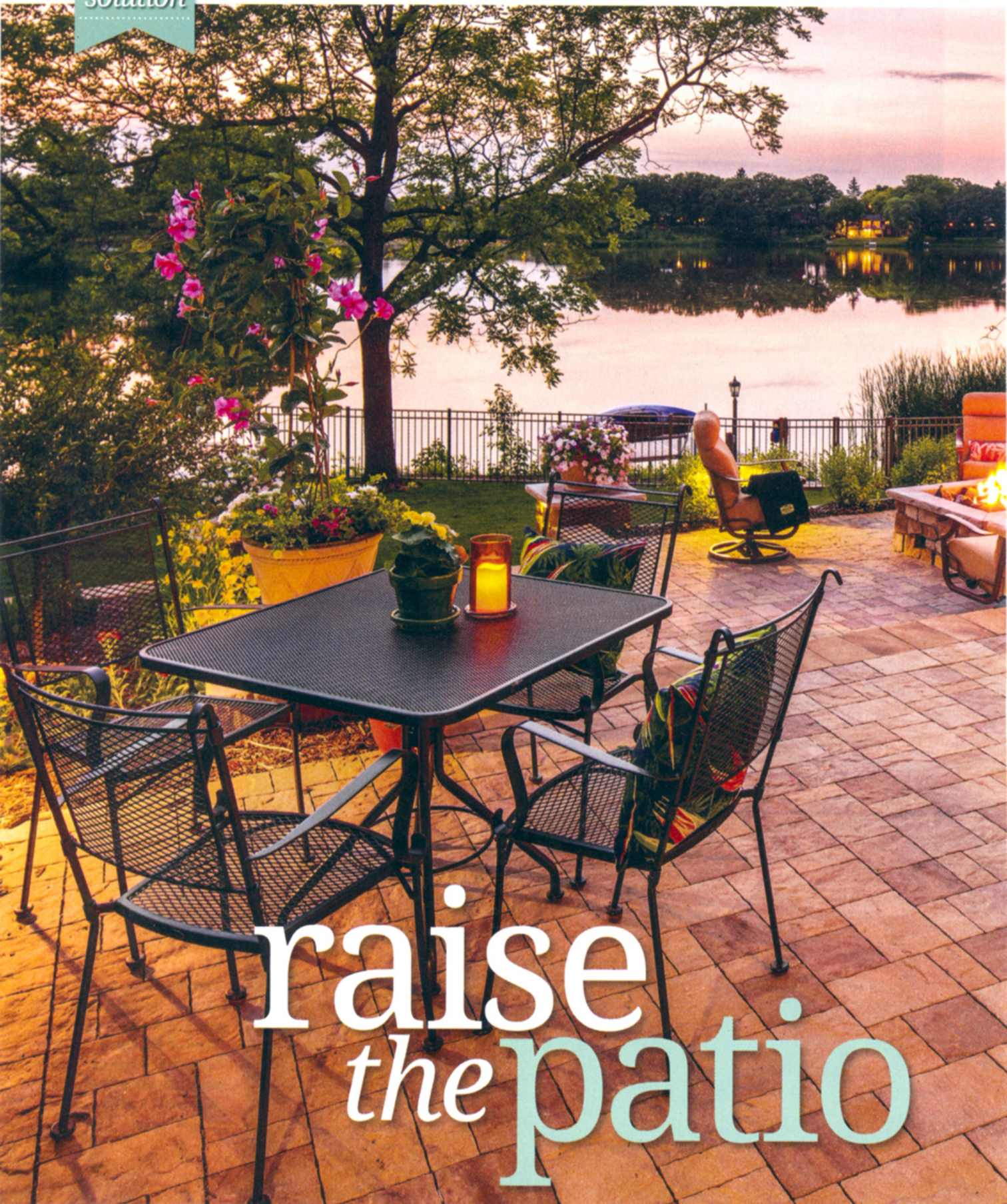


super  
solution



# raise *the* patio

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Goodbye high-maintenance deck. An eye-catching two-tier patio serves the same function and can withstand everything Minnesota throws at it—wind, rain, multiple feet of snow; wet, sandy feet; and sultry summer days.

Located on the shores of one of Minnesota's 10,000 lakes, this property offers incredible views of the water and has plenty of open space for kids, dogs, and adults to play. When the owners contacted landscape designer Colleen Moran, the list of amenities they requested for their new backyard was short—outdoor dining spots and a firepit with comfy seating. There was just one catch—no deck. The owners dislike railings that block views and despise the clutter that has a tendency to gather beneath a raised deck. They did not want a surface that required sealing or staining. The challenge was that the drop from the home's sliding glass doors to the ground below was nearly 8 feet.

Moran's solution? Tiered patios held in place by retaining walls that define dining spaces, a firepit-warmed gathering area, night lighting, and a timer-run drip irrigation system to water all the planting beds. Fill dirt packed with sand and laser-leveled

provides a solid foundation for precision-laid patio pavers. Because the neighboring houses were close, retaining walls were engineered to create usable spaces without the need for lengthy walls that could block neighbors' views. In lieu of pesky rails, wide staircases (that also serve as retaining walls) and raised planting beds were installed. The result? A no-maintenance outdoor space that can withstand anything Minnesota throws its way.

Small patio tables, *opposite*, enable the owners to arrange seating based on the number of diners. An additional table, *out of view*, is placed near the firepit.

Water-conserving irrigation drip lines water all the planting beds, *above*, even when the owners are away. The precise placement of beds alleviates the need for multiple railings.



Building code required only one rail to be installed between patio levels.



Choosing pavers in random sizes, top, is a great way to add a little more interest to your patio design. A segmental retaining wall block and cap, above, creates a comfortable 7-inch rise on every step.



Sleeves and piping connect the firepit to gas lines below. This opening provides access to the gas starter.

A remote control starter makes it easy to regulate the flames on the gas firepit, above. Multiple planting beds are filled with a variety of plants including daylilies, junipers, crabapple, phlox, spruce, hydrangea, Alpine currant, and astilbe.

### WILL A RAISED PATIO WORK FOR YOU?

Patios made from concrete pavers or natural stone require almost no maintenance and can last for 30 years or more, when properly installed. Poured concrete may crack over time.

Firepits and fireplaces can be installed directly on the surface, and planting beds can be installed in direct contact.

Settling can occur over time, so some minor adjustments may be necessary—sand may also need to be swept into the joints every few years.

Walkout lower levels are not candidates for raised patios—retaining walls will likely block windows and doors. Existing egress windows and the height of foundation walls may also eliminate a raised patio as a viable option.