

Fall Home IMPROVEMENT GUIDE

Home Services Guide

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Exterior Renovations That Can Improve Home Value

Renovating a home to improve its value can be a smart investment. Interior improvements, such as updating kitchens and baths, offer good return on investment, but there are plenty of exterior renovations that can add value to a home and give it that coveted “wow” factor.

Landscaping

Abundant and well-planned landscaping can instantly boost curb appeal. According to the landscaping company Lawn Starter, 71 percent of prospective home buyers say a home’s curb appeal is an important factor in their buying

decisions. As buyers use the internet to look for their dream homes, there’s no denying a beautifully landscaped, nicely photographed property can entice buyers to click and read more about a house.

Address insects and minor repairs

Improving home value may come down to fixing areas of the home that can negatively affect its appeal to buyers. Hire an inspector to look at key components of the house and recommend what needs to be fixed. This way it is discovered before home buyers come in and do their own inspections.

Termite infestations, deteriorating roofs and hidden water leaks are some things that might need fixing.

Improve the entryway

The front door is the focal point of a home’s exterior. Invest in a new door or paint it a striking color to add appeal. Remodeling magazine’s “Cost vs. Value Report 2019” indicates changing an entry door to a steel replacement can offer 74.9 percent ROI. Such a door provides visual appeal and added security — things buyers look for. In addition to the front door, make sure that the entryway has a level walkway, steps

that are in good repair, accents that are free from rust or tarnish, and decorative plants.

Outdoor lighting

Outdoor lighting can add to the ambiance of a property and serve as a security feature. Utilize different lights, such as a bright light by the entry, uplighting in trees and shrubs for drama, a light-lined path to the door to improve visibility, and motion-detection lights to improve the security of the property.

Repaint (or reside) the exterior

A fresh coat of paint or new (or cleaned) siding

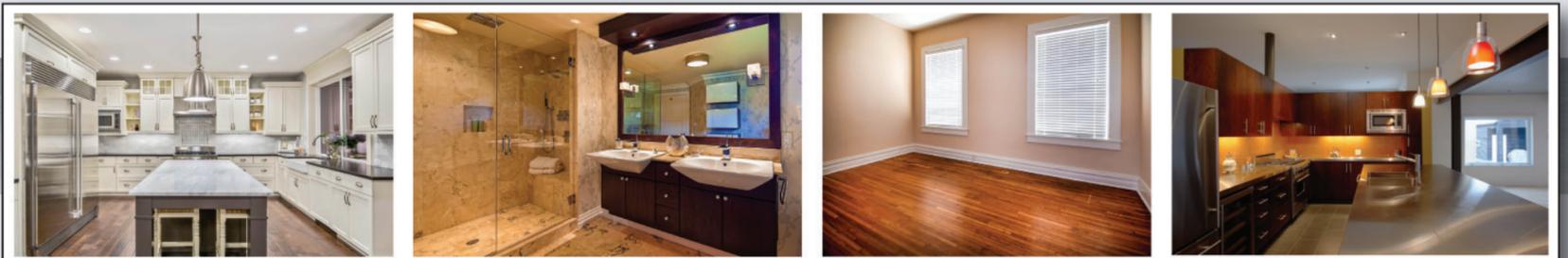
can instantly give homes a facelift. Neutral, warm and inviting colors tend to have the widest appeal. Adding manufactured stone veneer to the home can offer a 94.9 percent ROI, says Remodeling. And after doing the front door and siding, investing in a garage door replacement offers the highest ROI of all exterior projects listed on the “Cost vs. Value Report 2019.” This improvement returns 97.5 percent when selling. Knowing which improvements add value to a home can help homeowners tailor their efforts to those that are most financially beneficial.

Let’s talk about

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How to Hang Photos and Artwork with Ease

Personal touches turn a house into a home

Hanging pictures, whether they're personal photographs or artwork, can really change the character of a room.

Unfortunately, some people may not know the proper ways to display pictures on a wall. Design maven Martha Stewart advises that the first step is to gather all of the pictures that are in consideration for hanging. This will enable a person to see what is available and edit their selection based on the space available, theme or color scheme. Having the artwork there enables a person to move it around like a puzzle until the placement feels just right.

Next, plan on hanging artwork at 57 inches on center, according to the renovation experts at Apartment Therapy. "On center" means the middle of the photograph or painting will always be at 57", as this measurement represents the average human eye height. This height is regularly used as a standard in many galleries and museums. When the goal is to hang multiple pictures, treat the entire



grouping as a single unit. This means creating the layout and finding the center of the middle piece of the grouping. To make picture grouping easier, use paper templates with arrows to indicate whether the artwork will be hung horizontally or vertically. These templates can then be easily taped to the wall and rearranged until the grouping is ideal.

There are no hard and fast rules concerning frames, meaning they do not all have to match. But placing framed artwork

side by side can give a person a feel for whether the images and the frames work together in the space. Some people like to use frames of similar colors and sizes. Others want the eclectic mix-and-match appeal. It's ultimately up to the homeowner.

