

Outer Space

How Monika Hibbs transformed the backyard of her newly built Fort Langley, B.C., home from a massive mud pit to an outdoor haven for family and friends to enjoy.

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It's a backyard that's as pretty as a greeting card.

And it looks that way because homeowner Monika Hibbs decided her yard should count as a room. "I let go of the idea of inside and outside as separate," says the lifestyle blogger, who instead created a lovely living area for family lounging, entertaining and playing (she has three young children). "To spend time in the fresh air with birdsong accompanying your supper or to roast marshmallows with the kids is amazing," she says. "I recommend looking at your backyard and asking yourself, 'What would make us spend more time out here?'" In Monika's case, the answer was a cozy fire. "The outdoor fireplace was the first idea we came up with. The rest followed from there."

Roaring Success "A fire in the evening smells so good," says homeowner Monika Hibbs. She and her husband often curl up in front of the wood-burning fireplace – which features a cement surround with storage to keep logs dry – with a glass of wine after their children have gone to bed. To complement the oversized cement patio slabs, Monika chose a concrete coffee table.

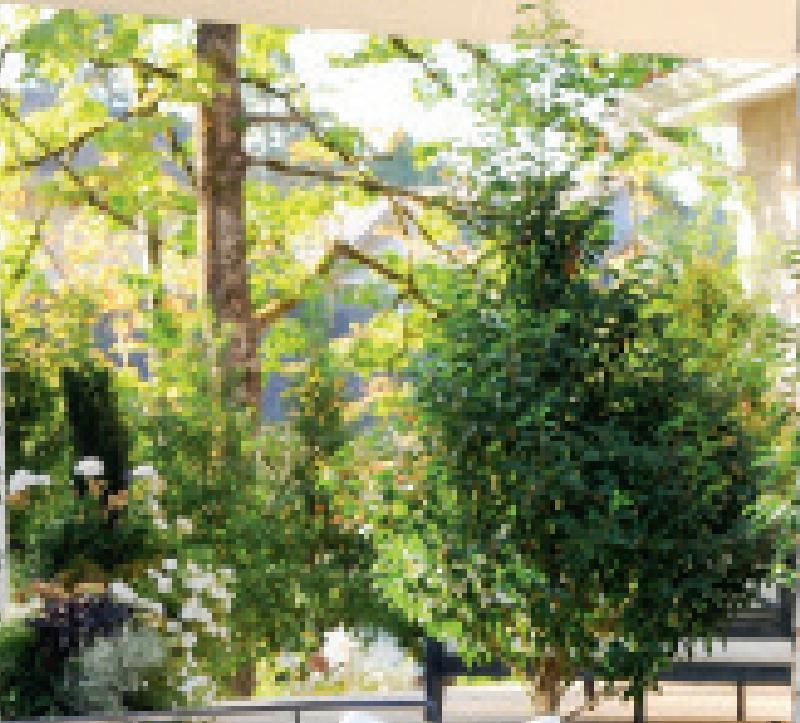
Sit Back and Sigh "From the loungers, you can see the playhouse and swings," says Monika. "So the adults can relax and chat – and still enjoy watching the kids at play." The black and white weave of the loungers is graphic and modern, a contrast to the softer cedar shingles and gambrel roofline of the home. White window boxes and dark planters that brim with white blooms combine elegance with sweet nostalgia.





Room That's a View

Welcome to the Hibbs's outdoor family room: sometimes it's for meals, sometimes it's for game night. Always, there's plenty of space to spread out. Topped with lots of toss cushions, the sofas and armchairs are comfy and cozy. For flexibility, there's a pouffe and a garden stool offering spots to sit or rest snacks ferried out from the kitchen on a rattan tray.



Play Station

To create the ultimate kid space Monika designed this playhouse, which her husband and brother-in-law then built. Lined by a hedge of hydrangeas and boxwoods, it features a loft and an adjoining swing set. "My kids use it every day for hours at a time," she says. "I think every child should have a dedicated space like this, a place of their own to make memories."



