

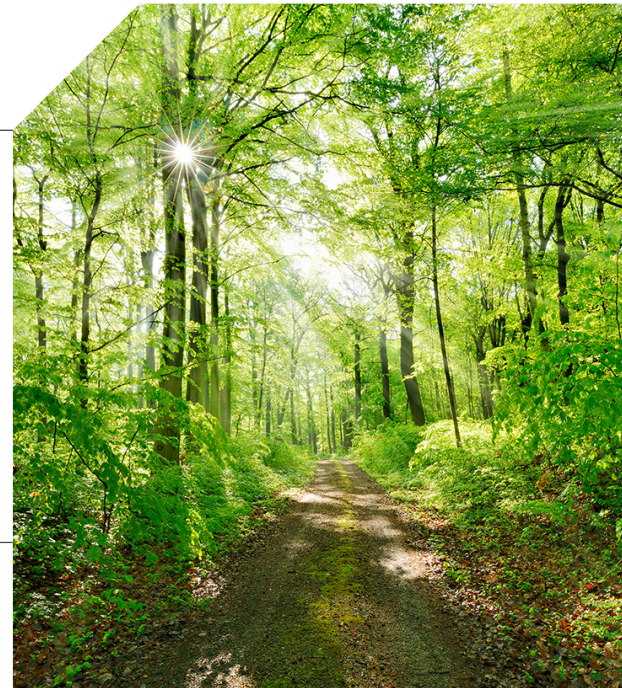


Biophilic Design: Exploring the Benefits and Design Trends

Architects and designers have looked to nature for inspiration in their designs, infusing natural elements into built spaces. This concept called biophilic design is sprouting up more and more in hardscape projects. As appreciation for our outdoor spaces continues to blossom, more homeowners are opting for natural elements in their outdoor spaces.

What is Biophilic Design?

The term '[biophilia](#),' coined by German psychoanalyst Erich Fromm in the 1970s, and gained popularity through scholar Edward O. Wilson in the 1980s, describes humans' innate desire to better connect with nature. Biophilic design embraces this principle, with an emphasis on bringing people and nature closer together within the built environment, to enhance the overall health and well-being of those who inhabit the space and rejuvenate existing structures.



What are the benefits of Biophilic Design?

Biophilic Design brings numerous benefits to our bodies, minds, and behavior. [Research in various sectors](#) shows that connecting with nature improves our fitness and overall quality of life. Here are a few benefits:

- **Physical:** Enhanced physical fitness, lower blood pressure, increased comfort and satisfaction, fewer illnesses, and improved health.
- **Mental:** Increased satisfaction and motivation, reduced stress and anxiety, improved problem-solving, and enhanced creativity.
- **Behavioral:** Better coping and mastery skills, enhanced attention, and concentration, improved social interaction, and reduced hostility and aggression.



What are the most common design trends associated with biophilic design?

While biophilic design is commonly associated with interior design, homeowners are growing to extend these practices to their outdoor spaces.

ENTANGLED DESIGN

“Entanglement” refers to the idea of entangling pavers with the natural environment, giving the illusion that nature is breaking through the paved surface. This has grown popular in backyard patio and pool deck projects, like in the photo below, where Unilock Arcana™ slabs are laid in a mosaic pattern and interspersed with turf, creating a natural stepping stone look that is aesthetically pleasing and cool underfoot.

Other examples of entangled design include slabs laid on gravel or pebbles, and the use of natural stone outcroppings, such as native flagstone or boulders, to create natural freestanding borders in your outdoor space.



VERTICAL GARDENS

Garden walls blend pops of vibrant color and lush greenery against the serene backdrop of paved walls, forming a striking contrast between structured hardscape elements and organic foliage. Likewise, you can also utilize other green elements, such as vines, hanging plants, potted planters, or shrub bushes.



FIRE AND WATER FEATURES

Both fire and water features contribute to the concept of biophilic design, as these are naturally occurring elements in our built environment. In the photo below, you can see a water feature sitting adjacent to a square fire pit. The sound of free-flowing water evokes a Zen-like feeling by providing a peaceful ambiance, while the fire pit's crackling flames provide a warm, cozy space for curling up, day or night.



NATURAL PATTERNS AND TEXTURES

This design principle emphasizes the use of shapes, styles, textures, patterns, and colors to convey natural, organic forms. For instance, this could include natural sweeping curves that replicate the appearance of free-flowing rivers or streams, or choosing textured products that mimic natural materials, like Umbriano®, which replicates the look of natural granite. Earthy color tones, such as beige or tan, are often popular choices that mimic the look of soil or wood found in the natural environment.



PERMEABLE PAVERS

If you're seeking a sustainable alternative to traditional paving products, [permeable pavers](#) are an excellent choice. Permeable pavers emulate the natural water absorption process that occurs when rainwater hits native subsoil. They can be used to absorb water into underground rainwater harvesting systems, which can be used to irrigate nearby vegetation in your yard. Consult with your [Unilock Representative](#) to explore integrating them into your project.

Some popular permeable pavers options include Town Hall®, Treo® Smooth, and Eco-Promenade®.



Creating Seamless Transitions Between Indoor and Outdoor Spaces

Some homeowners may seek to create outdoor spaces that feel like a natural extension of their home, incorporating popular interior design elements to establish comfortable outdoor living areas. These spaces are primarily intended for gathering, supporting mobility, as well as providing refuge from environmental stressors like rain or wind.

For example, a wooden pergola constructed with pillars, featuring different colors or textures inspired by earth elements not only provides a sense of security, but it connects users within the space to the natural environment. Some outdoor spaces, such as outdoor kitchens or entertainment areas with a sheltered TV wall, are designed with an open-concept approach. This allows users to remain connected with the natural environment, while benefiting from natural elements like light and wind, creating a tranquil space for enjoying the surroundings.



If you're looking to create a space that incorporates biophilic design elements, be sure to speak to your [Unilock Representative](#) at the earliest stages of planning your outdoor project as they can offer recommendations for products and designs that will allow you to achieve an outdoor space reflecting a true connection with nature.