



No matter what style you have, there is a fence out there that can enhance the architectural appearance of your home. In addition to adding design interest, fences provide boundaries for safety and privacy, to retain children and small pets, and to ward off the critters of nature. Often it is necessary, by law, to enclose structures, control noise, or restrict movement. Fences can provide these complete boundary enclosures or provide partial barriers. They may be made from wood, stone, bamboo, earth, iron or living plant material. The cost range depends on the materials chosen and any design and/or build services used.

When some of us hear fence, there is an immediate mental picture. For me it is the wooden post and board fencing that I spent my youth painting. That fencing was used and is still successfully used for large animal containment. It's functional yet, when up-kept, looks good in a rural setting whether in wood or permanently colored composite material. For defining suburban or urban yard spaces, a classic picket fence in natural, stained or painted wood can be tweaked and adapted to compliment many home styles and landscape situations. While welcoming, it clearly defines boundaries through the strong vertical construction. A relaxed split rail fence intimates boundaries without strict enforcement. These fences tend to be used in a natural state and allowed to weather or stained to look natural. Other materials such as willow, bamboo or grapevine can be constructed into a tied or woven wattle fence that provides a low stature with a calm, inviting and relaxed feel. You will often find these low, relaxed fencing structures put to good use with overflowing vines and other plant material.

If complete privacy is a priority, consider many of the composite or wood fences in solid styles. These vary from board louver and bevel siding styles to modern plastic panels inset between composite or wooden posts. For those homeowners with a bigger budget, iron fencing is finding its way back into the markets. Talented metal designers will do beautiful custom fences. Or there are many quality design choices in ready to use forms. Iron fences can come to the buyer with no finish - so that they will rust in the weather elements. Powder coat finishes can be applied to give a rich black coloration, or they can simulate an antiqued and painted look or even provide a finish that looks naturally rusted. Iron fencing, in large and small amounts, just exudes a feeling of permanence.

Living fences are a definite option if you have the space to allow them to grow and develop to maturity. Almost any plant material can be used for a living fence. The key is planning to make sure that all of the materials are

compatible and will not outgrow the allowed dimensions. Trees, shrubs, and perennials can all be combined to give beauty and multi-season interest to your boundaries and protect your privacy. Homogenous plant material may be used to give a more formal look to your fence area. Try creating a living fence woven out of cut willow. (It is as easy as inserting the willow branches into the soil prior to active spring growth but after the soil has somewhat thawed.) Design options may be as simple as growing posts or as complex as multi-layer woven wall designs.

Remember that if gathering plants, or any other materials, get the landowner's permission prior to removal. And always check the regulations in your community to insure compliance with all lot setbacks as well as any height restrictions. Before investing in any quality fence, define your reasons for construction. They are a substantial investment and do require care and maintenance. Is it for purely aesthetic reason or is there a practical function that needs to be met, such as human or animal containment, or safety measures to be considered? Then drive around and look at fences that others have constructed. Note your likes and dislikes in design and materials. Taking into consideration any special site requirements, decide if you want to tackle this project completely on your own, both in design and construction. Think about hiring a designer or architect. They will be able to skillfully blend your current architectural style to a fence that answers the needs you must satisfy while enhancing the quality and value of your home.