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Increase Your Home's Value with this "Magic Bullet"

There is no better way to quickly up the value of your home than with a brand new paint job. And this applies to both the interior and the exterior. The magic of paint is that it can completely transform the look and feel of your home almost overnight. In addition, a new paint job can be the best way to overcome the perception of "deferred maintenance" in a way that is far less expensive by comparison to other improvements. And if you are considering selling your home this spring, a new paint job will bring you the biggest bang for your buck.

SURFACE PREPARATION: Whether you are dealing with the interior or the exterior of your home, a new paint job requires cleaning of the surfaces. If repainting the exterior, the process of pressure washing your house will undoubtedly uncover areas that need fixing, like drooping shutters, displaced gutters, and peeling paint. All these things combine to make your home appear shabby and neglected. And because you see your home day after day, you may have stopped seeing its gradual decline. A new paint job will fix that overnight.

If you're repainting the interior, the walls will first need to be cleaned, which means removing dust and spiderwebs that have been left to

accumulate over the span of years. When doing this you will have to pull away furniture from the wall. This in turn will lead to replacement of some furniture and/or a rearrangement of your furniture for a more pleasing and functional aesthetic.

A NEW PAINT JOB WILL UPDATE YOUR HOME'S LOOK OVERNIGHT: If you've lived in your home for a number of years, it's possible that the paint colors selected twenty-some years ago are not what are trending today. Now is the time to change that worn-out vibe by selecting new colors. This will transform your home from dated and run-down to trending and brand new looking.

DON'T FORGET THE FRONT DOOR: Studies show that one of the greatest impacts for great curb appeal is a freshly painted front door in an appealing color. Speaking of colors, it's important to carefully research colors that are in style and also neutral enough to appeal to a wide variety of people. One caveat: If your neighborhood is governed by an HOA it's a good idea to find out what any color restrictions might be before you get started. A freshly painted home, both inside and out, will greatly increase the value of your home. Whether you are selling, refinancing, or showing pride of ownership, new paint is your magic bullet.

March Calendar

March 8 - Daylight Saving Time

March 17 - St. Patrick's Day

March 20 - Spring Begins

March is Spring Equinox Month

Homeowner Tips



Springtime Shingle Check

The beginning of spring is a great time to check your roof for missing or damaged shingles. Both winter and summer elements can really challenge your shingle's integrity. Any shingles that are buckled, cracked, or missing granules should be replaced.

Check flashing around skylights and chimneys. If repairs are needed, we strongly suggest you hire a qualified roofer to tackle this job.

Get Your Yard Tip-Top Ready for Growing Season

Whether you're a hard-core gardener or just shooting for a tidy, well-maintained yard, there are plenty of things you can do now to prepare for a robust grow season later:

SOIL IMPROVEMENT: Turn over the soil, adding compost, manure, or other organic matter to improve fertility and drainage.

LAWN PREP: Consider aerating and dethatching your lawn; apply fertilizer and new grass seed to fill in bare patches.

CLEAR DEBRIS: Remove dead plants,

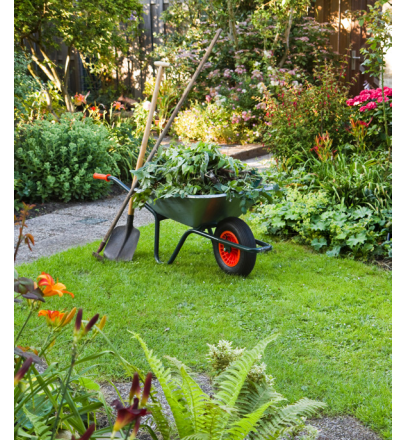
weeds, and any remaining debris from last season.

MULCHING: Apply new mulch to seal in moisture and suppress weeds.

PRUNING: Prune shrubs and trees as needed, but wait until the risk of frost is gone.

TOOLS: Clean and sharpen your garden tools to ensure they are ready for the season.

EARLY PLANTING: If your area allows, start planting cool-season vegetables and flowers.



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Irish Soda Bread

Give a nod to St. Paddy's day with this easy, delicious and decidedly Irish bread recipe (serves 4):

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup butter, softened
- 4 tablespoons white sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 large egg
- ¼ cup butter, melted
- ¼ cup buttermilk

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees and lightly grease a large baking sheet. Mix flour, softened butter, sugar, baking soda, baking powder, and salt together in a large bowl. Stir in 1 cup of buttermilk and egg. Lightly knead dough on a floured surface and form into a round loaf; place on baking sheet. (Dough will be a little sticky.) Brush loaf with combined melted butter and 1/4 cup buttermilk and brush loaf with this mixture. Cut an 'X' into the top of the loaf. Bake in preheated oven for 45-50 minutes. Cool for 30 minutes before serving. Eat with jam or as a side for soups and stews.

(Recipe courtesy allrecipes.com)

