

## **FIVE HOT NEW SPRING HOME IMPROVEMENT TIPS TO INCREASE YOUR PROPERTY'S VALUE AND GO GREEN**

With spring quickly approaching, there are a variety of home improvement projects to tackle that can add value to the home, but what about helping the environment at the same time? According to *McGraw-Hill Construction's* findings from a new Green Home Builders and Remodelers Study, green remodeling is growing due to the stagnant economy and the decline in new home construction. Also, many homeowners are choosing to go green as a way to increase the value of their home. In addition, green homes often have lower utility costs, providing yet another incentive for homeowners to seek simple green home improvement tips this spring. Below are a few ideas to add value to your home and help increase its energy efficiency.

### **1. Fresh Paint, Fresh Home**

Adding a fresh coat of paint can brighten a home without much effort. When choosing a paint type, make sure to avoid those with a high VOC level. VOCs, volatile organic compounds, are chemicals that evaporate easily at room temperature and can cause health problems. If these chemicals escape outside, they can contaminate and pollute the air.

### **2. The Grass is Always Greener With Organic Lawn Care**

Make the right first impression with a healthy, lush front lawn. Avoid using harsh, synthetic fertilizers made of salt that can rob the soil of essential nutrients. Instead, try to use organic herbicides and fertilizers that are made from biodegradable materials.

### **3. From Water-Waster to Conservation Champion**

According to the EPA, bathrooms are the largest water wasters in the house, accounting for more than half of all the water that families use indoors. It's important to choose products that conserve water while reducing utility bills. Try replacing older, inefficient, water-wasting toilets and showerheads with new eco-friendly products like Niagara Conservation's Stealth toilet, which achieves a powerful, quiet flush using only 0.8 gallons of water, or Niagara's Sava showerhead, which can help save up to 5,475 gallons of water per year.

### **4. Embrace Your Roots Using Local Landscape**

Landscaping, through the addition of plants, natural stone tiles or an outside patio, can increase a home's beauty and value. It also provides an ideal escape from the summer heat. Traditional landscaping can often have harmful effects on the environment, through the clearing of native woodlands and natural plant habitats. To combat the damage, select regionally native plants for the home and rely less on turf in favor of woodland, meadow or other natural plant life.

### **5. Big Remodels to Small Refreshes**

To really add value to the home, consider remodeling key rooms that provide the biggest return on investment, such as the kitchen or bath. In the kitchen, homeowners can add recycling centers or eco-friendly appliances. Also, one small change that can have a big impact is swapping the current kitchen or bath faucet aerator for a water-saving option to decrease water consumption.