

your home

Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers

GRASS ROOTS grooming



➤ Owning a home with a luscious lawn is a dream for many. But once you have it, how do you care for it? At first, it may seem like a lot of work, but it's actually not difficult if you take the time to learn. Here are some tips on how to maintain a pristine lawn.



Watch out for weeds. Proper weed care is twofold: preventing them from sprouting and removing them when they do grow. Use a pre-emergent herbicide to stop weeds from taking hold in your lawn. If a few grow, you can pick them out by hand. Or if there are a few patches of weeds, use a granular weed control product to wilt them away without harming your grass.

Mow the right way. Don't cut your lawn too short, as it may damage the grass and not allow roots to take hold. A general rule is never trim more than one-third of the blade of grass at a time. Also, the blade of your mower should be sharpened or replaced at least once a mowing season. A dull blade results in a jagged cut, leaving your grass looking malnourished and unsightly.



Provide nutrients. Watering and feeding your lawn in the right way will result in increased and consistent lawn health. When watering, make sure to do so in the early morning, as it gives the sun time to help evaporate the water sitting on the grass blades. Moisture that sits on your lawn may cause disease. When feeding, use a mixture of fast- and slow-release nitrogen-enriched fertilizers to keep your lawn healthy. But make sure not to apply fertilizer to any dormant grass, as it can't absorb nutrients when in this state.



ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOMES

Going green at home can not only reduce your carbon footprint, but also save you money in the future. Here are a few ideas you can implement to make your home more energy-efficient.

LOW-COST SAVINGS

- ➔ Keep your thermostat low
- ➔ Start a compost heap
- ➔ Use cool water for washing clothes
- ➔ Limit space heater use
- ➔ Switch to low-flow shower heads
- ➔ Seal all windows to prevent air escaping
- ➔ Don't waste water
- ➔ Unplug unused chargers

LARGER INVESTMENTS

- ➔ Buy Energy Star products
- ➔ Replace your desktop computer
- ➔ Install solar panels
- ➔ Perform an energy audit
- ➔ Tighten connections on your HVAC system
- ➔ Add a storm door
- ➔ Install attic insulation

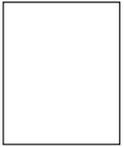


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DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS THINKING ABOUT BUYING OR SELLING A HOME? PLEASE MENTION MY NAME.

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boost YOUR VALUE

Homeowners are always looking for ways to increase the value of their property. However, some improvement projects are costly and may not result in the increased value that's desired. Which projects should you focus on and which ones will result in the highest ROI for your home?



1 Add a bathroom—Converting unused space, extra bedrooms or closets into another bathroom for your home can really add value to your property. HGTV estimates 80%–130% of those costs can be recouped when selling the home later. For a half-bath, you should have 18 square feet of space to work with; for a full bath, 30–35 square feet is ideal.

2 Energy-efficient windows and insulation—Going green is always a smart move. For new energy-efficient windows, you can recoup about 60%–90% of your investment, along with applying a 10% federal tax credit for installing green windows. Adding these together, it's a net positive to upgrade. Your home may have dated doors and insulation that let heat or cold air escape. For as little as \$200, you can add updated insulation to save hundreds of dollars per year on your energy bills.

3 Kitchen updates—The kitchen is considered the heart and centerpiece of a house. Kitchen remodels can range in price from \$5,000–\$75,000, but you don't have to overspend when improving your space. Brightening the room with a fresh coat of paint or investing in energy-efficient appliances (which will save you or buyers money down the line) can help you recoup an estimated 60%–120% of your original investment, according to HGTV.

4 Build a deck—Having a robust outdoor living setting has become very important for homeowners and buyers alike. Adding a deck to spruce up your backyard can increase the value of your home and attract more offers when you're ready to sell. Costs can range between \$1,200–\$10,000, depending on materials used and the size of the structure, but you can get back 60–90% of the costs when selling the home.

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