

5 outdoor projects that add value

Exterior renovations can enhance the appearance of a property and make it more enjoyable for homeowners. Certain renovations have the potential to add value to a home, while others may do the opposite. Learning which one have the largest return on investment can help homeowners select features that will have the most positive impact. Curb appeal goes a long way toward attracting potential buyers. According to the National Association of Realtors, first impressions of a property have a strong influence on buyers. Landscaping and external features can do much to influence such impressions.

Lawn care program: Investing in a lawn care program that consists of fertilizer and weed control application and can be transferred over to a subsequent home owner is an attractive feature. NAR says such a care program

can recover \$1,000 in value of the \$330 average cost, or a 303 percent ROI.

Low-maintenance lifestyle: When choosing materials for projects, those that offer low-maintenance benefits can be preferential. These include low-maintenance patio materials, composite decking, vinyl fencing, and inorganic mulched beds.

Fire pit: A fire pit can be used for much of the year. In the spring and summer, the firepit is a great place to congregate to roast marshmallows or sip wine and gaze into the fire. In the fall, the fire pit can make for a cozy retreat. A fire pit that has a gas burner is low-maintenance, and the National Association of Landscape Professionals says that most can recoup about \$4,000 of their \$6,000 average price tag.

Softscaping: Hardscaping refers to



structures like outdoor kitchens or decks. Softscaping involves the living elements of the landscape. Hiring a landscape designer to install trees, shrubs, natural edging, and rock elements can do wonders toward improving the look and value of a home.

Pool or water feature: In certain markets, particularly hot climates, a pool or another water feature is a must-

have. However, in other areas where outdoor time is limited, a pool or water feature can actually lower the value of a home. Speaking with a real estate professional can give homeowners an idea of how a pool will fare in a given neighborhood.

Outdoor improvements can improve the marketability of a home, as well as enhance its appearance and function.



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