

YOUR HOME

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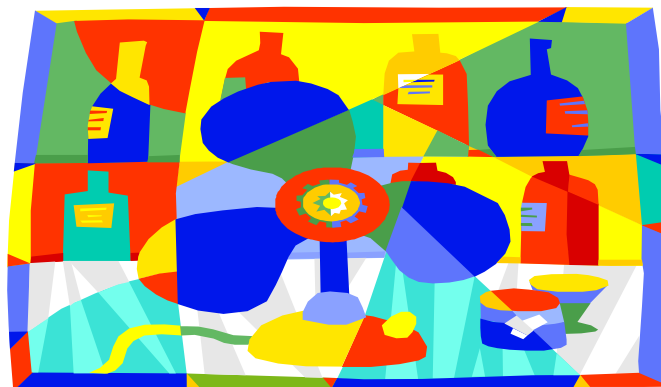
TIPS AND TRENDS FOR HOMEOWNERS, BUYERS AND SELLERS

CURB VIEW

Everybody knows that first impressions matter. The outside of your house says a lot to guests and potential buyers before they even walk in the door. There are easy ways to clean and freshen up the exterior of your home that don't require gallons of paint or a landscaping crew. Consider these tips from DIY Network.

Start with the front door. If you're willing to make a bold move, paint your door a bright color like canary yellow to help your house stand out (as long as the color is complementary to the trim, shutters and the rest of the house). Also, make sure lighting fixtures match the style of your house and are working properly. Another quick way to brighten up the front of the house: Put flower boxes or pots with colorful blooms on your porch railings or around your door.

Curb appeal is all about the details. Ask yourself: Is there sufficient outdoor lighting? Are overgrown plants and bushes creating an unsightly mess? Is your home address visible? You can revitalize your door by replacing the old hardware, installing tidy new address numbers or giving it a paint job. What's more, as simple as it sounds, installing a new mailbox — near the road or mounted to your house — can go a long way to show off your home. The options and materials are endless, but like with any other updates, make sure the style fits your house.



COMMON SCENTS

There is a strong connection between smells and human emotions. Given that homebuying can be a very emotional process, you'll want to make sure home looks *and* smells good to appeal to more buyers. Make sure your home passes the smell test by following these tips from HGTV.

If there are any foul odors in your home, don't just cover them up by baking cookies — try to identify the source and focus on eliminating the odors. Old carpets are often the biggest culprit. If you don't have the time or budget to replace old rugs with new carpet or hardwood floors, wash the carpet with mild detergent soap and water solution, then go over it with a damp towel to neutralize the odor. And open the windows on opposite walls to circulate fresh air.

After you've rid your home of bad scents or if you just want to fill it with more pleasant smells, consider boiling fruit peels, spices or herbs in water. Rather than throwing away lemon or orange peels, boil water and let the peels sit for a few minutes, adding water every half hour or so. You can also mix the peels with other soothing scents. Using oils such as sandalwood, lavender, tea tree and eucalyptus can be therapeutic and inviting.

fast fact >>>>>

Indoor and outdoor allergies affect more than 40 million Americans. The most common triggers are tree, grass and weed pollen, mold spores, dust mites, cockroach allergens and pet dander.



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DRAIN TRUST

Spring is prime time for house-cleaning and maintenance, which should include careful cleaning of gutters. Although they're designed to act as a drain and protect your home, they often get clogged with leaves and water. Gutters should be cleaned twice a year. To get started, consider these steps from Lowes.

First, clean the downspout. Set a ladder on the side of the house where the gutter starts and where most leaves and twigs get trapped. With gloves and a towel, remove the debris and let it fall in a bucket. Move the ladder down the gutter and repeat the process.

Check all gutters for holes, leaks, dents, and other features that may need repairs. If your hangers are loose, tighten them or replace them if they seem damaged. Sagging gutters are an indication that the hangers are too loose.

After you've covered the perimeter and have removed most of the debris, use a garden hose to spray the gutter to rid any remaining debris.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can make your own window cleaner by mixing equal parts of white vinegar and warm water. The vinegar eliminates window streaks and smudges on glass surfaces.



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