



EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
with Tim Goom

Enjoying your winter garden

As the days get shorter and the temperatures plummet, the temptation is to huddle inside in the warmth. But why invest time and money in creating a stunning garden that you can only enjoy in the summer? With clever design and planning, your outdoor spaces can entice you outside year round. What better way to embrace the cold climate than sitting round a crackling fire or soaking in a steaming spa, with a glass of your favourite pinot in hand?

Heat source

To make your outdoors usable throughout the year, it is fundamental to have a heat source. Braziers, electric and gas heaters, outdoor fires and even pizza ovens create a cosy ambience in your outdoor space while keeping the cool winter air at bay. Fixing heaters to the roof of your pergola or louvres allows you to direct heat where you want it. Having your toasty outdoor area readily accessible from indoors is important for easy transition. Visitors don't want to be tripping in chilly darkness as they make their way to a fire at the other end of the property!

Spa pools are a great joy in winter. Who doesn't enjoy staring up at the stars on a crisp winter night from a spa? Ensuring a close proximity between the spa pool and indoors will mean that relaxing soak doesn't end in a barefooted sprint across a frozen garden back to the house. If the spa will be used mainly by the kids and family, position it near main access routes. If it is for you and your partner, it may be more conveniently positioned near the bedroom.

Heating options for pools have come a long way in terms of energy efficiency. It is now possible to heat your swimming pool throughout the year without breaking the bank.

Design

Our climate goes from one extreme to the other. As such, we need to select materials that work across all seasons. Concrete is a versatile surface, but can make for cold seating. Timber will be kinder on backsides in chilly temperatures! Having a heat source is vital, but designing the outdoor area in a way which retains that heat is equally important.



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Positioning walls, structures and screens to block prevailing winds will help. A roof could be added, for example a covered pergola or louvres, to minimise upwards heat loss. The ultimate option is an outdoor room! We've been creating some innovative design solutions for Queenstown properties recently, where the cold poses even more of a challenge to outdoor living than in Canterbury. An example is an outdoor table within a sunken space, heated to keep legs and feet toasty. The table top works perfectly to keep the heat from escaping skyward!

Frosts can quickly make a driveway precariously slippery, especially if steep or winding. We recently included heating under a driveway during a project at Terrace Downs. This was a functional way of completely negating the issue.

Planting

Once your outdoor space is warm enough to enjoy, the next step is to consider which plantings will be attractive in the colder climate. Having a balance between evergreen and deciduous is important. Evergreens retain the structure of your garden when things look bare in winter but deciduous trees will bring a lovely dynamic, creating contrast and interest throughout the seasons. We are lucky in the South Island to have such intense colours in our deciduous trees, made more vibrant with colder weather. The bright red or yellow hues on autumnal deciduous plantings will be stunning visually in your winter garden.

Call Goom Landscapes to discuss making your outdoors inviting, whatever the season.

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