

Looking to Sell? Some Outdoor Improvements Bring Returns on Investment — Some Won't: Farrell on Real Estate

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Despite our recent bouts with wintery weather, spring really is on the way. And if you are dreaming about getting outdoors and doing some planting, you will be happy to know that landscaping improvements bring big returns on investment for the homeowner.

In fact, outdoor projects have been shown to get back well over a 100 percent return on investment and many times, much more. The ever-important value of curb appeal, which is largely dependent on your landscaping, can add significantly to your home's overall value.

Easy and low-cost gardening improvements include adding color with annuals, perennials or flowering shrubs in beds or in pots. Edging and mulching beds is also beneficial and adds to a finished look. Additionally, a well-kept lawn is a big asset. Removing weeds and keeping the lawn trimmed and clean goes a long way in making a good impression.

Trees are a huge asset and can add up to \$10,000 in value to a property according the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers. Trees can also bring significant savings to energy bills, saving \$250 a year in heating and cooling costs, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. By blocking sun, trees keep homes cooler in summer months and by blocking winds in winter, keep homes warmer.

Not all outdoor projects are created equal however. Investing in the installation of a pool may not be your best bet. Homebuyers may not be as likely to pay the additional \$75,000 or so that it may cost to install a

pool.

Better options among outdoor landscaping projects include creating visually pleasing garden paths, installing outdoor lighting for evening safety and aesthetics, and fire pits and fencing to create outdoor entertainment space. Ponds, fountains and hot tubs can also add to home value and outdoor appeal.

All that being said, the simple act of getting outside and enjoying the outdoors is a great value to your well-being. Bring on spring!

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