



Columns

5 Exterior Enhancements To Spruce Up Your Home Each Year



BY EMILY CLOUSE • FEB 26, 2019-09:00 AM

LET'S GIVE YOUR NEIGHBORS—AND PROSPECTIVE BUYERS—SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT.

When it comes to people, novels and submarine sandwiches, “It’s what’s on the inside that counts.” But when it comes to your home, regardless of whether you’re planning to stay put and want to let your [personality shine through](#) or are planning to eventually sell, the exterior is just as important.

And while some exterior projects may seem one-and-done, several annual updates are necessary to keep your outdoor elements in tip-top and attractive shape—and to step up your [curb appeal](#) in case potential buyers come a-knockin’.

ESTATENVY spoke with Allison Vaccaro and Cassie McDowell, founders of [brick&batten](#) Virtual Exterior Design, and Steve Walowitz, founder of [Nu-Concepts Exterior Decorating Company](#) to discover what you can do to spruce up your home’s exterior. Take their advice, and you may find yourself smiling as you pull into your driveway every day.

1. Show your yard some love

If you take care of your nails, your lawn should be nicely manicured, too. DIY landscaping can be quite inexpensive—and a great excuse to get down and dirty.

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Don't overthink it. "If you don't know colors, go green. If you don't know mulch, go dark. If you don't know what grows best in your area, ask your local nursery for assistance," said Vaccaro and McDowell.

Play with [different landscaping](#) elements. "You can define the borders of the house by planting something larger in the corners rather than in the middle," said Walowitz, adding that installing simple outdoor lighting can add a wonderful sense of charm and warmth.

2. Enhance your entryway

The front door is the first thing that greets guests visiting your home, so be sure it's well maintained and clean. Check the state of its finish at least once every year. "Your front door is a reflection of you. It's the gateway to your life, where memories are created," said Vaccaro and McDowell.

Walowitz recommended defining the entryway to make it more welcoming. "Adding a portico can enhance the look of the front door and create protection for guests. This creates dimension and adds a lot of value and prestige," said Walowitz. "And be sure to never hide your doorway system with bushes or anything else—make it open and inviting."

3. Keep your paint and siding fresh

If your home's exterior paint is chipping, it may be time to brush up. Plus, switching up your house's color is an easy way to breathe new life into its overall expression.

If your home has aluminum or vinyl siding, check in with that annually, too. "The siding can become faded or cracked because of oxidation. That can make the paint run and create streaking," warned Walowitz.

According to Vaccaro and McDowell, exterior paint can provide up to a 141 percent return on investment, so you shouldn't shy away from seeking professional advice about choosing the right shade for you. "Because it costs the same amount to paint your house the wrong color as the right color, it's important to get it right," they said.

4. Check for window updates

Do you feel a draft? Better check your windows.

"Many people buy a house with 50-year-old windows. There may be single-pane glass, old storm window systems or they may just have terrible energy efficiency," Walowitz said. "If there's damage or peeling, or if they are leaking air, that is an indication that you may want to install new windows."

Vaccaro and McDowell offered a tip for properly featuring window shutters: "Intended to provide privacy or shade, shutters should close or have the appearance that they fit the window." They also advised against skipping the hardware, as they regrettably see many new homes do. "Shutter hardware adds to the aesthetics and timeless look," they said.



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5. Make changes toward cohesiveness

By introducing one new exterior element every year—big or small—you can keep your home looking fresh while working toward a well-planned, cohesive aesthetic.

Walowitz advised matching and complementing colors across your exterior so every element, from the roof to the brick, meshes well together. He also recommended being conservative, creating balance, and remaining true to the architecture of the house. “If you have a colonial, you don’t want to put in bungalow-style windows or take off arch details. Let your house be what it is,” he said.

“We see new client builds every day where the builder recommends stone, brick, mixed orientation siding, then throws some stucco on there, then tops it off with an accent of natural wood. But simple is always timeless. Don’t forget that,” said Vacarro and McDowell.

Annual updates to your home’s exterior can make a big difference. And if you plan on selling your home someday, these enhancements just may be what entice buyers to stop by to take a look at what you’ve done with the inside, too.



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