

Green Tips for Your Home

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When it comes to preparing your home for sale in an environmentally friendly way, Kermit the Frog had it wrong. It *is* easy being green.

With so many homebuyers seeking green features in the homes they consider, sellers should create an eco-friendly atmosphere for the buyer, and that doesn't always mean costly fixes.

It's always nice for a homebuyer who's been touring houses all day to find water or a snack waiting for them in your kitchen. Instead of leaving the customary bottled water, go the eco-friendly route and have a pitcher of filtered tap water at the ready. Add some organic fruits and vegetables and keep trash minimized. Also, use glassware and plates instead of plastic cups and paper plates. This practice is not only green, it shows class.

Another way to act "green" is during your de-cluttering stage, remove furniture and other items from your home prior to the home's listing. Instead of simply throwing out all those things you no longer want nor need, you can recycle, resell at a garage sale, donate to charity, or give away the items at the popular website Freecycle.com.

Big fixes around the home can also go a long way. In this age of global warming and high-energy costs, more buyers are looking for houses that embrace energy conservation. The simplest upgrade is to replace all the light bulbs in the home with CFLs (compact fluorescents), which use a quarter of the electricity as regular bulbs.

To help with heating, make sure cracks are tightly caulked and leaks are sealed. Doing so can reduce your annual heating bill by \$100, according to The Department of Energy figures.

Justin Barnes, a policy analyst for the Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, said some of the easiest green fixes deal with appliance replacement. Most of today's appliances are highly efficient and will reduce your energy bills. They are also more attractive than their worn-out predecessors.

Barnes also suggests replacing doors and windows if the budget allows, and looking for better ways to insulate the home.

Also consider tankless water heaters, which are energy efficient and ultimately use less water during the heating process,

Don't be afraid to boast about your green home and any recent enhancements. Working with your agent to highlight your eco-friendly features may just be what makes the difference in completing the sale.

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