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Outdoor Rooms *and Paths*



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Covered Porches

This covered front porch serves as an outdoor entry foyer and has many of the same elements as an interior space, such as a cedar ceiling and decking floor. The stone plinth (base) for the tapered wood columns matches the side walls of the wheelchair ramp shown at the right rear.

IF YOU LIVE IN A HOSPITABLE

climate, a well-designed outdoor space can be the best “room” in your house. In nice weather you can use the outdoors for reading, recreation, dining, and cooking. Function and aesthetics should guide the design of exterior spaces. For wheelchair users, this means accessible transitions from inside to outside and accessible paths between outdoor locations.

Although today they are associated with power and wealth, outdoor rooms have humble origins. The first known example is a Sumerian domestic garden built in the 13th century B.C. In Pompeii, first-century Roman architects converted a traditional Etruscan rural home into a sophisticated townhouse for wealthy officials by adding an outdoor atrium. Roman atriums were located in the home’s center, with one side connected to a formal garden. Atriums often included decorative fountain basins that enhanced the space and collected rainwater for domestic use.