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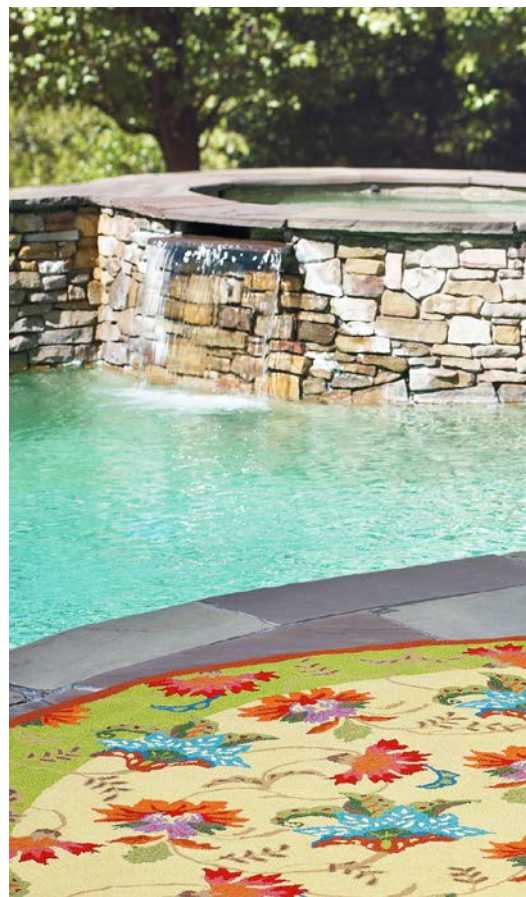
THIS SUMMER, IT'S TIME TO LIVEN UP
YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE.

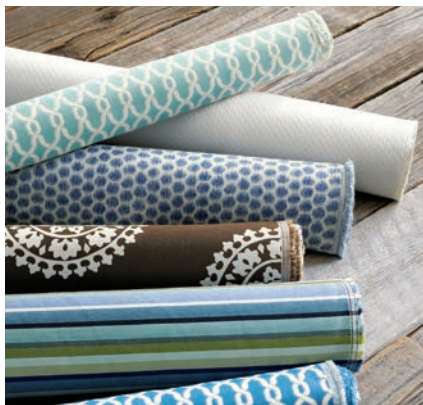
BY HASKELL MATHENY, ASID,
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With summer right around the corner in Chattanooga, your thoughts may be starting to wander to the outdoors as nature mysteriously resurrects with blooming pink crepe myrtles, yellow daylilies, and purple irises...

Then you look at your patio.

Maybe you see gray concrete or graying wooden planks, or a tired old picnic table that's seen better days. Maybe there are some mismatched metal chairs – or worse yet – some cheap plastic chairs that you purchased on a whim last year just to make it through the summer.





With the warm weather calling, it's time to add some color and joy to your outdoor space. And this year, with a little planning and some great products, the flowers in your yard don't have to be the only things blooming with color.

For 2013, manufacturers of outdoor furniture, fabrics, and rugs are pulling out all the stops to help you create an outdoor space that is comfortable, functional, and vibrant with color. Here are some suggestions for how to get started.

Start with the basics.

Just like you would with an indoor room, get started on your outdoor room with the basics. That means that if your wooden deck and railing are faded and gray, give them a good pressure washing and, if needed, a new stain to make them look fresh and new. If you're dealing with a concrete patio, consider a concrete stain to give it a facelift. (Be sure to keep it neutral with a warm gray or a light tan or cream.)

Liven up your furniture.

Now for your furniture: begin by considering how you want to use your space. Dining with family? Sitting and reading? Lounging and relaxing while taking in the view? Outdoor furniture has come a long way in the last 10 years. In many cases, what's available today is almost indistinguishable from indoor furniture. New "designed-for-outdoors" finishes and materials—from teak, rattan and metal to man-made materials resembling concrete, marble and bamboo—mean that your outdoor furniture can now withstand rain and sun without suffering damage from fading, mildew or rot.

Additionally, today's outdoor fabrics and trims are as varied and wonderful as their indoor counterparts. You can now choose between every color under the rainbow, from whimsical prints to elegant wovens. And with every style available from traditional to modern, it's far easier today than it used to be to have your outdoor furniture blend seamlessly with the style and palette of your indoor spaces.

Add a rug.

There's no need for all that style and color to be relegated to the furniture. Give your outdoor space some drama and pizzazz by adding a rug designed to withstand harsher conditions. Geometric, floral and abstract patterns can really give a color punch to your outdoor setting. Plus, they will offer comfort underfoot.

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