

## **Five Ways to Feng Shui your Outdoor Retreat**

By Feng Shui Expert Pat Heydlauff

When spring arrives most people turn their thoughts to the great outdoors. Instead of visions of sugarplums dancing in their heads flowering daffodils, tulips and lilacs abound. It doesn't matter if you live in the sunny south, are still dodging snow flakes in the north or ending the rainy season out west. Spring is the time of the year everyone dreams of new beginnings, watches the trees burst forth in their green plumage and thinks of basking in the warm sun on their decks, patios and lanais.

The arrival of spring brings with it great anticipation of everything new, full of life, abundance and growth. Spring is thought of as the most hope filled time of the year because of all the new energy bursting forth from the ground up. However, right along with the arrival of spring comes the realization that gardens need planting, flower beds need weeding and lawn furniture needs restoring.

The glorious attributes of spring soon fade if you get caught up in the details of all the work ahead. Imagine a perfect summer day sitting comfortably in your outdoor retreat with flowers blooming, birds chirping and your water fountain singing a soothing relaxing song. That is the image you need to hold onto while you prepare your outdoor retreat, whether large or small, fat or skinny, so you can relax in it once you've completed renewing and revitalizing it.

Your outdoor retreat is truly an extension of your home and needs to receive the same consideration and treatment for safety, comfort and energizing that you would use inside. It should reflect both your personality and lifestyle as well as provide you a retreat from the world. Your choice of plantings and furniture as well as their location should be evaluated carefully and placed to offer you a pleasing view, proper flow of energy and the maximum amount of relaxation.

### **Five Ways to Energize Your Retreat**

Once you have decided what your retreat should look like this year and how it would best serve you from an energy point of view consider using these five simple ways to energize your retreat to provide you maximum enjoyment and relaxation.

1. Remove all the unhealthy and dead plantings from winter and replace them with lively colorful new ones – uncluttering provides great new positive energy
2. Restore to its original beauty, functionality and safety any outdoor furniture – beauty and safety provide nurturing energy
3. Replace any furniture and accessories such as water fountains if they are not working properly or are broken – new items you love will provide you uplifting energy
4. Reinvent the reason for your outdoor retreat – since it is an extension of your home use it as an outdoor sanctuary to re-energize yourself
5. Rekindle family traditions and relationships while spending time in your outdoor retreat – old traditions of family and friends gathering for a barbecue or a late afternoon luau provide great memories for the future and bring back wonderful nostalgic positive energy from the past

When placing your furniture in your outdoor retreat, preserve the openness and any view you may have. That will also allow energy to flow better. Use gliders and benches in smaller spaces instead of individual chairs. If you see the back of a piece of furniture from the inside of your home either make sure it looks nice or camouflage it with a lovely large plant if there is room, if not add a colorful throw.

To make your retreat more expansive, even in a small yard you can place a small bench in the opposite corner of the yard under a tree to provide an additional mini sanctuary or focal point. If your retreat is not secluded enough plant small bushy trees or make an instant green privacy wall out of large shrubs planted in tubs you can move to other locations. If your view of the yard is the focal point, keep the furniture simple. If the view is not the greatest, invest in nicer furniture and some accessories like a water fountain to create the ambiance and view that would otherwise be the missing energy in your retreat.

Remember to hold onto the vision of you relaxing in your outdoor retreat while doing all the necessary preparation and work to make it become a reality. Staying focused on the end result will help you get peacefully through the rejuvenating stage. Outdoor retreats can provide hours of spring, summer and fall relaxation and revitalization energy.

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"Everything you say, think and do matters."

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