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Five home improvements for the love of spring

(BPT) - Improved value, curb appeal and livability are the benchmarks for any smart home improvement. But some upgrades you do for the sheer joy of it. The best home improvements deliver all those smart qualities and speak to your heart at the same time.

With spring home improvement season approaching, here are five home improvements that you can do for the love of spring - and the love of your biggest investment:

Add/replace a skylight

Abundant natural light and fresh air are among the joys of spring, and replacing an old, energy-inefficient skylight, or adding one where none existed before, is a great way to welcome sunlight and spring breezes into your home. Sunlight's positive effect on mood is well-documented, and adding a fresh-air skylight, which comes with a screen, offers other health benefits as well. Opt for an energy saving solar powered fresh-air skylight and you can enjoy the benefits of passive ventilation to reduce humidity and stale air in your home along with more natural light.

From a practical standpoint, installing an Energy Star-qualified skylight like those made by VELUX America can help you control heating, cooling and lighting costs in your home. Replacing an older, less efficient skylight with a new solar-powered, fresh-air skylight, with a rain sensor, can also ensure your home stays protected from spring showers. You can also choose solar powered blinds for even more energy efficiency, and both are eligible for a 30 percent federal tax credit. To learn more about energy-efficient skylights, visit www.veluxusa.com or energystar.gov.

Add/improve a deck

The trend toward outdoor living spaces continues, with decks being one of the most sought-after amenities among home buyers. In fact, adding a wooden deck can recoup more than 77 percent of the deck's cost when you sell your home, according to Remodeling Magazine's Cost vs. Value Report.

If you don't already have a deck, adding one - whether wood or composite - not only enhances your home value, it will be a great place to celebrate the arrival of spring. If you already have a deck, consider value-enhancing upgrades like new balusters, lighted post caps, built-in seating and even planters.

Install a kitchen backsplash

Spring brings a bright, colorful feel to the world and you can easily incorporate that sentiment into your kitchen by adding a backsplash. A project easily within the capabilities of most do-it-yourselfers, backsplashes are both functional and decorative. Granite, ceramic or glass tile protects the wall behind the range or cook top from splatters of food or grease while brightening valuable workspace and serving as a visual focal point for the room.

Great kitchens sell homes, and the room is one of the most-used in any home. Upgrading your kitchen is almost always a good investment, one that improves resale value and your enjoyment of your home.

Upgrade bathroom floors

Bathroom renovations are also popular and a minor bathroom remodel can return more than 65 percent of the cost at the time of resale, according to the Cost vs. Value Report. While replacing countertops and fixtures are common remodeling tasks in a bathroom, don't overlook the biggest surface in the room - the floor.

Many modern builders install vinyl floors in bathrooms because they are durable and cheap. Switching out this common material for stone or ceramic tile is a great way to brighten the room and give your bath a whole new look.

Improve your entryway

Your front door and entryway are the first impression visitors have of your home's decor. A welcoming entry invites guests in and gives you a mood boost every time you walk through it.

This year, celebrate spring by replacing an old worn wooden door with a sturdy, decorative steel door - an improvement that recoups nearly 85 percent of its cost when you sell, according to Remodeling Magazine. To really celebrate spring, add a screen door. You'll be able to let in fresh air and spring breezes while keeping insects out. Plus, a screen door is essential Americana, creating a welcoming openness that epitomizes the joy of spring.

ARTICLE IMAGE(S)[Caption](#)[Caption](#)**Word Count:**

680

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