



THE SUNNY SIDE OF THINGS

Exploring the benefits of three- and four-season rooms

BY LAUREN SIEBEN

A THREE- OR FOUR-SEASON ROOM is a great way to bring a little bit of the outside into your home. But which option is best for you, and what are the most important considerations when designing your dream sunroom?

THREE SEASONS VS. FOUR SEASONS

The main difference between a three-season and four-season room is temperature control, says Jude Tindall, owner of S.E. Wisconsin Sunrooms in Brookfield.

“A three-season room is made to keep things out — water, wind, dust, bugs, rain, things like that,” Tindall adds. “A four-season room allows you to feel like you’re outside while also using heat and air conditioning.”

A four-season room is more insulated, and a three-season room is ideal for people who want the feel of being outside while still keeping the elements at bay.

“You’ll get a lot of couples where the husband loves having the air conditioning on all summer, but the wife might like being outside,” Tindall says, noting that a three-season room is a good compromise for divided households.

A four-season room is usable year-round.

For many homeowners in frigid Wisconsin, that yearlong usability is attractive. Although a four-season room usually costs a bit more to construct than a three-season room, it can increase the value of your home by adding climate-controlled square footage to the house.

INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR DESIGN TRENDS

Designing the perfect sunroom requires attention to detail from the inside out. Regardless of whether you choose a three- or four-season room, windows and weatherproofing will be major considerations.

As you design the exterior of the sunroom, CertainTeed Siding Marketing Director Matt Gibson suggests considering whether you want it to look like a natural extension of your home or stand out as an accent. If the goal is to match your home, you’ll want to choose a siding that closely matches the wood grain and color on the rest of the house.

Homeowners looking to make a bolder statement often opt for wood or cedar shake siding, Gibson adds. Wide trim also helps windows pop, and an exterior stone façade can double as an attractive accent that helps manage water flow away from the roof and walls.

“Sunrooms are often an extension of the home, but people want (the room) to stand out a little bit,” Gibson says. “The trends are more toward adding a little pop or a little flair of design.”

As sunrooms have become more customizable, the sky is the limit when it comes to interior design, Tindall notes.

“As far as the interior touches, we’re seeing three-season rooms (that) tend to feature the wicker style of outdoor furniture,” he explains. “In four-season rooms, people tend to be decorating just like they would in their house, with traditional sofas.”

Tindall has also noticed an uptick in homeowners requesting sunroom wet bars, which creates a relaxing social space and utilizes the room as a sun-soaked den.

As design trends shift away from perfectly matching the rest of the house, homeowners have more opportunity than ever to flex their design skills and add personal touches to their sunrooms.

“Some people have a house built in the early ’90s with a lot of oak, but then in the sunroom they’ll make it more contemporary and modern,” Tindall says. **M**