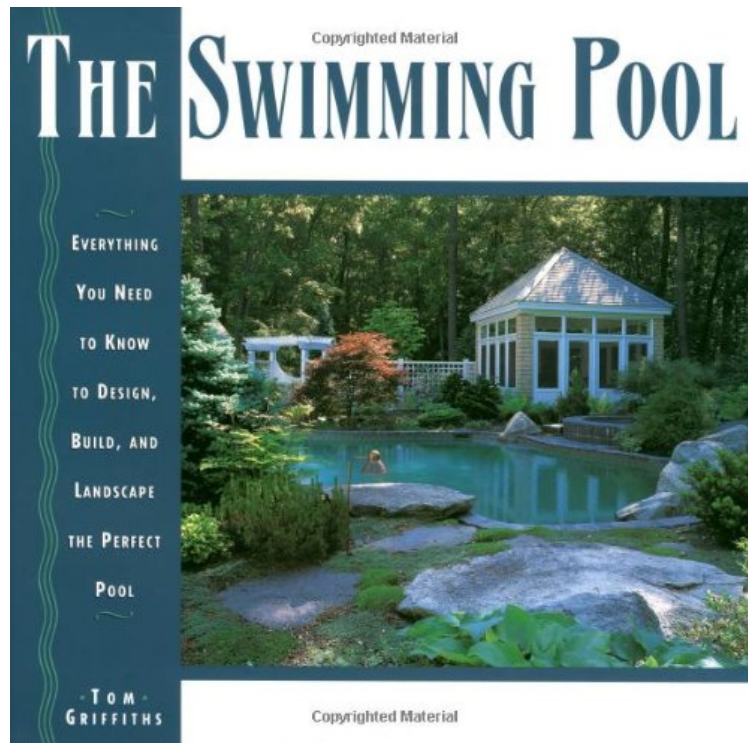


[FREE] Swimming Pool

## Swimming Pool

*Tom Griffiths*

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**Tom Griffiths : Swimming Pool** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Swimming Pool:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. \*\*\*\*\*By andrewlove it78 of 80 people found the following review helpful. I would not buy this book again.By A CustomerMy review will be short and to the point. This book does not deliver what the title implies. If you just enjoy looking at pictures of pools in different settings -- then this book is for you. If you need what the title implies -- look elsewhere.39 of 40 people found the following review helpful. Great pictures and design, decent contentBy Dan HooperThe subject matter lends itself to an extraordinary pictorial essay. Griffith's publisher does it justice. The content is a bit generalized but well organized. More detailing based on geographic locations and specific plant matter would round this out quite well. The comment that "a (residential) pool 20' x 40' would be considered average" is indicative of the Griffith's ambitious nature; this book is for people looking to build and spend big. Here in Massachusetts, that's a "larger" pool.Anyway, it's a pretty good value for those needing a little incentive to get excited about a substantial investment in time and money. One thing I didn't see mentioned, though I may have missed it, was the fact that good pool contractors in NE need to be contacted nearly a year in advance; if they're reputable they bound to be exceedingly busy. Another thing missed in emphasis anyway: contact your landscape designer and/or architect with the pool contractor to produce a 'master plan" of your yard. This will create the correct sequence of productions - pool construction makes a mess of any yard but is more painful when extensive landscaping was done recently.Finally, from a formatting perspective, the body copy/editorial content of the

book is set in a somewhat elaborate typestyle making it a little slower read. It would seem appropriate for chapters titles but maybe not the body copy.

You can install the pool of your dreams--all you need to know can be found in this accessible, beautiful volume:

From Booklist For anyone about to deal with pool builders or designers, this sourcebook will provide practical information. Griffiths discusses budgetary and planning concerns from project beginning to completion, with checklists and advice, all of which provides assistance with site, design, landscape considerations, and selection of pool type (vinyl-lined, concrete, or fiberglass). Maintenance, general pool care, and safety issues are also covered. Stunning color photographs show many breathtaking outdoor pool environments complemented by spas, gazebos, cabanas, and spectacular views. Although less expensive, above-ground pools are discussed, and some simpler, smaller pools shown, the emphasis is on a far grander and imposing swimming pool habitat. Alice Joyce About the Author Tom Griffiths, Ed.D., is the director of aquatics and the safety officer for the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics at Penn State University. He has served as a swimming pool and safety consultant for more than twenty years, and currently oversees five large pools and a fitness center and teaches a certified pool operator's course worldwide. The author of *Sport Scuba Diving, In-Depth*, and *The Complete Swimming Pool Reference*, he lives in State College, Pennsylvania, with his wife and two daughters. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

Chapter One The Site There are many factors to consider before installing a pool. Although developing the pool site is a comprehensive task, there's no need to feel intimidated by it; many professionals are available to assist you in the process. The principles set out in this chapter are meant to help you to understand and overcome common obstacles, although professional guidance will be necessary as well.

Proper Pool Placement The major pool-site considerations are as follows: legal restrictions: subsoil conditions and obstructions; sun, shade, and wind exposure; access to the pool and pool area; and views of and from the pool.

