



The Small Details That Make A Big Difference To Your Outdoor Living Space

Creating an atmosphere that people want to be a part of through fresh and functional design elements

Alison Hoesli
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Homeowners are often consumed by the latest interior design trends, from current furniture styles and textures to make a living space more unique to color schemes that have flair. All too often, they spend so much time focusing on the interior that the exterior space falls to the wayside. But it's the exterior that frequently makes the boldest impression with neighbors, friends and family, and in a sales environment, even potential buyers.

That's why you'll often hear home staging experts reference "The C's of Home Staging," and more often than not, number one on that list is curb appeal.

“I always bring up curb appeal to my clients,” said [Showhomes](#) franchisee Dana Baggett. “If there are weeds in the lawn and untrimmed shrubs, the inside of the house probably isn’t taken care of either. There is nothing more important than making a great first impression and your yard is always going to be a drawback if it’s not properly cared for.”

According to Baggett, homes are often branded by specific characteristics that attract or detract potential buyers. For example, a home that has large window panes and cream colored walls might be referred to as “the house with a lot of light” while a house with a noticeable, decorative feature like a wrap-around porch would be “that place with the rustic porch.”

“A buyer might look at five houses in a day and will probably only go back to three of those houses the next day through process of elimination,” said Baggett. “Of all of the things that might bring someone back the next day, or not, do you really want the reason to be because your house was ‘the one with the terrible yard?’”

There are a few simple remedies that can make an outdoor space really shine. For starters, make sure the landscape is contemporary.

“Landscaping can really age a home if it’s old fashioned, overgrown or taking away from the natural beauty” said Baggett. “If the house has a feature you love, like a big window or a big front porch, make sure you’re enhancing it rather than hiding it. Ripping out some overgrown bushes and planting colorful flowers or trees can give an entire house a face lift.”

Proper maintenance of the backyard is just as important. If there’s a playset in the backyard, declutter and pick up loose toys. If you have a pool or patio, make sure it’s pressure washed seasonally, that furniture is arranged, and that it frames the house properly.

“If your patio is too small and not to the scale of your house, consider expanding it. The same can be said of patios that are too large,” said Baggett. “Even adding something as simple as a canopy or bistro set can make the space look warm and inviting.”

A porch renovation is another great home improvement project – not only to increase value and improve the look and feel, but even to keep the family safe.

“The biggest eyesore that homeowners overlook is dilapidated wood decking and railings. They walk by it so often that their deck or porch becomes invisible to them,” said [AZEK Building Products](#) chief marketing officer Julia Fitzgerald. “The problem with this is that eventually, splinters end up in someone’s toes and fingers or the wood rots. It’s not just an eyesore – the deck actually becomes dangerous.”

This can also be a great way to enhance the home’s value and versatility.

“Homeowners can now design decks that look like a wire brushed tropical hardwood floor,” said Fitzgerald. “We’ve seen many homeowners choosing curved edges over straight edges and multiple shades of gray gaining popularity over more classic wood stains. We’ve also noticed that tastemakers are framing their decks in contrasting colors so the decking looks almost like

an area rug.”

Ultimately, a little TLC can go a long way. Your yard should be an extension of your home, so dress it up and play a little! Updating the space doesn't have to be an extravagant investment, but small changes can significantly improve overall aesthetics, become an attribute when selling, and provide a great area for family and friends to gather, relax and enjoy.