

Selling Your Home? How Avoiding This Mistake Can Earn You Thousands!

You remember the old adage that "you never get a second chance to make a first impression." For anyone interested in selling their home, this adage should be the first thing in their mind as they prepare their property for sale. With the help of a good realtor, a seller can get objective advice as to what "fix-it" items need to be addressed on their property before their house is put up for sale. Without a doubt, the first place they should start is in their front yard and surrounding exterior. For many prospective buyers, how you maintain the front exterior of your home can be the difference between a buyer telling their agent that they want to take a look at your house or to keep driving on to the next home for sale. This is what is known in the business as "curb appeal." If you have watched HGTV, you might have seen the show where the realtor walks in to view the house that is being prepared for sale and he or she makes a disparaging comment about the curbside view of the house the minute they drive up. Don't let this common mistake happen to you. If you've lived in your home for several years there is a good chance that there is something in your yard that needs to be cleaned, trimmed or thrown out. Very often sellers have grown accustomed to some of the undone projects around their yard and need to now view these items with a critical eye. From hedges and trees that can use some additional trimming to leftover home project materials that might have accumulated in a corner. With a little sweat equity and relatively little cost, spending time cleaning up the yard can improve the sale price of your home by up to five thousand dollars and also immediately improve the chances of your property being shown to several prospective buyers. The following is a checklist of items you might need to attend to:

- * Too many flower pots or clutter around the front entryway - although a single plant in a decorative pot might enhance the front entryway, a variety of pots can detract from the entryway's appearance. Pare them down to one or two at the most and get rid of old or broken pots.
- * Tires or left over home improvement project materials - even home improvement materials that are stacked neatly can give a cluttered appearance. It's time to get rid of them or donate them to someone who can use these materials.
- * Firewood - if you can't find a place to stack firewood neatly, you should reconsider having it in your yard at all. Firewood can attract bugs so you might be better off paring down the amount of firewood you keep.
- * Dated playground equipment - If your aluminum playground equipment is rusty or if it was previously brightly colored but has since faded due to the exposure to the elements, now may be the time to dismantle the equipment and get rid of it.
- * Lawn clippings and other natural waste - Sometimes leaves and debris can get stuck in corners of the yard that you might have not otherwise noticed. Have a trusted friend objectively review your yard and point out what you might have missed. Also make sure you check debris in your rain gutters.
- * Bicycles and other kid's toys - Try creating storage for bicycles in the garage on a bicycle rack or other type of storage device. Besides being a tripping hazard, bicycles are best kept in the garage or storage shed to reduce visual clutter.
- * Bottles, cans & trash - Most people maintain their yard adequately; however, if you have kids they may not always be as diligent in picking up their soda cans and similar items. Make sure your yard is free of this debris.
- * Exterior lights - Although most people will view your property in the daytime, a prospective buyer might drive by in the early evening. Make sure any exterior lights have had their light bulbs replaced.
- * Mow the lawn, Trim the hedges - A neat, lush lawn and trimmed hedges add to the beauty of your home. If you have not regularly maintained your lawn, now is the time to pay attention to all these details.
- * Pets - This is probably the most sensitive area for most homeowners, since pet owners love their pets and are tolerant of the negative side of pet ownership. However, just as there are many people who own pets; there are equally just as many who do not care for them. If you have an outdoor pet, now is the time you may need to keep him on a leash and keep his water bowl and dish scrupulously clean. While the mere mention of these items may seem rude or offensive, a professional real estate agent will not hesitate to share this checklist with you if these items apply in your situation. Remember, don't under-estimate the drawing power of a clean, well maintained lawn and surrounding yard: you might not get a second chance.

About the Author

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