Dealing with Restrictions and Obstructions Regardless of its size, shape, or slope, just about any yard can be fitted with a beautiful swimming pool. But successfully integrating the pool with the architecture of your home and landscape is extremely important and can be difficult to do. First and foremost, you must be aware of any land-use restrictions that might apply to your property. Before even thinking of building a pool, study the zoning laws, deed restrictions, and building codes of your area. This way you will know the allowable size, type, and location of a pool for your property. Zoning laws, for example, often dictate front, side, and rear-yard setbacks, that is, how much space must remain between property lines and other buildings. There are often laws that determine how much of a yard may be covered with an impervious surface or structure. Height restrictions for fences and buildings are other considerations. Some home-owners associations also mandate that utility easements are not interfered with. Your local government should have this information. Do yourself a favor and take the following first step; take a look at a minimum of six other pool sites in your town or city. This is an enjoyable exercise and you'll learn a lot, especially if you take the time to converse with other pool owners. Find out about the land restrictions and zoning ordinances that affected their sites, then follow up by getting these regulations in writing from your local government. Although neighbors or friends can supply you with advice, never rely on this information regarding such matters as if it really were the law. If you intend to install a permanent pool structure, you'll need a building permit before construction begins, and once it does, you'll need to be certain that all building codes are followed strictly. There may also be other local municipal restrictions and regulations that govern swimming pools. The use of water for filling pools and the discharging of that water, for example, may be severely restricted in your area. You may also need written approval of your fencing, pool cover, and pool type from your local government. Not until you clearly understand all applicable restrictive and regulatory guidelines for pools in your area can you seriously consider placing one in your yard.

Secondly, make every attempt to discover subsoil conditions and any obstructions in your yard before attempting to place your pool in the ground. Changing the size, shape, or layout of a pool after excavation begins is both time-consuming and expensive. If at all possible, drill test bores into the ground to help determine the condition of the soil. Rock, clay, a high water table, and other subsoil conditions can cause major excavation problems. Many pool builders include a subsoil clause in their contracts that explains additional costs that may be incurred should excavation efforts be hindered by rock, water or unstable soil. Other underground obstructions include septic tanks, dry-well systems, and plumbing. Overhead obstructions include overhead power lines that could fall into your pool or onto your deck. All structures -- including storage sheds, garages, fences, walls, and the house itself -- should be a minimum of 15 feet (4.6m) away from the pool's edge. If not, these structures can become inviting diving platforms for trespassers. If all these factors are considered prior to excavation, you'll save considerable time and money. Remember, it's far easier to move a pool on paper than it is to move it once excavation has begun. Moving a pool even a few feet in one direction can avoid many obstructions. When excavation takes place, a large back hoe, loader, bobcat, and dump truck may be used to avoid the unnecessary handling of dirt. This heavy construction equipment needs a way to gain access to the backyard safely and easily: a cartway of 8 to 10 feet (2.4 to 3m) wide is needed to move heavy equipment in and out of a yard. If less than an 8-foot width is available, earth removal with shovels and wheelbarrows may be required, resulting in a lengthy and expensive excavation project. Construction

access may even have to come through a neighbor's yard. Earth disturbance can be surprising and scary, as a major construction job will look like a war zone before it is finished. Make sure to discuss the amount of earth disturbance with your pool builder early on, so you won't be surprised, financially or visually. Soil conditions can also potentially damage a pool shell. Loam, sandy soil, wet soil, expansive soil, rock, and filled ground have special concerns associated with them, all of which should be fully analyzed by the builder. If you have a flat lot, you can recycle the earth removed from the pool site to create mounds. Elevated mounds are a common technique that can provide privacy and creative landscaping of waterfalls or ornamental plantings. Earth mounding can do wonders for a flat lot by adding variety via customized slopes and hills, and at the same time, it can save money in removal costs. Pools constructed on hillside lots are especially challenging projects, requiring expert advice. The cost of building a pool on a steep lot can be tremendous, but the rewards can also be great. Pools on hillside lots render once unusable land usable. In addition, the views from these pools can be spectacular. Steep-lot pools are often built on stilts, and many creative pool builders utilize slopes above these pools to create waterfalls. So if your home is on a hillside lot, you really needn't be discouraged from investigating the possibilities of installing a pool. Another vital consideration in choosing the proper site for a pool is the location of existing utilities. A few calls to your local utility companies will take much of the guesswork out of this process. Utility company employees can quickly mark all underground lines and cables and explain appropriate setbacks to you for both above- and underground wires and cables. Furthermore, every pool site requires the accessibility of these utilities: water, electricity, sewer or other acceptable drainage, and fuel for the heater (gas, propane, oil). Along those lines, many naturalistic pool designs can "hide" filtration equipment in caves, alcoves, and shrubs. The filter and pump should be placed on a concrete slab that is specifically poured for the site. Precast concrete slabs are not recommended because as the ground settles, the slab may shift and damage the pool plumbing. The poured slab should be large enough to add equipment, like a pool heater, in the future. Although weatherproof enclosures were once recommended for pool equipment, today's equipment can withstand just about any type of weather. Regardless of where the pool equipment is placed, there must be sufficient room to backwash and make repairs. For optimum performance, the filter and pump should not be located more than 50 feet (15.2m) away from the pool. If the pool pump is placed 2 feet (0.6m) higher than the pool grade, pump priming problems could result, making it difficult to maintain circulation. And don't hide pool recirculation equipment in your basement: the basement is an inconvenient location, and the equipment is loud and may cause flooding should it malfunction. As just explained, there are many factors to consider regarding swimming pool placement and construction. But if you review and discuss these considerations with prospective pool builders, other pool owners, and your family, you will be better informed and will likely have eliminated any obstacles to installing a safe, enjoyable, and long-lasting pool.

