

homefinder

ASK A REMODELER

Do some soul-searching before installing a new patio

Question: I'm thinking about adding an outdoor patio area to my home. What's the best material to use and why?

Answer: There are several outdoor patio materials to consider. Each has pros and cons depending on the use, your lifestyle and the overall effect you're trying to create. And each has a different price point to consider along with ongoing maintenance.

Common outdoor gathering areas are

created with decking, pavers, aggregate and stamped concrete, but before considering materials, consider how you will use the space. Do you want a large area for entertaining or a small area for the grill and a couple of chairs? Think about the overall plan. Are you phasing in an outdoor living area over a period of time, or just doing a small project for the short term? This thought process and your conclusions will help determine which material to use for your outdoor patio.



Steve Gray is the owner of Steve Gray Renovations.

Wood

Decking is one of the most common products used for outdoor areas, and green treated lumber is one of the least-expensive materials. But with low cost comes high maintenance. The screws and nails can pop and need replacing, and the wood needs to be re-stained about

every other year. Wood decks have a life span of about 10 years because wood rots over time.

Cellular PVC

Many homeowners opt for a cellular PVC material, such as AZEK that overcomes many problems associated with wood. Cellular PVC is a non-wood material that has a cell structure to give the look, feel and workability of actual lumber.

It costs more, but cost is balanced by low maintenance (no staining or painting) and longer life. Cellular PVC comes in many colors and styles and can be mixed and matched for interesting effects. Chosen and installed correctly, the life of a composite deck material is about 25 years.

Pavers

Pavers make a great hard surface and a sound base for an outdoor patio. They are available in many shapes and colors to complement a home's exterior, and homeowners can create any shape for an outdoor patio. With proper

maintenance, pavers have a long life.

Maintenance can include managing weeds that grow between the slabs and brushing sand over them to "seal" the cracks each spring. The sand base can erode and cause pavers to shift, but replacing them is easy. Because they are stone, they can become very hot in the sun and fade over time.

Exposed aggregate

Exposed aggregate is a pebble-like surface held together with polymers (clear or colored adhesives). It comes in a wide variety of colors and sizes and can be natural or man-made.

Because it's a solid foundation, it can crack over time if not properly installed. The surface must be power washed and sealed every year. Exposed aggregate complements any exterior and has a life of 30 to 40 years.

Stamped concrete

Stamped concrete is just that — concrete. Depending on the size of the outdoor area, stamped concrete installation can have a point of diminishing returns. For example, a small patio would not be cost-effective because of the expense of mixing and installing the materials.

Concrete comes in lots of colors and patterns and requires minimal maintenance with recommended sealing every two to three years.

★ Steve Gray, owner of Steve Gray Renovations, is a member of the Builders Association of Greater Indianapolis. If you have a remodeling question, e-mail it to indypubswriter@indystar.com, or mail it to: Ask a Remodeler, The Indianapolis Star, P.O. Box 145, Indianapolis, IN 46206-0145.

DREAM HOUSE



Photo / CARPENTER REALTORS

2006
year built

5
bedrooms

3
full baths, one half-bath

5,893
square feet

5
-car garage

ETC.

Home on 154 acres has hearth room, gourmet kitchen, butler's pantry, cherry library, four fireplaces, three covered porches and a basement with daylight windows.

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» **ASKING PRICE:** 1,421,000

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