

OTTAWA PATIOS

Paver Patios

Concrete pavers, interlocking stone, patterns, base preparation and installation

3 Expert Answers from Patio IQ

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Is there a paver colour that stays cooler underfoot during Ottawa summers?

Lighter paver colours genuinely do stay cooler underfoot than darker shades, and this is worth thinking about for Ottawa summers that regularly push past 30 degrees Celsius with high humidity. A dark charcoal or espresso-toned paver sitting in full sun on a July afternoon in Ottawa can reach surface temperatures of 50 to 60 degrees Celsius — uncomfortable to walk on barefoot and noticeably warm even through sandals.

The science behind this is straightforward: lighter colours reflect more solar radiation rather than absorbing it. Beige, cream, sandstone, buff, and light grey pavers will consistently run 10 to 20 degrees cooler on the surface than their dark charcoal or black counterparts under the same sun exposure. If you have young children running barefoot to a pool or hot tub, or you simply enjoy a barefoot patio experience during Ottawa's warm months, this is a real and practical consideration rather than a minor detail.

That said, colour is only one piece of the thermal puzzle. **Texture matters almost as much as colour.** Pavers with a tumbled, brushed, or rough surface texture reflect light at multiple angles and hold less heat than a smooth, polished surface — even in the same colour family. A tumbled limestone-look paver in a medium buff tone will perform better thermally than a smooth, dark slate-look paver. Natural stone options like light granite or limestone also tend to stay cooler than dense concrete pavers of the same colour because of their different thermal mass properties.

Paver placement and site design have an enormous impact as well. A patio shaded by a pergola, mature trees, or a sail shade will stay dramatically cooler than an exposed slab regardless of colour choice. If your Ottawa backyard bakes in full afternoon sun from the southwest — which is common in newer subdivisions in Barrhaven, Kanata, and Stittsville where mature tree cover is minimal — shade structure planning deserves as much attention as paver colour selection.

One practical Ottawa-specific note: lighter pavers do show efflorescence (the white salt deposits that migrate to the surface) more visibly than medium tones, and Ottawa's heavy road salting season means salt-laden meltwater can migrate onto patio surfaces. Medium tones in the buff, sandstone, or warm grey range tend to strike the best balance between heat reflection, aesthetics, and hiding the minor surface variations that come with Ottawa's climate. A quality sealer applied every two to three years will also help with heat absorption by adding a slight reflective sheen while protecting the surface from moisture and salt damage.

How do I match new pavers to my existing Ottawa patio after an expansion?

Matching new pavers to an existing patio is one of the more genuinely tricky challenges in hardscaping, and it's worth being upfront: a perfect match is rarely achievable, but a very good match is absolutely possible with the right approach. The key is understanding why pavers change appearance over time and working with that reality rather than against it.

Concrete pavers fade and weather over the first two to five years of their life. Ottawa's intense UV summers, freeze-thaw cycles, and snowmelt exposure all accelerate this process. A brand-new paver sitting next to a five-year-old paver of the same product line will look noticeably different — the new one will be brighter and more saturated in colour, while the existing ones will have a softer, more muted tone. This gap narrows over time as the new pavers weather to match, but in the first season or two the difference can be quite visible.

Start with the manufacturer and product line. If you still have your original invoice or remember the contractor who installed your patio, track down the exact product name, colour name, and manufacturer. Techo-Bloc, Permacon, and Belgard all maintain product lines for years and can often match existing products. Bring a sample paver to the supplier — most Ottawa landscape supply yards will let you hold new pavers against your sample under natural light to compare. Indoor lighting is misleading, so always do this comparison outside.

If the original product has been discontinued, look for the closest current equivalent in the same manufacturer's line first, then branch out to competitors. Paver suppliers in Ottawa can often help you identify a discontinued product's successor. Colour names like "Oaks" or "Charcoal" tend to carry across product generations with similar formulations.

One practical trick that experienced installers use is to pull a few pavers from a less visible area of your existing patio — under a planter, near a fence line, or along the back edge — and use those weathered pavers in the most visible transition zone of the expansion. Install the new pavers in the less visible area where the colour difference matters less. This "shuffle" approach creates a much more natural blend at the seam.