Back to Nature

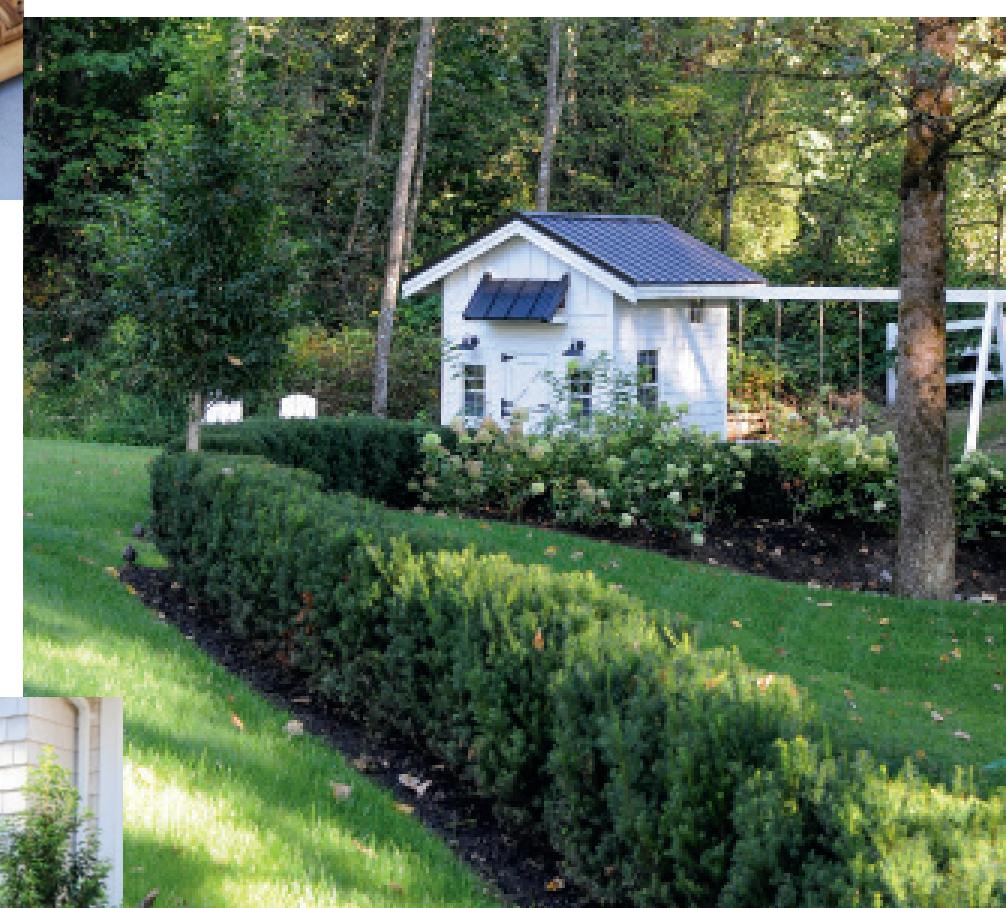
"For most of us, the idea of landscaping can be overwhelming," says Monika. Her tip? Don't use too many plant varieties. "For our yard, we used only five anchor species," she says. Boxwoods and yews create borders; Portugal laurel trees lend vertical definition; hydrangeas and roses effect romance. "Then, we added in a few annuals, such as petunias, for texture and colour." Plus, a row of lavender introduces a gentle sweep of tone, netting a soothing green, white and purple palette.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN, Teer Co.; **SOFAS, ARMCHAIRS, LOUNGERS, COFFEE TABLE,** woven **POUFFE,** CB2; garden **STOOL,** HomeSense; **PLANTER, RH;** **TOSS CUSHIONS,** Pottery Barn; **PLANTS,** West Coast Gardens; rattan **TRAY,** Serena & Lily; **PLAYHOUSE ARCHITECTURAL PLANS,** Monika Hibbs.

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Like most backyards, Monika's was a rather boring rectangle. To change that, she added diagonal cement walkways framed by crushed gravel. Next, she planted trees and hedges that would break up the rectangular space and enhance the architecture of the house. "Gardens really soften the lines of a home, and because they change shape and colour with the seasons, the yard always feels new," she says.

For furnishings, Monika went modern in spite of the home's more traditional lines. "It was a real risk for me at the time, and I was nervous, but in the end it worked!" she says. "And I learned something: You can have a bit more fun decorating outside." Looking at this stunning outdoor space, we think this idea is one worth stealing.





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To call this Langley, B.C., workspace an "office" would be misleading – it reads more like an elegantly outfitted apartment than a place of business. This was exactly the goal when lifestyle blogger Monika Hibbs set out to design and furnish the 150-square-foot room she shares with her husband and business

partner, Troy. "Since we both use the space, I wanted to seamlessly incorporate masculine and feminine elements," says Monika. Case in point: Warm grey-painted clean-lined built-ins, graphic black and white photography and well-edited open shelves are stylishly coed. Here are five ideas you can take from this sophisticated workspace to score a similar look.

1. Balancing Act

The benefit of having an office closed off behind elegant glass-paned French doors is that Monika and Troy can easily separate working hours from time spent with their three kids. "Sometimes, when we're in here working late, Troy and I joke that it feels like a date night," says Monika.

