

Summer



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"Small details make a big difference in encouraging people back up the path for a second viewing" says Joanna Cobb. Plus keeping your property up-to-scratch over the summertime will reduce the likelihood of winter problems.

First impressions do count Make sure the entrance to your property is clear paying particular attention to drives and porches - free them of clutter like bicycles and toys. Patios should be tidied up, patio furniture cleaned and arranged. Faulty fence panels or gates mended or even consider adding fences to enhance privacy.

Internally, of course, summer also provides a great opportunity to bring light in to a property. Open windows or doors to bring the fresh breezes in – and further enhance the presentation with vases of fresh flowers.

Fit for purpose Make sure every room shows a proper purpose. Some rooms fulfil several functions e.g. a dining room is also the place all old toys are stored or the computers live in a bedroom which make them appear busy, smaller and less attractive. Box up what you can and store in the attic, garage or cupboards to help streamline the appeal of each room.

Window dressing People are always drawn towards windows – a plus in the height of summer when they can look out onto your carefully tended garden, so make them a real focal point. Ensure the glass is sparkling, clear junk off window sills and keep curtains pulled well back to make rooms seem lighter and bigger.

Lighten up If you have a dark room, add a table lamp, and remember buyers can notice grimy light switches. They are normally in a prominent spot as you enter or leave a room, so wipe them clean.

Garden Features Make sure your lawns are in good condition and regularly mown, shrubs and plants are pruned, plant a few annuals to provide an instant burst of colour or spruce a particularly dull area with a few planted containers. If you have a pond, clear it of any dead foliage and make sure any water features are working properly and are also child friendly. Filling in holes in patios and paths, tidying up paintwork, staining fences and decking will all help too.

Pass the sniff test Sellers and landlords shouldn't underestimate the power of nice or unpleasant odours. A home that smells fresh and clean is more important than baking bread or brewing coffee, which won't disguise stale odours anyway. Musty-smelling rooms are off-putting and make people want to get out quickly. It's summer, so you can open windows without fear of making the house feel chilly. Don't forget to air rarely used rooms and teenagers' bedrooms. Pay attention to the areas your pets go into, you might not be able to smell them, but new people often can. Lightly fragranced candles, plug-ins and fresh flowers can all help.

Light the fireplace and clean the chimney Check the fireplace and chimney to make sure that they are clean and free of any debris. The fireplace flue and liners should also be cleaned to prevent the build up of ash and soot. If you have an electric or gas fire, test it to make sure it is in working condition. Doing this once or twice over the Summer months can help prevent Winter problems, including chimney fires.

Pest control The overwhelming majority of pest control issues occur over the summer. The populations of rats, fleas, bedbugs, wasps and other pests all explode in population numbers when the temperature goes up. Keeping your house clean, storing food properly, disposing of food waste effectively (keep bins shut and put out for collection), and draught-proofing your home can make it less attractive to pests.

Landlords....

Top Tip: Remember in let properties a Carbon Monoxide detector is now a requirement in every room that has a gas or solid fuel appliance or boiler.

Going on holiday?

Top Tip: Don't make it obvious that you are away. Keep your home safe by ensuring that post is removed from the door mat, that plants are not left in the sink or bath, that vases of dead flowers are removed, that curtains are appropriately opened or drawn and that there are no notes or documents left on view that could indicate you are on holiday. It may also be worth arranging for a car to be left on the drive perhaps with a reliable neighbour and set timers for lights.