



## *Feeling the need to freshen up your home for the summer?*

HERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS – AND REASONS – TO DO SO.

### **Let nature usher in light and color inside your home.**

For interior décor, Houston designer Valerie Cook says “lighten up” by adding flashes of bright colors like lime, tangerine, sunny yellow and ecru.

“Ready-made throw pillows in bright colors are an easy and inexpensive fix,” she says. Slipcover sofas and chairs in light-but-neutral washable linen, then let your pillows be the pop of color.”

Browse Brocade Home’s Citrus collection of pillows for ideas: these damask-print pillows in iron-out velvets and satiny jacquards can amp their way into any décor.

### **Let nature be your guide for decorating outdoors.**

Years ago, outdoor furniture consisted of wood picnic tables and fold-out chairs made of aluminum and nylon webbing. You could still swipe or soil that stuff in a hundred different ways and, at the end of the day, just hose it down.

Nowadays, our taste in outdoor furnishings is gone decidedly upscale. As homeowners rightfully realize that their outdoor living areas could be just as stylish as the “in,” patios and poolside are filling up with couches, chairs and

lounges covered in a brilliant array of durable-yet-designer-inspired fabrics. Resistant to moisture, mildew and fading, these beautiful new fabrics are easy to clean and keep on looking great season after season.

Kravet’s Soleil line features sun-warmed shades of tan, green, cocoa and sienna as well as brightly colored stripes, patterns and solids. Duralee’s Pavilion Bella-Dura offers a collection of delicious colorways such as Key Lime, Watermelon, Papaya and Shrimp.

Robert Rutherford, owner of Rutherford’s Design in Dallas, carries both Kravet and Duralee as well as other lines. He says demand for such resilient fabrics is on the rise as people spend more time entertaining outdoors.

“With these beautiful new fabrics, you can extend the color scheme of your family room right outside to the patio,” says Rutherford. So many homes now have expansive decks, outdoor kitchen areas or overhangs by the pool, he says, and that’s where these swanky, stain-resistant fabrics shine. Sunbrella, a long-time manufacturer of sturdy outdoor fabrics, has teamed up with Tommy Bahama to introduce a new line of fabrics that showcase the retailer’s tropical, island-inspired motif. Available through designers, you can also find these fabrics at Calico Corners stores throughout Texas.

### **Make your space outside as comfy and entertaining as the inside!**

There’s been a trend over the last few years to take the kitchen/family room combo known as the “great room” and replicate it outdoors. And why not?

While the temptation may be to buy an umbrella table, some pot plants and be done with it, experts encourage you to put a bit more thought into what you want your outdoor oasis to be.

“We encourage people to think outside the box when it comes to gardening,” says Monique Capanelli, designer for Big Red Sun in Austin. “Use structural plants such as a shark skin agave or aloe ferox paired with a soft succulent like kalanchoe or echevarria.”

Capanelli also encourages the use of garden art. That could mean a sculpture, chunks of recycled colored glass, or driftwood.

The hot Texas summers mean you need a cool place to chill out, and a backyard pool is just the ticket. Like everything else in the outdoor environment, however, pools are becoming designer statements.

“White plaster is a thing of the past,” says Tricia Barnes, director of marketing for Riverbend Sandler Pools in Dallas. “We’re getting more requests for upgraded interior finishes as well as things like natural rock, tanning ledges, beach entries and water features.”



The backyard barbecue has always been a great place to meet, greet and eat. Today, however, families are realizing that an outdoor kitchen – with a grill, a sink, a fridge, electrical outlets for accessories and more – can be the impetus for a wider variety of outdoor socializing.

“I tell my clients to look at the backyard as an entertainment area as opposed to just a cooking area,” says Wayne Franks, owner of Outdoor Homescapes in Houston. “Put a flat-panel TV out there. The guys might grill steaks and watch the ball game. After that, the women blend up some frozen margaritas and watch *Desperate Housewives!*”

Franks says outdoor kitchens are getting more and more elaborate, with tortilla machines, pizza ovens and “power burners,” which can be used to blacken chicken or fish or whip up a stir-fry.

While some welcome the fresh air of spring, for others it means only one thing: allergies!

Dr. Ed Peters, an allergy specialist in Austin recommends keeping the windows shut and the A/C on, and taking a shower after outdoor activities like gardening or biking.

“When it’s nice outside, people love to open windows,” says Dr. Peters, “but that just brings in the tree pollen, a big problem for allergy sufferers in the spring.”

If you’re going to be sniffing, you might as well indulge: stock up on tissues in bluebonnet print boxes at H.E.B. or go online and order custom-designed tissue boxes from Kleenex. You can have your own photo image printed on the box for just \$4.99 plus shipping. Now that’s something to sneeze at!

**Brocade Home**  
1.800.brocade  
[www.brocadehome.com](http://www.brocadehome.com)

**Kravit Inc.**  
1.800.645.9068  
[www.kravet.com](http://www.kravet.com)

**Duralee**  
1.800.275.3872  
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**Big Red Sun**  
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**Outdoor Homescapes of Houston**  
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