Measuring is key to hanging a picture correctly on the wall. Take into consideration the type of attachment, whether it's D-rings, sawtooth hangers, wire, or other fasteners on the back. Measure from the top of the frame to the hanger. Measure

the wall to achieve the 57" on center location, and then calculate where this falls within the height of the artwork and frame top. Adjust accordingly and mark. Then measure the distance from the frame top to the hanger location on the wall.

Be sure to take the weight of the picture into consideration when selecting hanging hardware. Wall anchors may be needed if measurements determine a wall stud will not help secure the artwork — to keep the frame sturdy in the drywall. Home improvement resource Today's Homeowner also suggests using self-adhesive rubber bumpers to the bottom corners on the back of the frame before hanging so that the picture will not damage the wall and will help it hang level. It can take a few attempts to hang pictures correctly, but with practice it should come with greater ease.

The good news is there are new products constantly being evolved to make picture hanging easier, including those that enable removal and relocation of artwork without damaging walls.

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Protect Your Plants From Winter Weather

For the majority of gardening enthusiasts, gardening is a warm weather activity. While some people live in climates that make it possible to enjoy gardening year-round, those who don't often lament the end of the gardening season.

Winter might not be conducive to gardening, but the arrival of cold weather does not necessarily mean a gardener's work is done until the following spring. Taking steps to protect plants from winter weather is an important part of maintaining a healthy garden that thrives from year to year.

Timing is of the essence when winterizing a gar-

den. The online gardening resource Get Busy Gardening!™ advises gardeners that the best time to winterize is after the first hard freeze in the fall. A hard freeze occurs when temperatures dip below freezing overnight. When that occurs, annual plants and vegetables are killed off and perennial plants, which grow back year after year, begin going dormant.

Perennials are the easiest plants to prepare for winter, as they require just a little cutting back and mulching to be safe from cold weather. But no two perennials are alike, so homeowners should consult their local gardening center for

advice on how to prepare their particular perennials for the coming months.

The steps necessary to winterize annuals depends on which type of annuals, cool- or warm-climate, you have. Cool-climate annuals should be covered with polyspun garden fabric when light frost is in the forecast. In addition, pull dead annuals and add them to a compost pile after a killing frost. Any annuals that developed fungal disease should be discarded. Mulch annual beds with a three-to-four-inch layer of chopped leaves or similar materials, spreading the mulch only two inches thick over self-sown seeds you want to

germinate in the spring.

Warm-climate annuals also should be covered with polyspun garden fabric when light frost is expected. Seeds of cold-hardy annuals can be planted for extended winter bloom, while gardeners also can collect seeds of warm-weather plants that will breed true to type. Even though you're winterizing, continue to weed and water plant beds and plants while also keeping an eye out for pests. If organic mulch has decomposed or thinned out, replace it with a new layer.

Get Busy Gardening!™ notes that the bulbs of tender plants like dahlias

and tuberous begonias can be dug up and overwintered in their dormant state. All dead foliage should be removed after the bulbs have been dug up, and the bulbs should be allowed to dry out a little before being stored. Container gardeners can overwinter their tender bulbs in their pots inside, but be sure to remove their foliage and store them in a dark, cool place that maintains temperatures above freezing.

Winterizing may mark the end of gardening season, but it's an important task that can ensure a healthy, beautiful garden next spring, summer and fall.



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Preparing Your Home For Cooler Days



By: Bryanna Bradley

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Gutters & Downspouts

Cleaning these regularly until the leaves are done falling will prevent water from causing damage. Clogged gutters can also attract unwanted critters that could try to make their way inside. If you aren't comfortable with cleaning them yourself, get in touch with a local contractor as

Windows, Doors, and Openings

Checking windows, doors and the perimeter of your home for gaps and openings will prevent cold air from getting in, warm air from getting out, save on energy bills, and keep your home comfortable. Sealing these with caulking, sealant, or stripping

will also keep bugs out as they seek refuge from the cold.

Trees & Shrubs

Fall and winter are ideal times to trim, prune, and top trees and shrubs. This can be dangerous for those with limited or no tree trimming experience. Hiring a professional could be the best option for safety measures and to save time. If you have a fireplace or wood burning stove in your home, ask them to save tree trimmings for your firewood supply.

Heaters

Changing filters and having appliances such as heaters, furnaces, water heaters, etc. inspected before cold weather arrives insures things run smoothly. Many contractors do not work on weekends and there are few things worse than a busted furnace or water heater for two days in the middle of winter!

Outdoor/Indoor Pipes

Frozen water inside pipes can expand and cause them to burst. Wrap exposed outdoor pipes with insulated "sleeves" that can be found at hardware stores, this will prevent costly pipe damage. In severely cold weather let water drip from faucets with exposed pipes, such as kitchen and bathroom sinks. The running water will keep the pipes

from freezing.

Roofing

From the ground with binoculars or by using a ladder to climb up, inspect the surface of your roof for signs of deterioration and damages. Shingle roofs are the most common in America and last for about 10-15 years. Call a specialist to fix or seal any issues before fall rain or winter storms hit.



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