

# Pavers are paving the way in today's landscape design

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It's hard to believe, as the sky remains a spirit-flattening gray and another Alberta clipper has us grabbing the shovels, that spring is coming.

But soon, gardening spades will replace the snow shovels. We'll be outside the first day we can shuck our winter coats, and we're not going back in until the first frost next fall.

And that means we want a nice outdoor space for hanging out. Pavers — made of stone, brick or concrete — are becoming a bigger part of our yards. According to the Interlocking Concrete Pavement Institute, a trade organization, 800 million square feet of pavers were sold in North America in 2006, 79.8 percent of them for residential use.

T.J. Farinacci, owner of T.J. Farinacci Landscaping in Euclid for 23 years, says pavers are part of a trend. People are putting more into — and wanting more out of — their homes.

"Instead of moving, they're putting more into the home they've already

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## Resources

**Valley City Builders Supply:** 6745 School St., Valley City. 330-483-3400. [www.thebrickplace.com](http://www.thebrickplace.com).

**T.J. Farinacci Landscaping:** 24480 Lakeland Blvd., Euclid. 440-646-9125.

[www.tjbrickpavers.com](http://www.tjbrickpavers.com).

**Unilock:**

[www.unilock.com](http://www.unilock.com).

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got," he said.

Today's busy lifestyle is another selling point for pavers, he said.

"There's no staining, no sealing, very little maintenance," he said.

Jim and Sandy Swanker of Chester Township wanted to update the front of their Tudor-style home.

"Living in the country, we don't just live in the back yard," Jim said. "We use the front yard, too.

They had long loathed the planting beds and patio space made of railroad ties. Jim considered bricks passe. They wanted something that would work both for patio space and for retaining walls.

"They fit the look we were going for," Jim said of pavers. "They weren't too modern, but they were a little rustic."

The rustic, old-world look is the most popular in pavers these days, said Sue Kronenberger, president of Valley City Builders Supply in Medina County, which sells pavers and offers classes in installation for do-it-yourselfers.

"The look people want is a more European, sophisticated look," she said.

Tumbled stone, whether real or imitation, is especially appealing.

Meanwhile, formal symmetry is giving way to a more casual arrangement of pavers in several sizes. A few years ago, most layouts used one or two sizes, Farinacci said. Today, it's not uncommon to see four to six sizes.

"It looks unorganized, but it really is carefully planned," he said.

Pavers come in about 30 colors, but earth tones remain the most popular, Farinacci said.

"People are more conscious of design and style," he said. "They want their pavers to go with their houses. They know a contemporary look won't go with a traditional house, and vice versa."

And they don't just want a square slab. Multilevel patios are taking the place of decks. One level can be for dining, another for lounging. Another level can be for an outdoor kitchen, a popular feature.

"People really want to play up the atmosphere," Kronenberger said. "They want to install outdoor kitchens and fireplaces. It really becomes another room."

Concrete and brick pavers are the most affordable, starting around \$2 a square foot. Natural stone pavers cost as much as \$8 per square foot. Professional installation starts around \$14 per square foot and can go over \$20, Farinacci said.

Pavers are most commonly associated with patios and walkways, but some homeowners are using them for driveways. Pavers cost at least twice as much as concrete or asphalt, but some of Farinacci's clients like the high-end look and durability.

"They're not going to do the freeze-and-thaw crack," Farinacci said. "So you don't have to deal with fixing or sealing them. For some people, it's worth it in the long run."