

from the floor up

Area rugs head for the great outdoors

BY ANNE FLYNN WEAR

Sales of rugs often heat up in the summertime, but experts say that retailers who sell area rugs need to be knowledgeable about the differences in construction.

Depending on the materials used, their useful life can be short, around three to seven years, according to Lisa Wagner, a National Institute of Rug Cleaners (NIRC) certified rug specialist who shared the information with Consumer Reports. Wagner said that for people who live in humid or subtropical areas where mold and mildew are more present, the life of their outdoor rugs could be even shorter.

"It's important to factor in breathability," Wagner told Consumer Reports. "If the rug material doesn't allow for airflow, mildew will likely be a problem. You'll also want to consider an outdoor rug's durability, especially if you'll be using it in high-traffic areas or on surfaces readily exposed to the elements."

According to Wagner, it's also important to think about how labor-intensive the care and cleaning of the rug will be, since some materials may only need a pressure wash while others may require professional cleaning.

Construction makes a difference

According to outdoor rug manufacturers, polyester and polypropylene are the most popular fibers for outdoor rugs since they repel water and help prevent molding and rot.

Both fibers are man-made, but polypropylene's solution-dyed nature means the color is absorbed all the way through the fiber. Polyester, on the other hand, has a more luxurious feel underfoot.

Newer to the scene, according to the experts at Jaipur Living, is recycled PET, a fiber made from plastic water bottles. Once the bottles are melted down, fibers are extruded and spun to mimic natural yarn, like wool. For people who prefer eco-friendly and sustainable natural materials jute, sisal and seagrass are popular options, but they tend not to be as long lasting.

"More customers are buying indoor/outdoor rugs for indoor spaces these past few years," said Giovanna Marra, Nourison Home's vice president of marketing and creative. "Indoor/outdoor rugs can be durable and easily cleaned which makes them perfect for playrooms, family rooms, mud rooms, etc. They are also usually less expensive than other rugs which makes them attractive for value buyers."

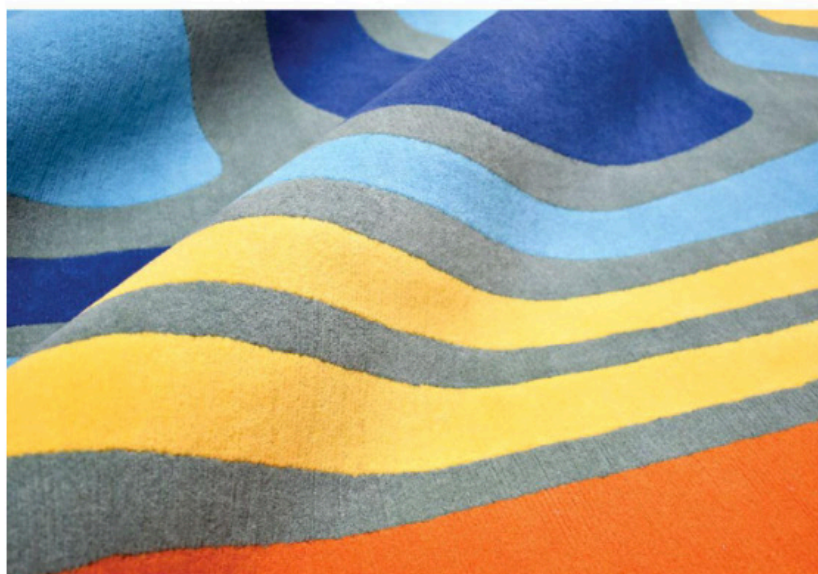
Summer sales

"The summer season is our prime season for selling outdoor rugs, as much of the northern USA has a more limited window of outdoor living and entertaining," said Austin Craley, Lolo Rugs vice president of sales. "However, in the southern USA outdoor rugs have become a year-round sale."

Adeleh Nassri, Unique Loom director of business development agrees. "The sales of



Loloi's Dawn Collection of indoor/outdoor rugs look like woven sisal rugs but are power-loomed of 100% polypropylene, which makes them water- and mildew-resistant.



Summer is the perfect time to infuse your space with lively and energetic hues, according to Fayette Studio. These shades can instantly add a refreshing touch to your décor and create a cheerful ambiance perfect for summer.



Tamarian's Moderna Blue Dusk is made of 100% wool and is hand-knotted in Nepal.

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