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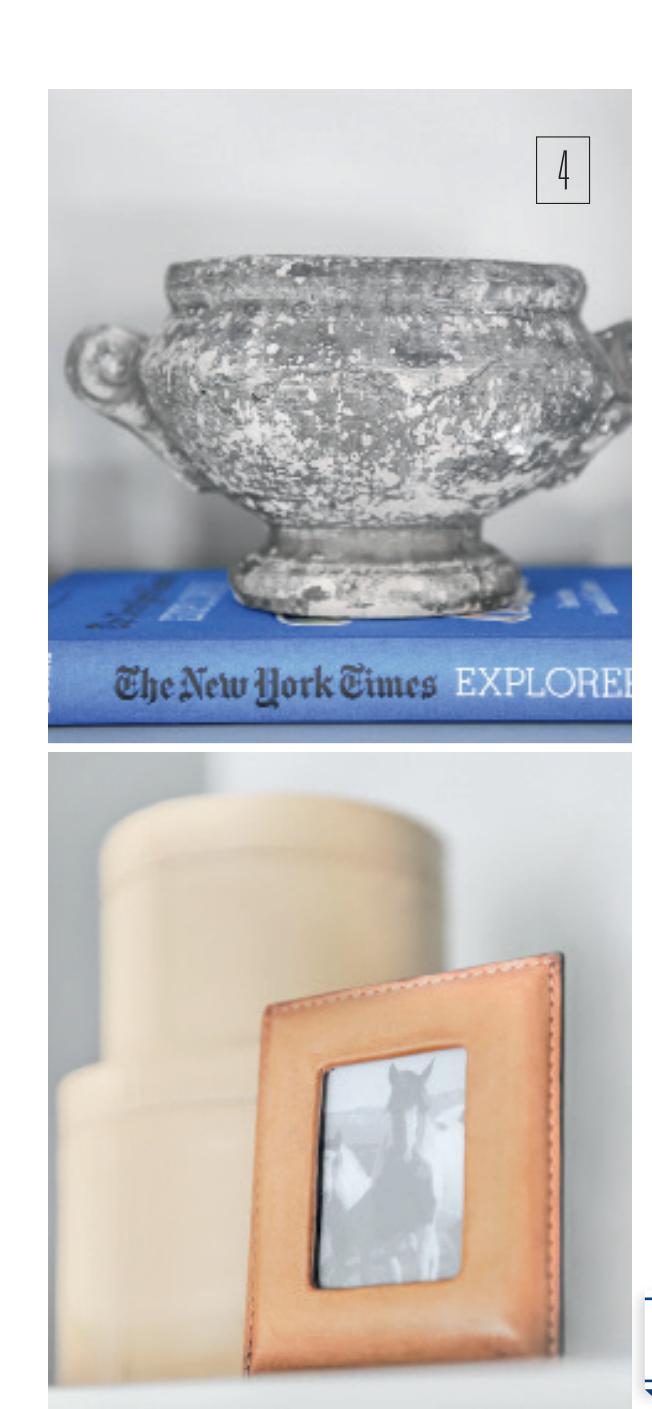


2. Shelf Life

Soft grey-painted built-ins maximize square footage and maintain organization in this small room. Monika still loves a real-life pin board to show off what she's loving at the moment. "Pinterest and Instagram are great places to compile inspiration, but nothing beats a pin board," she says. The mood here is fresh and feminine, denoted with family photos, pretty fabrics, magazine clippings and chic prints. The checked cotton-wool Roman shades add softness and coordinate with the clean lines of the built-ins.

3. Inspiration Station

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MILLWORK, Divert Millwork; Coventry Grey HC-169 **MILLWORK PAINT**, Benjamin Moore; **FLOORING**, Divine Flooring; **CABINETRY HARDWARE**, Schoolhouse; **DESK CHAIRS**, Anthropologie; **SCONCES**, Stephanie Jean Design; custom **ROMAN SHADES**, Q. Design Perfect Drapery & Custom Shades; **BENCH**, HomeSense; **RUG**, framed **PRINTS**, Peridot Decorative Homewear & Design; gold **WREATH**, wooden **BEADS**, The Cross Decor & Design; blue **GINGER JAR**, Caitlin Wilson Design; **FLOWERS**, Floralista.

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4. Detail Oriented

Look closely and you'll notice subtle differences in the way the two walls of built-ins are styled. Troy's workspace says "his" with grey and blue *objets*, black and white photos and a set of cocktail glasses. Monika's side is all her with touches of pale pink and gold, fresh flowers and books that speak to her personal and professional interests. This attention to detail impacted everything right down to the scented candles Monika included on each side.

5. Celebrity Spotting

The graphic portraits of Brigitte Bardot and Roger Moore were the jumping-off points for the room's masculine-feminine divide and are a cheeky way to show who sits where (who needs name plates?). "I'm a little bit Brigitte, and Troy has elements of Roger Moore in his personality," says Monika. The gilded frames, dramatic matting and library-style sconces set above are pure sophistication.