Sun, Shade, and Wind When attempting to place a pool properly on a lot, the elements of sun, shade, and wind must be considered to keep the water warm and swimmers comfortable in and around the pool. The location of the swimming pool in relation to the sun is of paramount importance. Although direct sunlight on the pool is vital, the sunlight must not impair the view of the pool. In other words, the pool with its decking must be laid out so that the supervision of pool activities can be accomplished easily, and that means without excessive glare. In addition, extended sunlight throughout the day will not only keep swimmers more comfortable but will also decrease heating costs significantly. Except for pools that are built in desert or tropical climates where midday shade might be desirable, most pools are designed to maximize the sun and minimize the shade. As a rule, pools with southern and western exposures stay warmer than pools with northern and eastern exposures. Pools with dark bottoms absorb heat, keeping the water warmer, while pools with white bottoms reflect heat, keeping the water cooler. While much attention should be given to sun exposure when positioning the pool, shady areas must be considered as well. Shade from trees and the house can offer a cool reprieve from the sun on hot days. Shade is an important consideration for adults as well, particularly grandparents or nannies who want to supervise children but must stay out of the sun. However, large trees that provide ample shade will also provide litter, dropping pods, blossoms, berries, and leaves into the pool, creating a poolkeeping nightmare. If shade is a priority for your pool surroundings, you may wish to obtain it by installing awnings, umbrellas, and similar structures located above and away from the pool deck. An overhead wooden trellis or gazebo can be strategically placed to provide shade and can also serve as a center for other recreational activities and for the supervision of the pool. Shade can also be produced by installing an entire system of decks and trellises used to connect the house, backyard, and pool. But if you're going to manufacture shady areas in the yard, place them above the pool level to create a bird's-eye view of the pool for safety, supervision, and aesthetics. Many naturalistic pools, particularly those that are designed to look like mountain lakes, do very well on shady lots. A little bit of debris on the surface only makes the pool look more natural, and extra cleaning equipment can be purchased to automatically clean the pool whenever it is not in use. (I prefer meticulously clean pools, without a trace of dirt or algae. My naturalistic pool would have a wider deck to keep debris away from the water.) A pool placed in the shade will have colder water than one placed in the sun. Moreover, swimmers may become cold when swimming or lounging in a shady pool environment. If a pool is to be placed in the shade, it's a good idea to turn up the pool heater a few degrees or even place heating coils in the pool deck. In addition to sun and shade, wind is another important consideration. Blocking strong winds from blowing across the pool and its decking is just about as important as placing the pool in sunlight. A

gentle breeze can have a positive cooling effect on loungers around the pool, but strong winds tend to be detrimental to the pool and bothersome for guests. Decreasing wind velocity is important because it keeps swimmers warmer and eliminates much of the evaporation and cooling of pool water, thereby saving you money. When swimming pool water evaporates, more than just water is lost: chemicals and heating costs are lost, too. Whenever possible, then, windbreaks should be placed on the perimeter of the property, particularly in the area from which the wind is traveling.

