

Paved Areas Around Home Can Be Attractive

"There I was -- an ugly, run-down sidewalk, just a dull, uninteresting slab of concrete -- until one day my owner hit me with a magic wand -- plang -- and made me beautiful."

"You may not have a magic wand, but you can make the paved areas around your home vital and attractive parts of your landscape, according to Michigan State University landscape specialists."

These experts tell us that there are several things to consider in landscape paving.

One of these is color. Does tiddling in with or accent the other colors in your present landscape? Or does it stick out like a sore thumb?

Texture is another important factor. Rough textures reduce glare and provide safer footing, but smooth surfaces are better for games or dancing.

Take a look at the different types of materials that are available. Ask yourself, what would each type cost? Is it readily available? Can I install it myself? Is it durable? What kind of maintenance will it require?

Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each type, and then you'll be able to decide what's right for you. Here are the basic choices:

ASPHALT -- is durable, fairly inexpensive and may be painted or colored. But it's hot in the summer and may become soft. It needs a stable base like sand, old concrete or gravel to prevent heaving in winter.

BRICK -- gives good footing, is available in several warm colors and is one of the easiest paving materials to install. It has the disadvantage of being hard to clean, and weeds or grass often grow between the joints. Some bricks tend to soak up water and often crumble after freezing. Check out this quality early.

CONCRETE -- may be given either a smooth or rough finish and is relatively low cost. It has a rather hard, "commercial" look, and is often flat in the summer. A pleasing effect can be achieved by allowing pebbles to become exposed on the surface.

FLAGSTONE -- is a high-quality, very durable material that is available in several colors, but its high cost limits its use. Broken concrete may be used as a substitute if it is readily available.

AGGREGATES -- low-cost gravel, crushed rock or limestone chips can give a pleasingly textured natural look to your landscape, but it's hard to walk on and weeds often cause problems. Try wood chips or garden bark as a substitute.

TILE -- is becoming more popular as an outdoor paving material. It gives a rather formal look and is easy to clean. Its main drawback is its rather high cost, and it usually needs to be set in concrete for stability.

WOOD -- is desirable as a temporary pavement treatment. Since native woods need pressure, they are subject to decay, insect infestation and weathering. Redwood from the west has a nice texture, and can last for many years.

Give your imagination a free rein -- and the paved areas around your home can become beautiful as well as functional.

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"Build Your Own Home," by J. James Hasenau, a second generation builder, is not a do-it-yourself handbook. Rather, it's a "guide for subcontracting the easy way." The book (Holland House Press, Northville, 91 pages, \$6) covers in detail the story of building a house from an experienced builder's point of view.

He describes where the lines are drawn between the tradesmen, their responsibility, and the next man's job.

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