

GRANDDESIGNS

MAGAZINE

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Should I choose a deck or a patio?

If you are thinking of making more use of your garden, the first things to consider is your budget and the optimum location to meet your needs, whether for sun, shade, or privacy. These are the factors that will determine your choice of a deck or a patio.

● **A DECK** is a raised platform, typically made of timber. It has the advantage of flexibility – it can be placed anywhere in the garden and disguises uneven ground and unsightly rubble.

● **PATIOS**, almost without exception, are an extension of the house. A common aspiration is for the patio, typically made of paving slabs, to be flush with the interior, doubling the dining or cooking area in good weather. Many patios, particularly in urban areas, are built with planting beds around the edges to soften the effect of the large expanse of stone.

Right, the ipe (tropical hardwood) raised deck overlooks the garden. It also leads, boardwalk-like into the garden proper. Below, Erika, with son Clement, wanted 'something contemporary and practical'



A 'FLOATING' DECK

Location: Raynes Park, South London

Clients: Erika and Roger Wilson

Garden designer: Andrew Fisher Tomlin

Cost: £4,590 for the deck (£33,000 for the whole garden).

Erika and Roger Wilson wanted a deck to match their modern, glazed extension, which explains the pale-green under-deck lighting. 'In certain light it gives the impression that the deck is levitating,' says garden designer Andrew Fisher Tomlin.

'We wanted something contemporary, but not as contemporary as a Diarmuid Gavin design,' says Erika. Practicality was another requirement – the Wilsons have a very young son, Clement. 'And we knew that we did not want a patio. I much prefer the texture of wood,' says Erika.

The result is a small (3.5x3.5m) raised deck made of Ipe, a tropical hardwood which has weathered from its original reddish-brown to a silvery hue. 'There is enough room for a table and chairs,' says Erika. 'It really does feel like you are

sitting in the garden.'

There was very little digging out as the deck is suspended above the main level of the garden. The underlying frame is made from treated softwood timber secured by uprights that are concreted into the ground. A detailed edge allows for lighting to be hidden, which is what creates the floating effect at night.

The deck is just one component of the Wilsons' award-winning garden – it won Fisher Tomlin the National Landscape Award in 2004. It leads, boardwalk-like, into the garden proper, which incorporates a series of timber screens, also made of ipe, a path, pool, lawn and planted beds, which divide the garden into a series of self-contained spaces.