

Spring, curb appeal and psychology: appealing to potential buyers | Home & Living

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Spring is the season to tackle yardwork as well as housekeeping and repair, especially if the end goal is a home sale.

Statistically, Virginia's single-family home, townhome and condo sales were at their greatest last year between May and August, and peaked in June, according to the Virginia Realtors' "Virginia Home Sales Fourth Quarter and Year-End 2017" report.

Regardless of whether you're selling your home, there is no better time to get outside and enjoy the sun – especially after Hampton Roads' most recent winter.

If you are selling, there is extra incentive to spruce up the garden and increase curb appeal. By the time potential buyers arrive at the front door, you've already made a first impression by the way your yard looks.

It is an emotional process and connection, to be sure, as potential buyers decide how hard that yard will be to get into shape or how easy it will be to maintain. Some things you as the homeowner should consider are weeding, decluttering, tree maintenance and exterior paint.

I like to tell my clients that the door isn't just the portal, it's the first on-site glimpse at a house that potential buyers have undoubtedly been eyeing on the internet. They've seen all the photos and have chosen your home out of all the others. When they get to that door, it should be clean and painted, with no cobwebs or chipped paint marring it.

Imagine how long it takes for the agent to get the key from the lockbox and open the door. Those buyers are standing there, looking at the door, doorknob and surrounding areas. If there are cobwebs, bugs, dirty light fixtures or leaves at the door, it might be a harder sell than if the house had a clean door with a sparkling knob, nice welcome mat and flowers.

Which would leave you with a better emotional connection? If you capture the buyers' hearts, you'll capture the sale.

To that end, think about lining your walkway with inexpensive potted plants. If you have room, perhaps add a small table and chairs on the front porch.

The lawn is an important area to address. There is something to be said about beautiful curb appeal. Fertilizing, mowing, trimming and resodding bare spots can help with curb appeal.

Removing lawn ornaments is also more appealing to the masses. Yes, the garden gnome is cute, and so is the bird feeder your child made in class, but it might not help with that connection a homeowner seeks when trying to sell. These items may be perceived as too

personal.

Also, take a long look at the trees in your yard. Do they need to be pruned? Can you cut back some of the limbs to give a cleaner aesthetic? Is the expertise of an arborist needed? If so, it will be worth it if it warrants a quicker sale.

If shrubs are blocking the way to the front door, they should be trimmed, too. Fresh mulch does wonders for a house. It tells potential buyers they won't have to work on the yard much that first year (and it just looks better). Make sure your lawn is watered and mowed.

How about your walkways, steps, porch and stoop? A good power washing will make all look stunning and brighter, and potted flowers on the stoop are a happy touch. Everyone loves flowers! A well-placed boulder or large rock also is inviting near the front walkway. These add different elements to look at as buyers are walking up to the door.

Toys, bikes or other items in the front yard are a big turn-off to potential buyers. The cleaner and less cluttered a property is, the quicker it will sell.

Having a clean, well-designed and welcoming exterior will help buyers fall in love with your home even before they walk through the front door.

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