre property in Vancouver, Wash., which also features 180-degree views of the Columbia River.



PHOTO: JAKE DONAHUE/PORTLAND PICTURE

The six-bedroom home is on the market for \$2.995 million through Lori Anderson-Benson of Re/Max Realty. It has five full bathrooms and two ½ bathrooms across 8,837 square feet of living space.



PHOTO: CHRIS MEECH

Greenwich, Conn. // \$8.21 million

For sale at \$8.21 million, the grounds of this circa 1900 single-family estate in Greenwich, Conn., span approximately 11 acres. According to Compass agent Robin Kencel, who is representing the property, the seasonal landscaping budget—covering spring through fall—is approximately \$30,000.



PHOTO: CHRIS MEECH

“I’m spending a lot more time during my showings walking around the outside of this house and walking the land with buyers,” says Ms. Kencel of the estate, which contains a

secret garden, cutting garden and vegetable garden. The main residence features five bedrooms, six full bathrooms and one ½ bathroom. A guesthouse on the property has an additional three bedrooms, two full bathrooms and one ½ bathroom.



PHOTO: BEN MOSS/THE JILLS ZEDER GROUP

Coral Gables, Fla. // \$5.495 million

A mature oak canopy and lush landscaping surround this two-story home, built in 2003 and located in the Snapper Creek Lakes Community of Coral Gables, Fla. The six-bedroom dwelling has 9,807 square feet of living space as well as eight full bathrooms and one ½ bathroom.



PHOTO: BEN MOSS/THE JILLS ZEDER GROUP

The resort-style outdoor areas feature a pool with a waterfall, hot tub and a private fire pit. The property is on the market for \$5.495 million through Jill Eber and Judy Zeder from The Jills Zeder Group.

Corrections & Amplifications

The guesthouse of the home in Greenwich, Conn., has two full bathrooms. An earlier version of this article incorrectly said it had one. (Corrected on Nov. 25)

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