Windbreaks can be achieved with plants, trees, fencing, screens, walls, and other structures. Access A pool must be easily accessible from your house. Otherwise, much of the pleasure derived from using the pool will be overshadowed by the nuisance of getting to and from it. Changing facilities, whether in your home or in a bathhouse, should be conveniently linked to the pool by decks or walkways. Whenever possible, avoid constructing steps and other barriers to the pool: ramps are a better alternative, and are becoming a popular way of joining pool areas on different levels. Ample ramps and rails, along with some small steps, make entry easier for children and older adults. If small children are going to use the pool, be sure the shallow end is installed closest to where they will enter it, that is, closest to the exit from your home or bathhouse. Generous poolside space should make it easy to get in and out of the pool and allow for activities like reading or sunbathing. It is also a good idea to create a space that will allow for as many activities as possible near the pool, including cooking and entertaining, so that trips back and forth to the house are minimal. Access to the pool should be such that swimmers are prevented from traveling across grass or dirt prior to entering the pool: otherwise, debris will enter the pool with each swimmer. If the access to your pool area and to the pool itself is not properly planned with these recommendations in mind, driving to a public pool might be a more convenient and far less expensive option. Views Generally speaking, the pool should be in complete view of the house yet laid out in harmony with it. The size of a pool should also be proportionate to the size and scale of a home. Several pictures of your existing home and yard should be analyzed to determine if the pool should be placed parallel, perpendicular or at another angle to the house. You and the builder should jointly decide the angle at which the pool should be placed. After evaluating all of the previously discussed logistics, it's time to select the exact location of the pool. This decision can only be reached after considering aesthetics, safety, and privacy. Many creative pool designers believe that aesthetics is the key factor in deciding location, particularly when building naturalistic pools and waterscapes. Some designers claim that if sun, shade, wind, and other factors are too heavily considered, the pool will not be as attractive in the yard. So if a pool that is aesthetically pleasing is a priority, don't let drawbacks like leaves hamper your creativity. It's also a good idea to try to highlight views both of and from the pool. The pool and decks should be oriented so that they can enhance the surrounding landscape. Vanishing-edge pools, for example, are tremendously popular because the view of these pools highlights vistas beyond them. If small children will be using your pool, an unobstructed view from the house and yard is not only essential for safety reasons, but comforting to parents and other family members. You might want to consider placing adult amenities, such as spas and gazebos, so that they overlook the pool; this will not only create additional space for poolside activities, but produce a panoramic pool view that will help improve supervision enormously. If privacy is a prime concern, don't place the pool in such a way that your neighbors have an excellent view of it. When telescopes begin to appear in neighboring homes shortly after the completion of your pool, you know it's time to invest in additional screening. (See pages 33-35 in this chapter for landscaping tips regarding privacy and chapter six for details on installing proper barriers.) Designing the Landscape Although you can contract with landscape architects and pool builders to do all or part of your landscaping, it is important to be familiar with some landscape principles so that you are able to make wise decisions. Remember, you are decorating your pool much in the way you would decorate your house. Just as you would examine magazines and visit showrooms and model homes to get design ideas for the inside of your home, so should you do the same for this major outdoor project. Too often, the beauty of a pool is compromised by an unattractive or inadequate landscaping scheme. Landscaping Objectives and Principles Landscaping projects require thought and planning. Pool landscaping efforts must be customized to fit your pool, the ways in which you plan to use your pool, and your ability to maintain the pool area. Of course, all this must be thought of in terms of your budget. First and foremost, make sure that the landscaping really works for your yard. Copying a neighbor's pretty landscape design may seem a good idea, but it may in fact create problems for you. It is important to realize that improper or poorly planned landscaping can hinder pool operation by blocking views, obstructing access, and littering the pool and deck with droppings. A good landscaping scheme serves many functions and is far more complex than installing plants. Pool fencing, decks, walkways, and poolside structures must be planned to complement one another as well as blend in with the house and yard. Before you begin to landscape your pool area, decide on your landscaping needs. Beautification, privacy, safety, comfort, enjoyment, and convenience are a few of the more important pool landscaping considerations. For example, if keeping unwanted visitors out of the pool is a major concern, strong fencing with thorny bushes or vines may be preferred to a low-perimeter hedge. On the other hand, if space for entertaining is a priority, a spacious flat deck would be better than a profusion of plants and rock outcrops. If simple upkeep is a primary concern, that will influence your choice of plants and trees; you may even wish to keep planting to a minimum. When selecting landscaping materials, you should bear in mind your lifestyle and work schedule. Retired homeowners may have a lot more time available to care for the landscape than do younger couples with children. Some landscaping requires a great deal of care, such as

flowering plants and shrubs that require fertilizing and trimming, or nonrustproof deck furniture that requires painting, so it is best to invest in attractive items that require little maintenance. Price is an important consideration when you draw up your landscaping considerations. If your budget is limited, you may have to select only those landscape items that make your pool usable, and wait to buy the items on your "wish" list. For example, if you need trees or shrubs to screen your pool for privacy, these plantings probably would be high on your list of first buys. If beautification is a priority, then flowering annuals may be your first purchase. Rank your needs, then select essential items that are within your budget. More expensive and lower-priority needs can always be added later -- that's the nice thing about landscaping. If you're on a limited budget, get the biggest bang for your buck by clustering your plants. Generally speaking, the larger the plant material, the more it's going to cost, so if you know you want some tall evergreens but can only afford three, place them close together rather than spreading them out. If you like flower beds but can't afford too many plants, make a small flower bed and buy fast-growing plants. As they plants grow, you can easily expand your bed. If you have a large bed with few plants in it, your plants will appear lost. For those with large landscaping budgets, I would recommend large trees for privacy at the perimeter of the lot, with smaller, exotic trees closer to the pool. A gazebo with plenty of deck space and walkways is a terrific addition, too. The following six principles of landscaping should help you get started on a general landscaping plan. Bearing these principles in mind, you can move on to more specific landscaping ideas, some of which are included later in this chapter.

**Order and Unity** Order is the overall organization and structure of a landscaping design. Unity is the harmonious relationship between all elements and characteristics of a design. To establish order, you must create a theme around your pool that is carried throughout your entire landscaping composition. To establish unity, you must fit all the pieces of the puzzle together so that they relate to one another. Without order and unity, your backyard poolscape will seem chaotic and unorganized. Home and garden magazines can give you ideas for creating order and unity.

**Balance** Balance is the equalization of visual weight from one area of the landscape composition to another. While there will usually be a dominant accent in a composition, there should not be an imbalance of weight. There are usually two types of balance, symmetrical and asymmetrical. Symmetrical balance is achieved by creating a mirror image from one side of the pool to the other. Asymmetrical balance is achieved by creating equal weight without repetition of forms on opposite sides of the pool.

**Rhythm** Rhythm is created in a pool environment by the repetition of outstanding elements. If a dramatic effect is desired, you should emphasize the rhythmic aspects of a pool. If you want a visually relaxed atmosphere, you should reduce the rhythms. For example, to achieve a relaxed rhythmic pattern, you should choose plants that do not stand out visually.

