

Curb Appeal: Landscaping & Gardens

In a recent report from the National Association of Realtors (NAR), 99 percent of their participating members said they believe curb appeal is important in attracting a buyer. First impressions are hard to undo, and the first impression that homebuyers get is from your yard and landscaping. Overgrowth of grass, weeds, shrubs, and trees can negatively impact a buyer's first impression. ***Standard lawn-care service and landscape maintenance topped NAR's chart for the most important investments for preparing your home for resale. This includes simple items like regular mowing, pruning, and annual mulch application.***



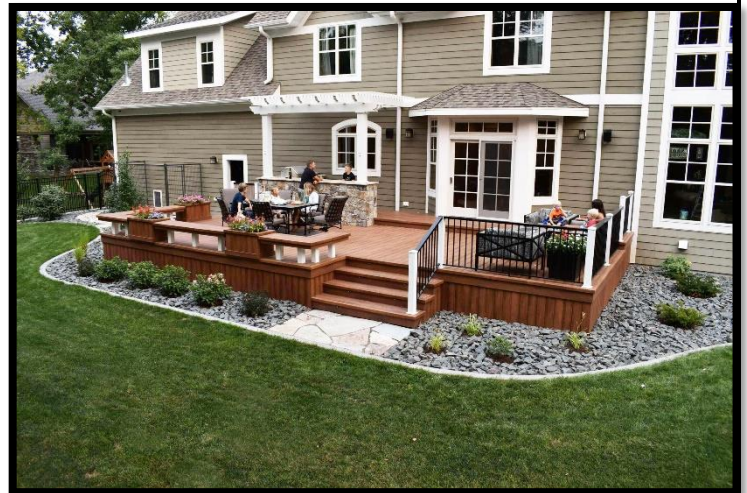
The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) claims professional landscaping can add to a home's price tag ***"15 percent to 20 percent more at the time of resale" and up to 30% on high end landscaping!***

But there are do's and don'ts for landscape and garden improvements. Some changes will boost your homes values, while others will

decrease it! Enhancements may backfire in other ways. For example, certain landscaping projects can be considered high maintenance or too costly to maintain. A lush, green lawn may be attractive in many areas but is not practical in drought zones due to their high-water requirement. ***(Xeriscaping, landscaping in a style which requires little or no irrigation, may be one of the most expensive landscaping projects up front — but as climate change rocks the country with droughts and warmer temperatures, it's getting more popular. The ASLA has reported that members have seen a 10% growth in client demand for drought-resistant landscaping)***

Decks, are a very popular option, for entertainment and even cooking. In effect, it increases the usable square footage of the house. They ***return an estimated 83%*** of the amount spent. That may sound like a losing proposition, but an outdoor kitchen space keeps your house on the shortlist of an expanding group of buyers. Properly finish and weather-proof the space for your climate so it will last for years to come. That means building in a firepit in cold climates and making sure there is good shade and air circulation in warmer ones. For smaller houses, ***Romana***

King, director of content for the Canadian real estate website Zolo.ca, recommended creating an all-season outdoor space, particularly one that can lend itself to outdoor dining. She said sales figures show that well-planned and executed outdoor spaces contribute 10% to 15% of a property's value. SmartMoney.com has a similar estimate. It says a dining area, dry-laid patio, a patch of gravel, a covered patio, or an above-grade deck raise the value of your home by 12.4%.



Pools can be seen as a safety hazard and require fencing and added security in many municipalities, and have a high degree of maintenance in the North East...However, especially in warmer climates pools are much more welcome, so, weigh carefully, before installing. Ponds, waterfalls and other water features can present a safety issue for young kids and pets. They can also require constant upkeep. Elaborate constructions such as an outdoor kitchen or a tennis court may be counterproductive, if the cost of the addition is *significant enough to push the home's value higher than that of neighborhood comps, and again in the North East, have a limited amount of use per year.*



Landscaping trends may change over time, *but the most financially-rewarding projects tend to be the same: They're low-maintenance, attractive, and expand your enjoyment and use of the home.*

Large mature trees, providing shade and privacy are always an asset! We do not want them too close to the house, and pruning is necessary, but as long as they do not crowd the yard and take away open

spaces, are always welcome. Lighting hardware has changed in recent years, with solar-powered and LED lighting products adding alternatives to traditional hard-wired lighting. *They show off your garden at night, silhouette your trees, keep everyone safe from tripping and keep burglars away.*

Here in the North East, plan your gardens to be seasonal. Pops of color from planting annuals, can be replaced by mums and pumpkins as the days get cooler and shorter! Remember KISS, "keep it simple stupid" You can have very nice and well-maintained landscaping, without spending a fortune in either time or money...*Any questions or thoughts? Feel free to call or text us anytime.*

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