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7 Tips to Turn Your Roof into a Lush Oasis

CHICAGO, May 23, 2013 – Whether you’re in an apartment or a mansion, roof deck gardens can be accessible to everyone. [Topiarius](#), a Chicago-based leader of urban gardening services, works with rooftops of all shapes and sizes to create the perfect escape.

According to Craig Jenkins-Sutton, President of Topiarius, the key to any roof garden isn’t about square footage, it’s what you do with the space available. “You can make a basic roof deck garden simply by adding a covering of potted plants, or you can make an elaborate roof deck garden by creating a sky-high park filled with trees and shrubs,” said Jenkins-Sutton. “The key is to visualize the end goal, and then work backward.”

Jenkins-Sutton provided the following tips on how to make the best use of any roof deck space.

1. **Create a destination.** Your deck should be a place you enjoy spending time with friends and family, so it’s important that it’s a relaxing, inviting space—not a half-finished project that’s too cluttered or too stark. Consider what you want in an outdoor space. Will you grill there? Garden? Watch TV? Read? Sunbathe? Eat? Play bocce ball? Add the elements to your deck that will appeal to you, while also making it an extension of your home.
2. **Plan for privacy.** Privacy is at your fingertips, you just have to be creative. Plants and containers provide a lush, garden feel, while also enclosing the deck. Consider using other products such as wood, Plexiglas or metal to create panels. Topiarius has also created box-like panels with lighting as privacy screens. And outdoor fabrics (solids and sheers) work well as curtains on stainless steel rods.
3. **Find shade/shelter.** The best decks are all-weather decks. By placing something overhead, like pergolas or an umbrella, you can enjoy the outdoor space rain or shine. Pergolas, which are structures with four corner posts and beams running from side to side, come in all shapes and styles and you can design them to cover partial or full spaces. For shade and privacy, grow vines on the structure or add retractable shades.
4. **Go vertical.** Build up, not out, to make the most use of your limited space. Consider a water feature, artwork or even a “green wall” on your deck. Green walls are beautiful, but it's important to know that in our Chicagoland climate (zone 5), the best bet is annuals.

5. **Grow your veggies.** Some of the best sunshine hits roof decks, so why not take start an urban farm? Use simple containers to grow a tomatoes or herbs. For a higher crop yield, consider a raised bed planter. With a peat-based potting soil, your rooftop veggies will be very happy.
6. **Slake your plants' thirst.** Drip irrigation is key for container gardens, which need more water more often for almost all seasons in order to thrive. If you're building a new home, make sure you have a spigot with a backflow preventer installed in an accessible but off-to-the side place. For existing roof decks, run water lines from a spigot on the side of the house.
7. **Find audio/visual aids .** Whether you're using ambient lighting, safety/directional lighting or entertaining lighting, the ambiance of your space is important. Lighting can be hard-wired and incorporated into the whole design or accomplished through usage of outdoor lamps. And don't forget sound. Consider incorporating outdoor speakers into your design to transform your area into a prime party space.

To learn more about Topiarius, visit www.Topiarius.com, follow them on [Twitter](#) and [Pinterest](#), like their page on [Facebook](#).

About Topiarius Urban Garden and Floral Design:

Founded in 2003, Chicago-based [Topiarius](#) offers the best in urban garden and floral décor services. Co-owned by Craig and Sara Jenkins-Sutton, Topiarius offers outdoor landscape design and care from the construction and installation of furniture to regular maintenance, urban farming, exterior and interior seasonal decorating and snow and ice care. Topiarius also provides regularly scheduled floral arrangements and interior plant rotations. Their distinctive designs and professional installations are known for breathing new life into indoor and outdoor spaces. For more from Topiarius, follow them on LinkedIn, [Twitter](#) and [Pinterest](#), like their page on [Facebook](#).

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