

ESSENTIAL STRUCTURES

We asked: What's one of your favorite permanent garden features, and how do you work it into the garden?



Seating

Built-in seating gives you more furniture bang for your buck because it serves a dual function—as seating and as an architectural element. When it comes to sizing, I always tailor the seat for both fit and function: The client shows me their most comfortable chair, and we work based on that. It's also important to think about cushions—if they're to be used at all, when, how, and on what parts of the seating. Then we adjust thickness and materials from there.

Margie Grace

Landscape Designer
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Santa Barbara, CA



Fireplaces

A fireplace can transform a wide-open space into a cozy room. If you're going to add one, it's critical to consider wind. A slope is a good place to tuck a fireplace into; you can put plants around it to nestle it into its surroundings. We like to get the bones for our fireplaces, such as the smoke chamber and flue liners, from Buckley Rumford Fireplaces (rumford.com).

Barry Schneider, President &
Howard Cohen, Vice President
Landscape Architect
Surrounds Landscape
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Sterling, VA

Electronically Louvered Shade Structures

I like using these because they're versatile. When it's hot out, you can close them for instant shade. In the evening, when you open them up, the heat is released and you can see the stars. They are also conveniently watertight.

Harold Leidner

Landscape Architect
Harold Leidner Landscape
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Dallas and Austin, TX





Water Features

When siting a water feature, determine where people will gather and pause. This feature is on the way to the home's front door and is where homeowners will greet visitors when they arrive—so it has a captive audience. It's made of black Indian granite, which, surrounded by the plant material, is a motif familiar to anyone who's hiked in nearby Olympic National Park. And the feature is an example of the design concept for the property: native vegetation meets abstract modernism.

Paul Broadhurst

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 Seattle, WA



Pergolas & Arbors

Being plant fanatics at OVS, we often use pergolas and arbors as armatures for vines and climbing plants. They're a great way to introduce color, fragrance, and texture—or even an edible landscape on a vertical plane. This arbor in particular adds intimacy to the garden and also screens the neighbor's yard. The vertical oak pieces are 12 inches thick, so it's sturdy and gives the feeling of permanence.

Eric Groft

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Playhouses & Sheds

Nestled in the corner of a crescent-shaped border in my garden next to a dogwood tree, this playhouse is a whimsical getaway for my grandchildren. The surrounding dogwood blossoms, azaleas, bleeding hearts, and hostas add to the whimsy and make it feel hidden. Each detail is designed to enchant: reclaimed red barn siding for an antique look, the bell tower my brother acquired in Austria, the shingle roof covered in moss and lichen, the sign on the door that lists the names of my grandchildren, the Dutch door and window, and the antique painted chair on the porch. It's most charming quality? Adults are not allowed in unless personally invited by one of my grandchildren.

Peggy McDonnell-Walsh

Homeowner
 Peapack, NJ

