

Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers

Backyard Lighting Ideas

The right lighting in your backyard can truly set the mood for some fun outdoor evenings. You may want to have a combination of lighting styles throughout your yard, and there's an assortment of options for you to choose from.



Security lighting

Security lighting will probably be the brightest source of light in your backyard. It's meant to illuminate the entire area, keeping your home safer at night. It is typically placed in raised areas, like on the top of a garage.

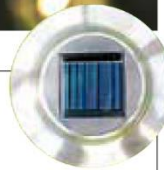


String lighting

Great for entertaining, string lights will provide warm, low-level accent lighting. You'll want to opt for a waterproof option that's rechargeable or battery-operated to avoid the need for unsightly extension cords. They can be hung from just about anywhere.

Solar lights

Solar lights are great green solution for lighting your backyard space. They come in a wide array of sizes and varying lumen levels.



Landscape lighting

Landscape lighting beams a narrow light upward, varying from low to high intensity, and can be used to illuminate and showcase beautiful plants or lawn ornaments. If you're illuminating something tall like a tree, it's best to use bullet-shaped lights that have an adjustable head.



Lanterns

Lanterns offer soft, low-level lighting and can be a beautiful addition to the architecture and decor of your home. If you don't want to attach a lantern to your home's exterior, you can find battery-powered tabletop options.



Path lighting

If you're looking for soft lighting that will safely illuminate the walkways in your backyard, path lighting is the way to go. You can install it along stepping stones, both sides of any walkway or even along the curves of flower beds and gardens.

Buying a Home With Children



When house hunting, you probably have an extensive list of things that you want to consider while you search. Your list gets even longer when children are involved. You'd like to satisfy your wants and needs, but also those of your children. The goal is to find a home that every member of the family can feel comfortable and flourish in. Here are three key considerations when buying a house with children in mind.

1 The size and layout – Some of the most important areas of a home are the kitchen, bedrooms and bathrooms. You'll want to find somewhere that has enough space for all the members of your household to be comfortable. Is this a home that you plan to raise your family in? You may want a home that has some extra space that allows room for your family to grow.

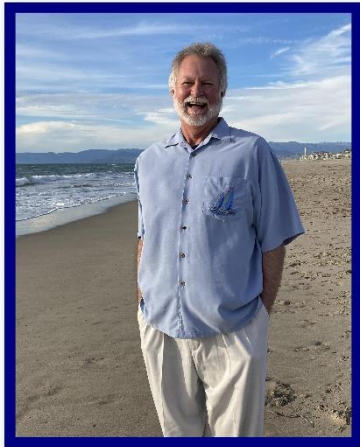
2 Nearby recreational amenities – Where is the nearest playground, baseball field, pool or basketball court? You may want to find a house that has backyard space that allows for you to facilitate these amenities at home if other options are too far away.

3 Local school system – Research schools and districts before you even begin your search. This may determine which areas you want to strongly consider and which areas are an immediate no-go.



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1 Find the power washer that will work best for you. There are both electric and gas power washers that you can choose from. If you have a tougher job on your hands, you may want to go for the gas variety. Also, be sure to consider what materials your house is made of, as the amount of water pressure that different materials can withstand varies.



2 Prepare the area and yourself. Be sure to seal your doors and windows, as well as cover or move any plants, air conditioning units, light fixtures and outlets. You may want to pre-scrub the area before you begin. Never power wash while you're standing on a ladder, and always wear the proper protective gloves and goggles.

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Power Washing Your Home

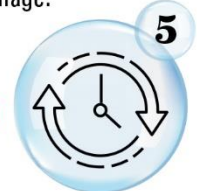
Looking to boost your home's curb appeal? Power washing is a great way to remove the dirt, mildew and soot from your home, or to help prep your home for a fresh layer of paint. It's best to power wash your house during the spring or fall, as the heat from the summer sun will likely dry the cleaning agents before you have a chance to rinse them off. However, it's a much more involved process than just spraying the house with your garden hose. Power washing can be a risky task if you aren't following the proper recommendations. Here are five steps to power washing your home safely.



3 Mix your washing solution and set up the power washer. Use a five-gallon bucket to mix mildewcide, a cleaning agent and water according to the manufacturer's directions. Then attach the power washer to your garden hose and choose the appropriate pressure washer nozzle. Do a test shot by stepping back at least three feet, adjusting your stance and the water to a level that will clean your home without causing damage.



4 Go from the bottom to the top. You're less likely to miss cleaning a section of the house if you work from the bottom to the top, spraying from side to side. Maintain a 45-degree angle when you are cleaning gutters and roof overhangs.



5 Repeat until you've finished the whole house. When you are done, you can remove any tarps and sealing you used to prep the house. If you're planning to paint, let the exterior dry for at least two days.

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