

## **TRY THESE AFFORDABLE IDEAS Small Things Can Make a Big Difference**

Here are some small touches can liven up your home without breaking the bank.

**Warm it Up:** Bring life to a monotone bathroom with contrasting draperies and towels

**Create Focal Points:** Replace things that blend into the woodwork are replaced with contrasting furniture. The boldly colored chest and pillow combine to provide a focal point

**Pare Down:** Books and photos go into storage, replaced with accent pieces and flowers that brighten the dark shelves.

**Accent With Color:** Surfaces are decluttered and red accents added to enliven a seating area

**Think in Threes:** Odd numbers create tension that provides visual interest. For example, this principle is applied with three grass bundles on the fireplace hearth and three varied-height vases on the kitchen counter below. A painting retrieved from storage and a larger rug improve the balance of and add warmth to the mantle area.

**Set a Scene:** Kitchen counters can be transformed from utility into a welcoming oasis.

### **6 Landscaping Tips**

**1. Add splashes of color.** With every changing season, a landscape should provide a new display of colors, textures, and fragrances.

**2. Size trees and shrubs to scale.** These should be planted in the right scale for the house so that they don't block windows, doors, and other architectural features on the home's facade.

**3. Maintain a perfect lawn.** A velvety green lawn demonstrates tender loving care. Some rocks, pebbles, boulders, drought-tolerant plants, and ornamental grasses will generate more kudos, especially in drought areas.

**4. Light up the outside.** Good illumination allows buyers to see a home at night and adds drama. Sellers should use low-voltage lamps to highlight branches of specimen trees, a front door, walk, and corners of the house.

**5. Let them hear the water.** The sound of water appeals to buyers, and you shouldn't just reserve this for your backyard. A small fountain accented with rocks provides a pleasant gurgling sound, blocks street noise, and is affordable.

**6. Use decorative architectural elements.** A new mailbox, planted window boxes, and a low fence wrapped in potato vines add cachet, particularly during winter months when fewer plants blossom. Colors should complement the landscape and home. Just don't overdo it: Too much can seem like kitschy lawn ornaments.

## **8 No-Cost or Low Cost Ways to Improve the Look of Your Home**

### **1. Move it.**

Simply rearranging the furniture can reenergize a room. Add and remove furniture, lamps, rugs, and accessories from other parts of the house to create a whole new look. Mirrors are particularly useful when it comes to updating a room. Try one out in different rooms to see where it fits best. Even just moving a mirror to a different wall can create a more welcoming feel.

### **2. Plant it.**

Houseplants are a generally undervalued design component that can add texture, warmth, and color to any room. Just drop plants in their store containers into decorative planters. Small plants can be moved easily and regroupped to change a room's look, while larger ones make a statement on their own. Group plants of differing heights, fullness, and color for the most dramatic effect. Jettison the scraggly specimens.

### **3. Paint it.**

Paint is one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to make a substantial change. Use dramatic colors in powder rooms and dining rooms, and more neutral colors in living spaces.

### **4. Organize it.**

Use a variety of organizing tools to make a space feel polished while maintaining utility. Hooks and shelves inside the door give people a place to hang coats and keys, while canvas bins or natural baskets help contain magazines and mail. Shelves are a great way to neatly display collectibles.

### **5. Hide it.**

Have a banged-up wall? It may be easy to camouflage. Paintable wallpaper will smooth out an uneven wall or hide minor dents and dings.

### **6. Replace it.**

Cabinet handles, switch plates, and other small pieces of housing hardware can update a home for just a few dollars a piece. Scan each room to see what looks worn or outdated and then replace it. Fresh towels and a new toilet seat go a long way toward making a bathroom feel clean and new."

### **7. Light it.**

Lighting can have a major impact on a home's look and feel. Whether a room seems dark or too bright and harsh, try "layering" the lighting by adding accent pendants and lamps. Make sure they have independent controls, so that you can turn them on and off at will. You can create a

cozy feel just by turning down the lights. Add dimmers in the dining room, bathrooms, kitchen, and even the hallways for less than \$4 each. Then adjust the lighting to create the mood you want.

#### **8. Clean it.**

Turn a critical eye to the flooring to make sure it's up to snuff. Scrub grout and seal natural stone. Rub out scratches and nicks on wood floors with scratch cover. Vinyl flooring is a bit harder to spruce up but usually can be replaced easily and inexpensively.

*(Paraphrased from articles from the National Association of Realtors website)*