

There's More To Doors Than Meets The Eye

Some people think of a door as simply providing access. But a front door also gives the first impression of a home and the family that lives there.

The front door helps determine where people walk, allows for privacy and security, can help with ventilation and energy control and can add or detract from the exterior appearance of a house.

When considering the selection of a door, the N.C. Agricultural Extension Service suggests homeowners consider function and appearance, materials and cost, trim, accessories and energy efficiency.

Door Construction

All exterior doors should be made of either solid wood or insulated steel, according to an extension service publication titled "Selecting Exterior Doors."

Wood has long been the choice of homeowners for front doors because of its warm, solid appearance and durability.

But steel doors have become more and more popular as the need for energy conservation has increased. They are warp-free and fire resistant. Steel doors also provide good insulation and are security against break-ins.

Steel doors aren't solid metal. They have an inner core of compressed foam, wood or wood and foam.

Types of Doors

Batten, flush solid core, sliding glass, stile and rail and storm are the five basic types of exterior doors, according to the extension

service report.

The batten door is an early door style used in America consisting of boards that are nailed together in various patterns. They are used most often when formal appearance is not important and where a rustic effect is desired.

Since very few doors are made from a single slab of wood or steel, a flush solid core door is a good option for an exterior door.

These doors are made up of a surface material or covering over a solid core of wood or cellular material. The style or appearance usually is kept simple so it can work with many architectural styles.

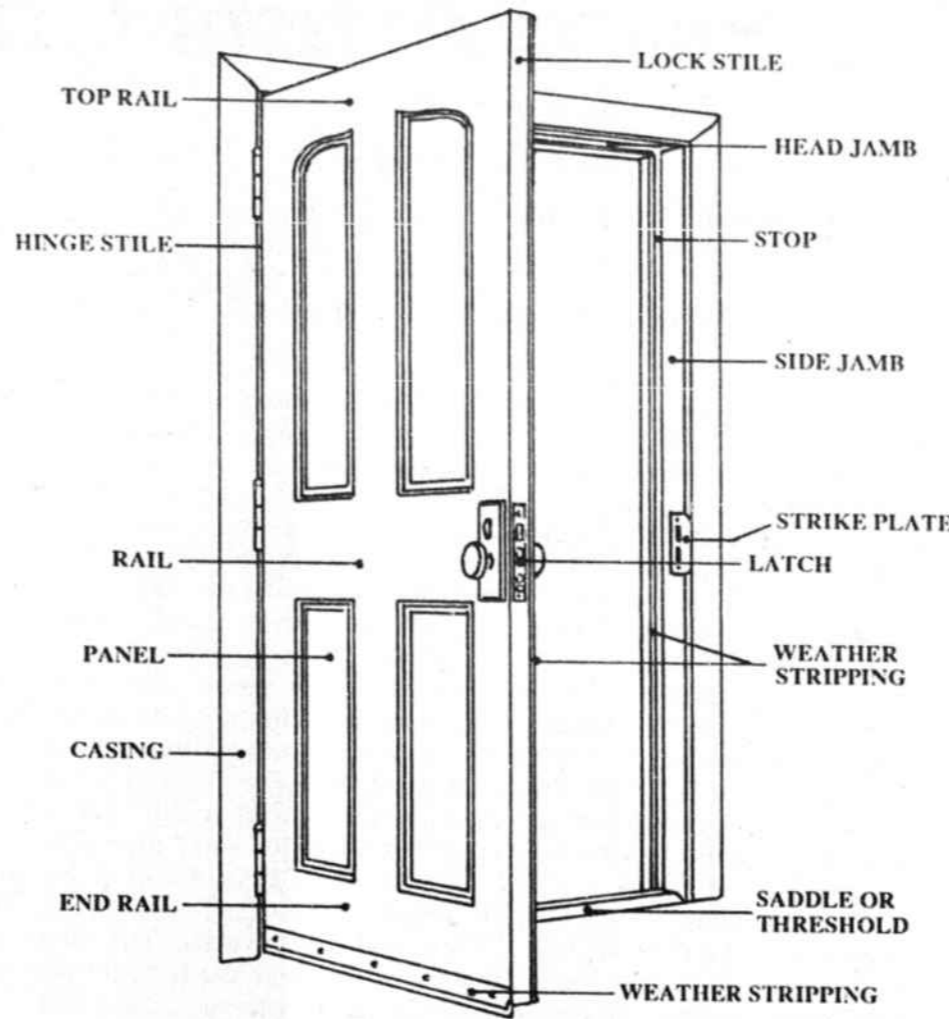
While classified as a type of flush door, sliding glass or patio doors are less energy efficient and operate differently than most other flush doors. Generally, one panel is stationary while the other slides by or swings open.

Stile and rail doors are often called panel doors since they are formed by a framework of vertical boards, horizontal boards and panels.

The number and arrangement of the panels determines the name of the stile and rail door. Examples include Colonial Cross-and-Bible, St. Andrew's Cross, Florentine, Tudor, Contemporary and Mediterranean.

A combination storm and screen door is often hung outside the regular door to provide additional insulation in winter and ventilation in the summer.

The glass and screens may be removable or they may slide so they



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THIS SKETCH shows there's more to the average door than a knob and a lock. Homeowners should be familiar with the various parts before trying to install a door on their own.

can be changed with the season and easily cleaned. The frame on a storm door is usually made of aluminum or lightweight wood.

Dressing Up Doors

The appearance of a basic door

can be changed dramatically and easily with the addition of accessories or hardware.

The extension service report says one way to liven up to the appearance of an ordinary door is to add a

pediment or pilasters.

A pediment is a triangular motif from classical Greek architecture that is placed above the door. They typically are made of wood or plastic.

Pilasters are column-like accessories used to flank an entry. A pair of them can add dignity to a traditional doorway, and they usually are used with a pediment.

Sidelights, fanlights and transoms are windows that can be installed on the side of a door or above the door. They allow light into the house and help change the style or appearance of the doorway.

Hardware includes knobs and handles, wrought-iron hinges, mail slots, house numbers, door bells and locks.

Most hardware is purchased separately from the door, but it should be matched to the door style to give a uniform appearance to the doorway.

Saving Energy

Whatever type of door and accessories are selected, the extension service says homeowners should think about energy efficiency when they choose and install a door.

Research has shown that one exterior door that doesn't fit properly and isn't weatherstripped can be responsible for substantial air leakage and heat loss.

While only about 1 percent of the measurable heat loss occurs through the door itself, air leaks around the door can be a major problem.

Weatherstripping and caulking are very important, as is the tight fit of the door into the frame.

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