

OUTDOOR VALUE GUIDE

Build outdoor spaces that pay you back



Smart yard upgrades that add value and buyer appeal.

What outdoor projects return at resale

% of cost recovered · NAR

Lawn care service	217%
Landscape maintenance	104%
Landscape upgrade	100%
Outdoor kitchen	100%
Landscape lighting	59%
In-ground pool	56%
Fire feature	56%

Front yard: first impressions

- Healthy lawn, edged beds and fresh mulch
- A clear, welcoming walkway to the door
- Pressure-washed siding, steps and driveway
- Updated house numbers, mailbox and lighting
- Trimmed shrubs that frame, not hide, the house

Backyard: living space

- A patio or deck that feels like another room
- Defined zones: dining, lounging and play
- Privacy from plantings or a well-kept fence
- Low-maintenance native plants
- Good drainage, away from the foundation

RULES OF THUMB

Maintain first

Upkeep returns more than fancy features.

Match the street

Don't overbuild for the neighborhood.

Keep it easy

Buyers pay for easy, not for chores.

Source: NAR 2023 Remodeling Impact Report: Outdoor Features.
Results vary by home and market.

Pools, waterfront & land on the back →

Want to know which upgrades pay off for your home? Let's talk.



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Pools, decks, water and land

What adds value in Massachusetts, and what can hold a home back.



OFTEN FLAT ON VALUE

In-ground pool in Massachusetts

56% of cost recovered at resale (NAR); lift is often flat or negative in New England

- Short season: roughly Memorial Day to Labor Day
- Yearly opening, closing and winterizing costs; freeze risk
- Helps most in higher-end towns where pools are common

Tip: Keep it clean, safe and fenced. Massachusetts code requires a barrier.

YEAR-ROUND APPEAL

Hot tub in Massachusetts

12 mo. of use, so it fits New England winters better than a pool

- Built-in: valued as landscaping, if at all
- Portable: personal property; may not stay with the house
- Plan for electricity costs and a good insulated cover

Tip: Photograph it in use for winter listings, or remove it if it is worn.

More outdoor value-adds

New patio

95%
of cost recovered (NAR)

- Low-upkeep space for dining and grilling

New wood deck

89%
of cost recovered (NAR)

- Extends living space; keep it sealed and permitted

Outdoor shed

Storage
buyers always want more

- Room for the snowblower and tools; check town permits

Kids play space

Family
appeal for many buyers

- A flat, fenced lawn; play sets may not stay

3-season sunroom

Spring-fall
bug-free living space

- Usually not counted as heated square footage

BIG PREMIUM

Waterfront

~2× Zillow: waterfront homes worth about twice all homes nationally

- Direct frontage and usable shoreline add the most

Tip: Check flood zone, insurance and dock permits (Chapter 91).

ADDS VALUE, WITH LIMITS

Additional acres

Usable land is worth most; per-acre value drops as lots grow

- Adds privacy and room for a garden, pool or ADU

Tip: Wetlands and conservation limits reduce usable land.

Bottom line: buyers pay most for features that are well kept, easy to maintain and common for the area. Sources: NAR 2023 Remodeling Impact Report; Zillow Research; Opendoor; HomeLight. Estimates only; values vary by home and market.



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