



How to Make your Above Ground Pool Blend with the Surroundings

With a little thought and planning, anyone can create landscaping around an above ground pool that makes it look like part of the scenery. The key to effective landscaping is balance and continuity. With care your above

ground pool and its surroundings can look as beautiful as any in-ground pool. Use some of our suggestions below to improve the look of your above ground pool and create a more natural and aesthetically pleasing atmosphere.



Landscaping your surface pool may seem difficult, but you can make it fun and easy. The problem of course is that, being above the ground, it breaks the continuity of your general landscape. But because installing an above ground pool is less expensive than an in-ground pool, it is worth spending a bit more time and resources on above ground pool landscaping. No matter how you do it, whether you follow a simple theme or invent something more elaborate, you can create a landscape that will be a credit to your pool and garden.

Pool landscaping choices are limited only by your imagination. The focal point of your landscape design clearly has to be your swimming pool's shape, size, design and colour. After that, for a garden landscape that truly reflects your personality and taste, it is a matter of combining practicality with aesthetics. For example you might choose curved walkways and rounded flower beds. Or you may prefer a design that is entirely linear and straight. Your layout can coincide with the shape of the pool or be entirely contrasting. It can be minimalist or wildly eclectic. Simple designs can work surprisingly well. Or you can go to town and incorporate garden art, ponds, stone pathways and sitting areas.

We suggest you decide on a general theme for your garden and then continue along the same lines as you begin landscaping around the immediate vicinity of your pool. It is amazing how you can transform the look of your pool simply by adding a few shrubs & plants. If you want to be more ambitious you can incorporate walls, decking, paving and fencing etc. to blend with the overall appearance of your patio or garden.



Personal Considerations in Pool Landscaping

What do you most want out of your garden or patio space? Furniture and design will be defined by whether you mainly want to use it for reading, relaxing, playing or entertaining. If relaxation is your priority, then start with soft flower colours and comfortable loungers. If entertaining is your most important purpose, then coordinate everything around your barbecue, patio and lawn to accommodate your guests. Hunt for objects of art to define a theme and tone around your pool in tune with your personal tastes. They need



not even cost you any money. Old pieces of wood, rope nets, smooth glass and pebbles polished by the sea, shells, flotsam & jetsam, washed up on a shore somewhere for example. Things that remind you of special times. If you love the sounds of nature, consider wind chimes, bird baths or feeders. Ponds and fountains are also great for relaxing and soothing noise.

Environmental Considerations in Pool Landscaping

The scope of your pool landscaping plans depends a lot on the physical, topographical and architectural limitations of your garden. Existing slopes, retaining walls or raised decks may need to be incorporated and shaped into your design. Try to choose a spot for your pool and patio that is situated out of the wind. If there is already a nice view so much the better, or maybe you can create a pleasant background as part of your overall plan. Placing your patio and pool close to your house is usually the most practical.

Where and at what times do you receive the most sunlight? Are you most likely to use your pool in the afternoons and evenings? Sun exposure will not only effect the enjoyment of your pool but it will also determine plants, shrubs and awnings.

What Kind of Pool is Appropriate for Landscaping?

If you intend landscaping an above ground pool, it really needs to be of the solid permanent kind. It is a bit of a waste of time trying to landscape around an inflatable pool that needs to be taken down and removed with the seasons. Inflatable pools are also more subject to damages and tend to have a short life span.



Design Ideas for Enhancing your Swimming Pool's Appearance

Sink Your Pool Partly or Fully Below the Earth



Clearly the best idea is to sink your pool into the ground to create an in-ground pool for a fraction of the cost of a classical pool. In a nutshell all you do is dig a hole with a gap of about 1 foot or 300mm all round where the pool is going to be. Erect the pool at the bottom of the excavation and fill it with water in the normal way, to stiffen the walls. Then put some polystyrene sheets behind the walls, to protect them and provide thermal insulation. Finally you simply backfill with a lean mix of sand and cement. That's it, more or less.