**Dominance** Dominance is the authority of one design element over all others, and is achieved by size, shape, tone, color, texture, or location. The subordination of other elements in the design establishes a certain unity among them, causing the unique element to become dominant. Dominant elements in the design are sometimes referred to as focal points. For example, a flowering tree, a large rock or a waterfall can create a focal point, or dominance. In most pools, the pool itself is the dominant landscape feature, based on sheer size alone.

**Contrast** Closely related to dominance, contrast is the visual strength of one element or a group of elements that is different than the remainder, which helps provide interest and unity to a design. Contrast can often create a sense of tension in a design. A tall tree in a predominantly flat landscape, for example, serves as a strong visual contrast.

**Interconnection** Interconnection is a principle of design in which unity, balance, and order are achieved by physically linking various elements into one unified composition. In the pool area, interconnection can be achieved by a series of adjacent or overlapping elements, such as plants, fences, walls, walkways, pool decking, and patios. Attractive ground covers can also be valuable in developing interconnection in a landscaping design.

**Site Inventory and Analysis** Keeping in mind the landscaping principles just discussed, the next step in planning your pool is to study the existing site by completing an inventory and analysis of the pool area. A site inventory means that you have to assess and evaluate the site conditions that will have a significant influence on your design. The inventory should include items such as the character of the site, local codes, drainage, type of soil or soils, views, vegetation, and microclimate. As you develop your pool-site plan, design it with the characteristics from the inventory in mind. Remember, the inventory is simply an accurate assessment of the current status of the site environment and any restrictions that you face in installing your pool. The basis of a site analysis is provided by creating an accurate base map of the property on which are recorded all physical site elements such as walls, fences, and other miscellaneous buildings and structures. The property should be measured and boundaries defined using a tax map or other official record of the lot dimensions. Of particular concern are the front-, side-, and rear-yard setbacks: these indicate how close to each boundary the homeowner is allowed to build a structure. The setback lines are clearly drawn on all approved building lots. Your local city hall, county office, or mortgage banker may be able to supply helpful documents illustrating these elements of your property. After boundaries and measurements are taken, the house should be drawn to scale on the base map. This drawing should indicate the location of all walls, doors, and windows as well as utilities such as gas, electric lines and outlets, television cables, dryer vents, and existing lighting. (To assist homeowners and contractors, many utility companies will print "Call us before you dig" on approved building lot plans and include a toll-free telephone number.) The house's architectural style should be noted along with the color and texture of its exterior. The base map need not be a work of art, but it should be as complete and accurate as possible. The microclimate of the pool site needs to be analyzed, too. The times

of sunrise and sunset should be noted for various times of the year so that sun and shade areas may be planned. The direction and velocity of prevailing winds, particularly summer breezes, must also be noted for the positioning of windbreaks. At this point, the site should be photographed from several angles. The photographs will not only improve the accuracy of your drawing, but also provide a before-and-after look at your poolscape. In addition to recording and observing what exists on your property, it is important to note the characteristics of your neighborhood. Take into consideration the style of the other homes as well as the size and maturity of neighborhood trees and plantings so that your landscaping efforts blend in naturally. Sidewalks, street lights, and neighborhood traffic patterns are also important, for knowing the direction of traffic and busy times of the day will help you determine if and where visual and noise screening should be installed. Of utmost importance are the views to and from the pool. You may want to highlight some of these and obscure others, bearing in mind that these views will change over the seasons of the year. Mark these views, then consider storage areas, work stations, and service entries; these areas must be marked so that they can be somewhat hidden by strategic plantings but at the same time remain accessible and functional. After you complete the base map of the specific features and elements that exist on the site, you can compose a functional diagram of the future site. The ideal functional diagram is a graphic development of your landscape design (see pages 34-35). It need not be a work of art, but should include a rough illustration of the major functional areas of the site, noting the distances between each area, the type of enclosure you want for each area, and any barriers or screens, exit and entry points, and views you would like to hide or highlight. It is important to define your usage areas, be they for recreation, relaxation, gardening, work storage, or service, and allow sufficient space for each. When dealing with different spaces within the poolscape, it might be helpful to identify each as public, semi-public, semiprivate, or private to facilitate selecting appropriate barriers, screens, and planting buffers. Circulation patterns must also be drawn so that heavy traffic is not channeled through private areas intended for relaxation. Once you have completed your plans for your poolscape, you need to concentrate on selecting the appropriate ground covers, shrubs and trees, fencing and screens, decks and walkways, bridges or waterfalls, and lighting. Plants by the Pool Besides creating a beautiful natural setting for a pool, plants add texture and color to the swimming environment. Landscape architects, landscapers, nursery workers, and regional horticultural guides can offer helpful advice regarding final planting decisions. (Specific suggestions for a range of plantings can be found in the chart in the appendix on page 136.) Generally speaking, pool plants should be hardy, healthy, and sun-loving. They should like water and be mildew-resistant. When it comes to decorating with beautiful flowering plants, thousands of options are available, with annuals being the most popular. When selecting flowering plants, be certain they blossom during the summer months. Special consideration should be given to plants and trees that do not attract annoying insects and that do not drop leaves excessively. Unfortunately, some of the prettiest plants and flowers can cause problems if they draw bees or shed a great deal. Remember, when it comes to pool plants, looks are not everything. Raised Beds and Container Gardening There are other important considerations in poolside planting. Greenery and flowering plants should be carefully placed so that water running off the deck will provide moisture for the plants. Conversely, runoff from the plants should not be deposited on the deck or in the pool. Properly placed borders of flagstones or other landscaping materials can help to keep mulch and dirt off the deck and out of the pool. Planting flowers in raised beds offers a great swimming-pool planting scheme. Raised beds serve several functions; they can add visual relief or contrast to a flat lot, add prominence to some special plantings, create separate and distinct clusters, and contain the soil so that it does not enter the pool. The borders of the beds can double as pool benches and retaining walls. In addition, raised beds elevate flowers and plants to a height that makes maintenance easier. Remember, when raised beds are constructed, they must be built with drainage in mind. Bottom drainage or weep holes must be supplied so that the draining water doesn't find its way into the pool. Container plants do extremely well around swimming pools. Perhaps the greatest advantage of container plants is their portability. You can easily move potted plants to the pool for special occasions or move them when they drop flowers and leaves, attract bees, or take up needed space. Another advantage to container plants is that containers can be filled with the perfect soil, which is most convenient for sites where the soil is poor or unsuitable for pool plantings. Lightweight potting mixtures, which can be purchased from any nursery or garden shop, will provide good soil and will also lighten the load when you move the plants around the pool. However, potted plants tend to dry out quickly, so they may need to be watered and fertilized more often. Many types of containers can be used around the pool, as long as they are unbreakable. While clay, ceramic, and stone pots will certainly add to the aesthetic appeal of your pool, half-barrels, crates, and other plastic or wooden containers may be preferable in order to prevent accidents. Larger pots are also preferable, as they cannot be knocked over easily and can hold more water. Ground Covers The importance of a good ground cover around a pool or spa should not be overlooked. By definition, ground cover is any low or spreading plant that does not grow taller than 6 to 12 inches (15.2 to 30.5cm). There are a variety of flowering, nonflowering, woody, and herbaceous ground covers -- and they possess almost as many functions. Around the pool, ground covers are useful in defining "nonwalking" areas, especially when used alongside paved walkways or lawns. Ground covers of distinct colors and textures can be used to create visual interest, while more neutral plants of this sort can also provide a noncompetitive background for more dominant landscaping elements like sculpture and ornamental trees. Ground covers may be used to interconnect other

