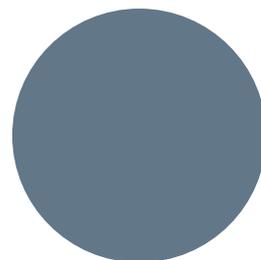


IMPROVEMENT CENTER



Guide to Garden, Bay, Bow and Bench Windows

Adding these windows to your home can be a big remodeling project — but the results can be spectacular. Learn about enhancing your home by adding a little space and a lot of great viewing area.



Guide to Garden, Bay, Bow and Bench Windows

Replacement windows don't have to be just run-of-the-mill swap-outs that look nice and work better, but simply aren't all that exciting. While you might not be able to add a sunroom to your house, you can open things up and create new spaces with bay, bow, bench or garden windows fairly easily. Before diving into the details and picking out your new, fancy, room-extending window feature, it's important to realize that most bay and bow windows require more structural support than your walls currently offer. As obvious as this might sound, it's not uncommon for people to underestimate this side of things and be surprised by the project's price tag.

Bay Windows

Bay windows are usually a three-window setup. A large, fixed picture window is flanked by narrower casement or single- or double-hung windows on either side. This arrangement allows you to let in the breeze and get a nice view at the same time. The protrusion of the windows creates a small alcove, or bay, which offers many possibilities. This triple-window feature can be built into spots as narrow as four feet across and can be tailored to go the full height of a room.

Smaller bay windows don't usually extend to the full room height, allowing for ornate exterior fixtures that can make your bay window look more like a partial turret. Make your bay window large enough and instead of just a little extra space and storage, you can create a reading nook replete with a built-in bench. Even larger, floor-to-ceiling additions can make great dinettes.

Bow Windows

These protrude like bay windows, but they can be made up of as many windows as you like. This many-windowed approach smooths out the sharper angles you'd usually find with a bay window. Bow windows don't typically have a central picture window and often comprise matching openable windows. Just like the bay window, they can vary in size dramatically, ranging from a nice shelf with an excellent view all the way up to a windowed, round room. Bow windows simply can't be beat for panoramic views.



Bench Windows

Curling up with a cup of coffee and a good book next to a big window can be a truly satisfying experience no matter the weather. This secret is out, which is why bench windows have been gaining in popularity. Both bay and bow windows make great homes for reading nooks with built-in benches, but they are increasingly being joined by more rectangular additions. These contemporary bench windows are like long bay windows with sharp, ninety-degree corners, giving occupiers of the bench the feeling of being in a glass box with nice views.

You don't necessarily need a full, three-sided window box to enjoy a bench window. Any large window can have a bench built to fit right underneath. Square off the sides with bookshelves (built-in or otherwise), and you've got a cozy book nook to enjoy.

Garden Windows

You can let in more light and make room for a small garden at the same time with a garden window. These windows come in all sizes, from surprisingly tiny herb garden size to small attached atrium. The most common of these sizes fits right into a kitchen window as a versatile — and energy-efficient — replacement window.

Garden windows typically have an awning-style window to top them off and occasionally come with openable casement or vertical sliders on either side. Because they project out from your home, garden windows add light and space. The openable windows allow plenty of airflow, too. To make watering and gardening easier, these window boxes are equipped with built-in shelves and mold-resistant, waterproof materials — so there's no worrying about rot or water damage.

Flair and Function

All of these built-out window options add a level of elegance to your home, and they do it while being fully functional. Add space. Add light. Enjoy the view, whether it's of your herb garden, across a panoramic landscape or from your bench seat when you look up from your favorite book.

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