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1 BACKYARD, 5 OUTDOOR ROOMS

Story: Tiffany Adams | **Photography:** Beth Hall

Defined areas for enjoying nature dot this Little Rock backyard—making it the perfect spot to unwind almost year-round

It's often said that word of mouth is the best advertisement one can receive. In this West Little Rock neighborhood, perhaps the term should be altered to *sight of garden*. "There's a group of sweet friends who all live in this mountaintop neighborhood. I worked with the homeowners across the street and the ones next door, and they led me to help this couple," landscape designer Chris H. Olsen of Botanica Gardens says.





When the homeowners contacted Olsen they were looking to update their front and back lawns to make them more current and practical for everyday use. The backyard had an existing deck but it was in need of repair and stopped short of taking full advantage of the view of Chenal Mountain as well as creating a space for year-round enjoyment.

In talking with the couple, Olsen learned they were social people who enjoyed entertaining and gathering, and he felt they could benefit from an outdoor area that gave them multiple opportunities to do so. He planned out five defined spaces: a covered porch off the home's back entrance, a dining area, a sitting area, a covered nook, and an open pavilion on the exterior side of the double-sided fireplace.

To soften the new hardscaping, Olsen added an abundance of filled-to-the-brim containers. "My philosophy on containers is to shove it and cram it full," laughs Olsen of his more is more approach to garden color. "I want it to look like a living floral arrangement," he adds. Olsen also wanted the pots to be low-maintenance. He chose heat-tolerant, sun-loving plants along with several evergreen selections for a durable mix that would last from late spring all the way through fall with a few updates. They also installed a drip irrigation system that is woven through the decking into the containers, making the plants easy to water.

"If you create a destination, you're going to use your backyard more," Olsen says. "Before there was a lot of dead space, but now there are zones they can enjoy every day."

Design Resources

Contractor **Botanica Gardens**

Landscape and fireplace design **Chris H. Olsen, Botanica Gardens**

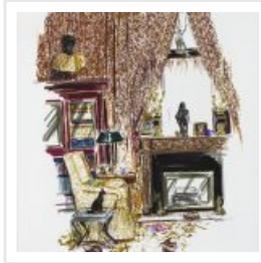
Accessories—containers, fountain, lighting, millwork, and plants **Botanica Gardens**



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