plants in the area. But perhaps most importantly, ground cover is an excellent way to covers areas where lawn and other plant materials are impractical. For instance, it can be dangerous and impractical to plant grass on steep slopes. In this situation, ground covers stabilize soils and prevent erosion. Ground covers can be planted where grass would be difficult to mow. Over the long haul, ground covers will save you time, effort, and money in landscaping maintenance. Check with your local nursery before buying ground covers to be certain whether the plants will prosper in the sun or shade of your pool area.

### Shrubs and Trees

Shrubs come in various sizes and, based upon their size, serve different functions in a pool landscape. Low shrubs are woody plants that do not grow taller than 3 feet (0.9m). Similar to ground covers, they can be used to enclose areas as well as to define walks and patios. Low shrubs are a nice addition to the poolscape because they can be used to define these spaces without obstructing views. Intermediate shrubs are from 3 to 6 feet (0.9 to 1.8m) tall. They are used mostly to provide a transition in the landscape between low shrubs and trees. Tall shrubs are woody plants from 6 to 10 feet (1.8 to 3m) tall, and are best used for vertical enclosures, screening for the elements, and privacy control. Shrubs and trees that grow closely together form hedges. Hedges can be used to screen or hide pool equipment, camouflage other unattractive sites, and channel traffic. Hedges may be formal or informal. Formal hedges are made up of finely textured small-leaf plants, such as boxwood, that are manicured to a sharp straight edge and are found in many formal gardens. Formal hedges require careful attention and frequent trimmings. Informal hedges are usually composed of plants of a coarser texture, such as a large-leaf holly, which requires less care and provides excellent screening. Effective visual screens, trees can be used to block wind and sun as well. Evergreen trees rather than deciduous trees are often selected for a poolscape because falling needles are usually less of a problem than leaves -- although needles may drop all year long. Evergreen trees provide permanent, consistent screening and privacy, and proper evergreen plantings may reduce wind velocity by up to 60 percent. Coniferous evergreens, such as white pine, spruce, hemlock, yew, and juniper, maintain their color all year long without visible flowers. Evergreens are also available in shiny broadleaf varieties, such as rhododendron, mountain laurel, and leucothoe, adding luminescence to any outdoor space as well as offering the benefit of and are found in many formal gardens. Formal hedges require careful attention and frequent trimmings. Informal hedges are usually composed of plants of a coarser texture, such as a large-leaf holly, which requires less care and provides excellent screening. Effective visual screens, trees can be used to block wind and sun as well. Evergreen trees rather than deciduous trees are often selected for a poolscape because falling needles are usually less of a problem than leaves -- although needles may drop all year long. Evergreen trees provide permanent, consistent screening and privacy, and proper evergreen plantings may reduce wind velocity by up to 60 percent. Coniferous evergreens, such as white pine, spruce, hemlock, yew, and juniper, maintain their color all year long without visible flowers. Evergreens are also available in shiny broadleaf varieties, such as rhododendron, mountain laurel, and leucothoe, adding luminescence to any outdoor space as well as offering the benefit of spectacular spring blooms. Deciduous trees and flowering trees in a pool landscape may be used in order to contrast the light color of the blossoming flowers against the dark background of the evergreens. Deciduous trees can offer striking color changes within changing seasons, something to consider when your pool season is not year-round. Purple, red, yellow, and blue are just some of the brilliant colors that can be pleasingly combined. Fruit trees, such as hollies, oranges, and persimmons, can provide colorful flowers and fruit, but should be planted well away from the pool and deck area. Otherwise, their droppings will create a lot of cleanup work for you. You must also be cautious in planting trees near the pool, for their root systems may clog pipes or disrupt deck foundations and walkways. Nonetheless, there are many small trees with good garden manners and root systems that are compatible with decks, patios, and walls. These trees don't shed many leaves, fruit, or blossoms. They are also slow to grow and, as a result, don't require a lot of pruning. If your lot is large, a large shade tree or trees may be an effective backdrop for a naturalistic look. Flowering and majestic trees may be overwhelming on small lots and may shed too much for the meticulous pool owner. Nevertheless, large shade trees can often become the cool meeting place or picnic area in many yards. There are also small trees available that have distinctive foliage. These trees are excellent for providing contrast to a landscape. The Japanese maple, *Acer palmatum*, is a good example of a tree that can add variety to a pool landscape design. A small, slow-growing tree that does not grow taller than 15 feet (4.5m), the Japanese maple is hardy, with lacy foliage capable of bringing a bit of the forest into the smallest of poolscapes. Remember, before purchasing any tree, pay critical attention to its eventual height and width (listed on its label). Otherwise, you may be asking for trouble.

