**Build an Outdoor Fire Pit**

You will need:

Pavers

Cast concrete wall stones

Capstones

Sand

Shovel

Tape measure

Level

Tamper

Steel rake

As you consider building an outdoor fire pit, be sure to first check the building codes in your area for specifications and regulations. You should select a spot that is away from your house and not near any low-hanging trees or other structures. Be sure of where underground cables and lines are so that you can avoid them, as well.

What to do:

1. Assemble pavers (we recommend Paving Delite™) around a circle that is the approximate size and shape of the desired fire pit. Fire pits are typically about 36 to 44 inches in diameter.
2. Dig a hole approximately 12 inches deep in the circle (and of the same diameter as the circle).
3. Pour sand into the bottom of the hole and tamp the sand so that it is level.
4. Lay wall stones around the perimeter of the hole. Continue stacking the wall stones so that they are about 12 inches above the surrounding ground.
5. Pour a layer of sand into the ring of stones so that it covers the first layer, approximately 4 inches deep.
6. Enjoy!

**Build a Backyard Fish Pond**

What to do:

As a critical first step, you should call 811 or your local call center to get any underground lines marked. You will definitely want to steer clear of them. As you determine the pond’s placement, consider putting it where it will be noticed—visible from a window, beside a patio, or along a walkway. Keep it away from the play areas of small children or pets. Also watch out for major root systems of mature trees, which can block too much of the sunlight that plants and fish need. Make sure the pond is within reach of a grounded exterior outlet so a pump can be plugged up, which is an essential tool for aerating the water. Most pumps include a maximum cord length of 25 feet. Extension cords are not recommended. You may even need to bury the power cord a few inches down in a PVC pipe to hide it.

Your goal should be for at least 40 cubic feet for the pond, which is about 7 feet by 4 feet. That way, the water can be kept clean. An initial shallow terrace just inside the perimeter of the pond holds rocks that conceal the liner edge and keep it in place. A second, deeper, terrace supports plants that live in the water and help balance the pond ecosystem.

As you dig the pond, slope the sides so that if the water freezes, the ice will push up instead of against the liner. Even in a warmer climate, a small pond can change temperature rapidly. Therefore, if adding fish, you’ll want a deeper pond that will maintain a more consistent temperature. We recommend 18 to 24 inches for goldfish and at least 3 feet for koi.

After digging the pond depth, you will prepare for the lining. A thin layer of sand and old newspapers or burlap bags will soften the jagged edges of rocks and roots. Over that, you will need to place a waterproof skin. You will find several types of flexible liners designed for small ponds. Most are made from polypropylene and EPDM. Locate one that is weather-resistant, so that it will stand up to UV rays and freezing temperatures. For good measure, make sure it is rated “fish-safe.”

Install a pump based on the manufacturer’s directions, and be sure to get a guide on proper maintenance of a backyard fish pond. You’re all set!