



By Joseph H. Pedferri

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Think Spring, Think Maintenance

Spring is a season of renewal. Birds are singing and the flowers are beginning to burst into bloom. The days are getting longer and people are getting outdoors again. So not surprisingly, real estate activity begins to swing into high gear. The weather is more cooperative and families are looking to move during the summer break.

If you are considering putting your home on the market, now's a good time to do some spring maintenance to make sure your home is in tip-top shape. Even if you aren't planning to sell your home, you should still add these chores to your list to help preserve your home's value and help avoid major repairs later on.

Walk Around the Outside

Check for any damage caused by winter's cold weather. Look for those sagging or loose gutters, window frames or siding. Is your roof missing any shingles, or is there any water damage under the eaves? Promptly schedule repairs for those items you can't do yourself.

Over the fall and winter, leaves, mud and debris may have accumulated in your gutters. Check your gutters for clogging and damage and schedule an appointment for cleaning.

Walk around your yard as if you were a first-time visitor. What impression does your home make? Be sure to clear away fallen branches and leaves. Loosen the soil around perennials, plant annuals or a vegetable garden. Prune shrubs and trees.

If your water supply has been off for the winter, turn it back on. Test your automatic sprinkler system or connect your water hose and check for cracks and leaks. Replace old washers or sprinkler heads.

Don't forget the backyard! Is it time to condition your deck? Be sure to hammer in any loose nails, or replace them with galvanized deck screws. Replace any broken boards or rails. Consider renting a power washer to clean dirt and mildew from the wood, and then apply an all-weather sealer or stain. Then dust off that patio furniture you kept protected over the winter.

Repair any broken fence boards and paint or seal them as needed. Clean the pool if it has been covered all winter. Wash windows, screens and windowsills; repair any winter damage.

Take A Tour Inside

Start making a list of things to do in each room. Then dive in. Dust walls and ceilings to remove cobwebs and wash any grimy areas. Wash window curtains or remove drapes for dry cleaning. Deep clean rugs and carpets. Dust and polish wood or laminate floors.

Clean fan blades using mild soapy water. Check the central air-conditioning unit for debris and obstructions; vacuum the main condenser coil on top of the unit. Check the operating condition of window air-conditioning units; remove and wash filters in mild soapy water.

Make sure all exhaust fans and vents are clean and clear. Don't forget to remove the lint buildup from the clothes dryer vent.

One often-overlooked area is the fireplace. Be sure to sweep ashes carefully into your fireplace's ash pit or into a dustpan. Clean and lightly oil fireplace tools. Remember it's springtime, so you may want to decorate the fireplace or wood stove with a large silk flower arrangement.

Look around for clutter. Are there items you don't use any longer? If you are planning on moving, what items will you not need? Consider having a garage sale and then either donate or trash the remaining items.

And lastly, don't forget to replace batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. A good time to change them is when you change your clock for daylight savings.

Although performing these spring chores may be a dreaded task, they go a long way in maintaining and even enhancing the attractiveness and quality of your home.

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