### Perimeter Fencing, Walls, Screens, and Other Structures

Constructing screens with fences and walls may be preferable to installing trees and shrubs, particularly since cleanliness is a top pool priority. Fencing on the perimeter of the lot provides security and privacy. Before constructing any fence, though, remember to check your local building codes and zoning ordinances. Vertical screens are placed in pool-landscape designs to protect against unwanted sun, wind, noise, and unpleasant views. These screens can be used to define space and are typically lighter than fencing or walls, and are often less permanent so they cannot be considered safety barriers. Reed, wood lath, louvered wood, safety glass, plastic, canvas, and plants can be used as screens. Horizontal overhead structures can also be added to provide shelter from the sun; these can be made from a variety of materials such as wood, arbor and louvered overhead, tinted safety glass or acrylic, and sliding and stretched canvas awnings. A variety of useful pool structures can be added to the landscape design as well. Gazebos have

always been popular, for not only are they attractive, they provide additional space for entertaining, dining, changing clothing, storing items, and observing poolside activities. Similar to fencing, gazebos must blend in with the design of the house, pool, and yard. Many pool owners hide the back of a poolside gazebo with evergreens or vines to provide a more complete closure for privacy while keeping the side that faces the pool open for supervision. Other gazebos on the property should remain open to provide views of the pool and surrounding plantings. Although the primary use of a bathhouse is to provide a place to shower and change, it can also be a place for storage and cooking. Bathhouses, then, can range from the simple to the elaborate. Some pool owners incorporate saunas into their bathhouses. Other structures that can be added to a pool landscaping design include a pool chemical shed, a greenhouse, a garden work center, or a garden pavilion. Decks and Walkways Pool decking and walkways that connect other functional yard areas are an integral part of every landscaping design. Decks provide extra space for pool-side activities and transitional points for different areas around the pool. The importance of a quality pool deck is often overlooked by some homeowners. Don't make this mistake. The deck is second in importance only to the swimming pool, and in some smaller yards, the deck may even take up all the space that is not devoted to the swimming pool; in most cases, the larger the deck, the better. All pool decks must be a minimum of 4 feet (1.2m) wide to allow safe pedestrian passage around the pool, should be clear and unobstructed at all times, and should extend at least 8 feet (2.4m) behind play equipment such as slides and diving boards. These are the minimum deck requirements. A variety of materials is available for swimming pool decks. Provided the slope away from the pool is adequate and the material is completely nonslip, most materials can be used. Some of the more popular decking materials include pressure-treated wood, poured concrete, exposed aggregate concrete, slate, brick, ceramic tile, and flow-through interlocking tiles. It is important to select to deck that has heat-reflecting properties so that it is not too hot for bare feet. This type of material is referred to as cool deck. Carpeted decks are generally not suited for swimming pools because they retain moisture. To add variety to pool decks and walkways, decking materials such as brick and pressure-treated wood can be combined. If you use ceramic tiles or bricks for your pool deck, remember that it is the grout between the tiles and bricks that provides most of the abrasion that prevents slippage. Larger tiles and bricks are often slippery when wet, regardless of how nonslip the manufacturer claims them to be, for large tile and bricks allow bare feet to hydroplane across the surface. Basically, the smaller the tile or brick, the more nonslip the deck. The deck must also slope away from the pool so that water that is splashed out of the pool -- which picks up contaminants -- is unable to return to the pool. The slope of the deck should be at least a quarter of an inch per foot (20.8mm/m) away from the pool or toward deck drains. The deck should be as close to the water surface as possible, as decks that are too far above the surface will make it difficult to enter and exit the pool and create more of a risk for divers. Ideally, decks should be 4 to 10 inches (10.2 to 25.4cm) above the water. It is also wise to maximize deck space and minimize the lawn around your pool. As mentioned earlier, wet swimmers returning from the lawn to the pool bring grass and contaminants along with them; this is particularly true if the surrounding lawn has been recently cut. Lawns are pretty, but they create poolkeeping problems. If lawns are a must, separating pool (wet) and lawn (dry) activities with barriers such as fencing or planting is wise. This is why it is a good idea to install a large, spacious deck around the pool; doing so will increase the number of poolside activities that can occur simultaneously and prevent debris from entering the water. Coping, the material that provides a finishing edge to the pool, thus connecting the decking material to the pool wall, is also of vital importance, as it prevents water from finding its way behind the pool shell and is the place of entry for most swimmers. Coping stones must be sturdy, nonslip, and attractive. Tile, stone, concrete, and numerous other materials are available for coping. Many naturalistic pools use specially cut stones for this purpose. To eliminate a manufactured look of pool decking meeting the pool wall, try to place the coping over and beyond the wall (about 2 to 3 inches [5 to 7.5cm]) to create a lip. While the same characteristics are required to materials used for walkways as for the pool deck, it is possible to use a different surface for them as they won't receive quite as much exposure. For instance, wood rounds, concrete slabs, bricks in sand, gravel or crushed rock, and random stepping-stones make for excellent walkways but poor swimming pool decks, as they are not completely impervious to the elements. When selecting natural stones for pool decks, coping, or walkways, or as accents, it is important to determine if the stone is colorfast; if not, the color can bleed or leach into the pool, discoloring the pool water and shell. Pennsylvania Blue flagstone is hard and colorfast, making an excellent coping stone for a naturalistic look, while Tennessee flagstone, although attractive, has a high iron content that may cause brown staining in the pool. These days, exposed aggregate concrete is being used more for decks and walkways, as it is extremely functional and attractive. Bridges and Waterfalls Bridges and waterfalls are becoming a more popular feature of pools today. Bridges offer a passageway from one area to another for both the swimmer and the dry observer, allow nonswimmers to experience the pool up close without getting wet, and enhance poolside entertaining. Most often, bridges over pools are constructed of wood or some combination of stone and concrete. The bridge must be sturdy, and children cannot be allowed to play unsupervised underneath it. Waterfalls are a nice pool enhancement, providing more than aesthetics; they can be added on to the existing recirculation system so that an extra pump is not required. Many waterfalls are built with benches constructed directly underneath the fall of water, allowing children and adults to have fun and cool off at the same time. Waterfalls should be built with variable speeds so that the intensity of water flow can be controlled by simply