Deck Around Your Pool

A very popular strategy is to use decking around your swimming pool. Landscaping above ground pools by building a deck connecting your home to your pool area is a beautiful and functional way to create balance and style. Sometimes different levels of deck are useful to allow your above ground pool to blend seamlessly into the landscape. You may only need to install



decking around just a portion of the pool, with a nice hedge, shrubs or bushes around the rest perhaps. A deck can be set with lounge chairs and potted plants and have steps linked to walkways that you've created. But do remember to leave enough room for service access to the pool and for filtration and other pool equipment.



Patio and deck materials are crucially important. Wood is the most common material used in decks. For pool patios, concrete, brick, cobblestone and marble can be used. The surface should be non-slipping, cool to walk on and aesthetically enhancing. Wooden decks work well with wooden trellises or privacy screens and matching flower boxes. A concrete pool patio matches better with stone fountains and concrete art.

Erect Your Pool on a Terrace

If your garden slopes away from your house then why not create a ledge or shelf or terrace, partly concealing your free standing pool when viewed from uphill, making it look as if it is lower in the ground.



More Suggestions

Feel free to use all or any of them in any combination to achieve whatever beautiful scenery around your pool that you desire.

Rocks, Gravel & Sand

Rocks such as granite, limestone and sandstone can also be purchased through a local garden centre or landscaping company. Try setting blocks up in a tiered pattern on one side of the pool and decorate each tier with potted plants and whimsical garden figurines.



An unusual but effective idea, especially if there are children around, is to use play sand to create a small “beach” near the pool. Buy from a local gravel pit or builders merchants who will deliver for a small charge. Put chairs on it, along with a table and BBQ. Complete the seaside theme with holiday umbrellas and toys. Used sensibly, this is also an easy and affordable way as well to keep your above ground pool clean and free from harmful debris or overgrowing grass. Make sure that such things as loose sand and grass clippings and water run-off do not contaminate the pool water.

Plants, Trees, Bushes & Shrubs

Installing your own plants, shrubs and trees around above ground pools is not a light task, but it can be fun and rewarding. Providing shade and cooler breezes is the mark of good swimming pool landscaping. Your pool can be more attractive, more enjoyable and even safer, by limiting pool access to areas that are highly visible. Your local nursery can provide you with expert advice on the types of plants and trees that grow best in your local soil and climate. Accent the beauty of your pool by allowing your garden plants and lush landscaping to flow around it. Impatiens and Ivy are great potted plants that can be placed around your pool and brought in during the winter to avoid having to replant every year. Hardy perennials that will continue to flourish year after year, include dwarf rose bushes, small evergreens. Begonias are hardy and beautiful and their root systems stay relatively small so that you can plant them next to your above ground pool without worry that the roots will damage the liner or walls of the pool.

Planting colourful trees and tall plants in big clay pots and situating them strategically around the pool can add interest and improve the landscape. You can space them out equally around the pool or clump a few together at one end. But don't include trees that are too large or messy, as this will make pool maintenance difficult. Cyprus and holly are also a good choice around an aboveground pool. Many above ground pool owners also put a 3'-4' rock border around the bottom edge of the pool.



When building a deck, planter boxes can be built in. They are an attractive way to add greenery around the pool. Artificial plants are another way to add color to a pool area. Planters can be a good choice for a seasonal pool. Large clay pots with tropical plants and small palms can be spaced around the edge as a quick landscape fix, and can be brought into the house during the winter.

Paths, Paving & Walkways

Lay attractive walkways to and around your swimming pool that will draw the eye toward the swimming area and create a surface for wet feet after swimming. Use paving in real or reconstituted stone, or cement stepping-stones in a variety of whimsical designs or dig out the area and install stepping-stones to create a path.



Fences & Ornamental Garden Features

Add a privacy fence around half the pool to give the landscape some structure. To be a bit more original, why not use logs or railway sleepers, on their sides or stood up vertically at different heights. Choose a side of the pool that looks out over your neighbours or your least favourite parts of your garden. This technique, coupled with trellises, vines, ivy hedges and a bit of planting is an attractive way to add greenery and give your pool a feeling of natural lushness.

A fence, combined with a good plant theme, will help give continuity to the landscape and do wonders to brighten up your above ground pool. But make sure the materials you choose compliment your overall exterior theme.

Adding outdoor furniture figurines, urns and statues that harmonize with your pool and the rest of your home, can also help tie the landscape together. And don't forget some imaginative lighting to complete the effect.