Sealing both the old and new sections together after the expansion is complete is one of the most effective ways to visually unify the two. A quality penetrating sealer or a wet-look sealer applied across the entire patio surface will even out the colour tone and bring both old and new pavers to a similar sheen level. Wait at least 30 to 60 days after installing the new pavers before sealing to allow any efflorescence to work its way out. Ottawa's spring and early summer — May through June — is the ideal window for sealing, when temperatures are consistently above 10 degrees Celsius and rain is not forecast for 24 to 48 hours.

One important caution specific to Ottawa: if your existing patio is more than eight to ten years old and showing any signs of unevenness, joint erosion, or heaving from our freeze-thaw cycles, address those issues before expanding. Adding new pavers to an unstable existing base just extends the problem. Make sure the expansion area gets the

full treatment — a minimum 12 to 15 inches of compacted granular base — so the new section performs as well as the old one over Ottawa winters.

If the colour match is genuinely important to you and the expansion is substantial, it may be worth having an experienced hardscape installer assess the project. They often have access to supplier relationships and product knowledge that can identify the best available match. You can browse patio and hardscaping contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory if you want a professional opinion on the expansion scope.

Q3

How do I cut pavers around curved garden beds on my Ottawa patio?

Cutting pavers around curved garden beds is one of the more satisfying finishing details on a patio — when done well, it gives the whole space a clean, intentional look. The key is to mark your cut lines accurately before you ever touch a saw, and to use the right cutting tool for the curve radius you are working with.

Start by laying your pavers dry (without sand or adhesive) right up to the edge of the curve. Use a flexible garden hose or a can of marking spray paint to trace the curve line directly onto the paver faces. A grease pencil or chalk marker works well on concrete paver surfaces. Take your time here — the quality of your cut line determines the quality of your finished edge. Once marked, pull the pavers and cut them individually.

For the actual cutting, an **angle grinder with a diamond blade** is your most versatile tool for curved cuts on concrete pavers. You can follow a gentle arc freehand with an angle grinder in a way that a table-mounted wet saw simply cannot do. A wet saw (also called a masonry saw or paver saw) is excellent for straight cuts and slight angles, but curved cuts require the grinder. Make multiple shallow passes rather than trying to cut through in one aggressive pass — this gives you better control and reduces the chance of cracking the paver. Always wear eye protection, hearing protection, and a dust mask when cutting concrete pavers, and do the cutting outdoors or in a well-ventilated area.

For tight curves with small-radius bends, you may need to make a series of relief cuts — small notch cuts along the waste side of your line — before breaking away the excess material. This technique lets you nibble away at the curve rather than trying to follow a tight arc in one continuous cut. Natural stone flagstone is more forgiving for tight curves because you can score and snap it, but concrete pavers need the grinder approach.

One Ottawa-specific consideration worth mentioning: if your garden bed edge is going to be a permanent, defined border, consider installing a **paver edge restraint** along the curve before you backfill the bed. In Ottawa's freeze-

thaw environment, soil in garden beds expands and contracts seasonally, and without a proper restraint, the adjacent pavers can shift inward over time. A plastic or aluminum flexible edge restraint spiked into the granular base holds everything in place through 50-plus freeze-thaw cycles.

Also think about the joint width along your curved edge. Tight curves naturally create slightly wider joints on the outside of the arc — this is normal and expected. Fill these joints carefully with **polymeric sand**, pressing it firmly into any wider gaps. In Ottawa's wet springs and heavy rain seasons, loose or shallow joints along curved edges are the first place you will see washout and weed growth, so take extra care when finishing this area.

This is genuinely a project that a patient, detail-oriented homeowner can tackle on a smaller patio. The tools are rentable from most Ottawa equipment rental shops, and the technique is learnable with a few practice cuts on scrap pieces. For larger patios with complex curves or if you are working with premium natural stone, having an experienced hardscape installer handle the cutting and fitting is worth the investment — a botched cut on a \$15 flagstone piece is a frustrating waste.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Patios. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any patio, deck, or outdoor living project. Information is current as of September 6, 2026 and may change. Visit **ottawapatios.com** for the latest answers.