turning a valve. Those waterfalls that drop from a height greater than 4 feet (1.2m) should be shielded from the wind; otherwise decks and observers may inadvertently get wet on windy days. Waterfalls can also be designed as water slides. Water slides must have sufficient water depth (this will depend on who will be using it) where people come off them into the water. In the evening, a waterfall highlighted with either spotlights or colored accents is very pretty. If you opt for a waterfall, make sure the pool builder has experience constructing one, as not everyone can do this.

Lighting Pool lighting has come a long way since the days when bright spotlights were mounted on garages to aim harsh beams on pool surfaces. Not only is spotlighting unappealing, it produces a dangerous glare on the surface of the water, which prevents one from being able to see under the water surface. Today's improved outdoor pool lighting can provide safety, security, and decoration. A variety of pool lighting is available that will enable you to illuminate your pool for evening swims and beautify it at night. At least one underwater light is required for evening swimming. This way, swimmers and divers can determine water depth, and adequate supervision is made possible. This light is usually placed at the deep end of the pool, 3 to 4 feet (0.9 to 1.2m) below the surface: the larger the pool, the more underwater lights that are necessary. Underwater lights should point away from the house whenever possible so that there is no blinding glare. The pool and pool area must also be illuminated from above the pool surface. Between 10 and 30 foot candles (110 to 330 LUX) as measured by a light meter are recommended for outdoor decks and pools, and must illuminate all walkways and decks to prevent injuries. The surface of the pool must be illuminated as well, but the light used there must not produce a glare. Most of this important down-lighting is provided by 120-volt outdoor lighting systems. This same lighting can also be used for highlighting elements of your landscape, such as a special tree, garden, or statues. A variety of low-voltage lights can be placed in and around the pool for ambience. These can be installed by plugging in a small transformer and a two-wired outdoor cable along the ground and adding fixtures wherever you need them. Low-voltage (12-volt) landscaping lights are ideal for this function and available in many varieties. Small landscaping spotlights can be purchased to illuminate special features such as waterfalls or grottoes. On straight-edge pools, low-voltage tube lighting can be placed around the perimeter of the pool to achieve a neon-light effect. Tiny bud lights can be used to define steps or decorate trees and shrubs. It must be remembered that ambience, not illumination, is the main function of 12-volt lighting. There is much to consider when fitting a pool on your property. Remember, the more you do before beginning to install the pool, the more satisfying and trouble-free the job will be. If you follow the recommendations in this chapter, there should be no reason why your project should not result in a safe, enjoyable, clean, and beautiful pool. Copyright 1994 Michael Friedman Publishing Group, Inc.