

Is it a pool or spa?

Would you love nothing more than to relax in a spa on your deck, but your children are rooting for a pool? Spa or pool — it's a difficult choice. Before coming to a decision, be sure to weigh all the pros and cons. Careful planning is essential when you're thinking of landscaping your backyard with this type of specialty installation. Either way, it's a challenging project for you to tackle.

THE FIRST STEPS

Before shelling out any of your hard earned dollars, look into current bylaws and regulations in your municipality. This applies whether you're installing a spa, an in-ground pool, or an above-ground pool. You'll probably be told that you need a building permit and that you need to respect property lines. It is also going to be necessary, most likely, to build a fence around the spa or pool, even if it's an above-ground one. As you can see, you'll have to take into account a number of details.

The next step is to think about where the pool or the spa should be positioned. You can't just put it anywhere. The factors you'll have to take into consideration include the location of your deck and garden shed; the presence of any electrical wires, trees and roots; the children's play area; and the positioning of any electrical wiring that will be required. Don't forget to figure out how much sunshine and shade your ideal spot will get at different times of the year.

WHY GET A POOL?

If you and your family love playing in the water, swimming, and outdoor entertaining, you'll probably benefit most

from the pleasures of a pool. Having a pool in the backyard is like being on vacation all the time; there will be no more driving through traffic jams to get to a public pool or beach. You'll be able to go for a dip whenever you feel like it — before work, at lunchtime, or late in the evening — without disturbing anyone. You can swim laps to stay fit, host pool parties, or enjoy romantic, candlelit dinners near the water.

WHY GET A SPA?

There is plenty of evidence that whirlpool baths are therapeutic, both for healthy people and for those suffering from chronic diseases such as arthritis. Other benefits include muscle relaxation, the oxygenation of the tissues, the elimination of toxins, and improved blood circulation. And of course, stepping into a hot whirlpool just feels great! A spa is perfect for some quiet time alone or for enjoyment with family or friends. Depending on the model, a spa can even be used during the winter.

SWIM SPAS

If you're an inveterate swimmer, you'll appreciate the advantages of a swim spa. The premise is simple: this micro-sized pool has an adjustable current that allows you to swim continuously, at your own pace, and never have to turn to continue swimming laps. The flow can be regulated for a beginner or for a more experienced swimmer. Then, after a good workout, you can rest and relax while multiple jets give you a hot water massage.

If you have a generous budget, go ahead and start dreaming right now: you can have a spa that connects right into your in-ground pool!

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