

Get Noticed with Curb Appeal

By ALEX MASON | Green Shoot Media

First impressions count. When it's time to take your house to market, curb appeal can make or break the sale.

However, you don't need to break the bank to enhance your home, and by following a few simple guidelines you can transform your house from beaten down to best on the block with some do-it-yourself tips.

FRONT DOOR

The front door to the property is a real eye-catcher and needs to grab some attention. Remove tired and worn-out screens and give your front door a makeover with a vibrant coat of paint. To create a distinguished frame for your door, be sure to paint the trim in a darker color than the door.

PORCH

Straight, clean lines are in order for the porch to add a sense of space and sharpen the effect of a freshly painted door.

Remove unused objects such as baskets, decorations, tired chairs and anything else that will detract from the living space.

FRONT LAWN

Keep it clean and keep it green. A front lawn that is well cared for speaks volumes about what's in store for the interior living space. Fresh sod and plenty of water will make your green grass thrive, and a splash of color adds a special touch.

ADDING COLOR TO YOUR LAWN

Flowers can be expensive, and some species require abundant care. However, low-cost pansies make a dramatic addition to an



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Landscaping touches can grab potential buyers' attention. Curb appeal can make the difference between piling in buyers and having your home sit on the market.

outdoor space and are easily transplanted in a mature state.

To cut back on cost and make your garden pop, try lining the just the walkway with a colorful selection of flowers to draw the eye to the path, porch and front door.

If you have the time and money, lining the entire front of the home with flowers is a treat to look at. However, home sellers on a budget will do well to stick to the center pathway and porch areas.

EVENING CURB APPEAL

Some buyers are prone to property drive-bys after hours, so you

want to make your home stand out at night.

By adding a line of solar lights along the pathway, you can create a soft glow that outlines the yard and creates a symmetrical ambiance. In addition, a low-voltage porch light in soft yellow or orange adds warmth and enough illumination to showcase your home at night.

EXTERIOR ATTITUDE

The exterior of your home should radiate an appealing color contrast to set your property apart from the rest. Sandblasting may not fit most sellers' budgets, but a

fresh coat of paint will take you far.

Light colors, such as white, eggshell, yellow and similar hues, give the illusion that the property is larger. Similarly, darker exterior paint will create the illusion of a smaller home.

EXTERIOR ACCENTS

Once the house is painted, you are ready to accessorize with window treatments, garden statuary and colorful decor.

Window shutters provide a neat and tidy appearance, and you may find them at good prices and competitive rates. The shut-

REAL ESTATE 101

The Quick Route to Curb Appeal

These quick, inexpensive changes can help increase your curb appeal:

- Solar lights along the front path;
- Colorful pansies planted in the walkway, and near the porch and front door;
- A fresh coat of paint on the front door; and
- Cleaning up the front porch by removing unused items.

ters should be darker than the exterior paint to create color contrast and true curb appeal.

Use your creative powers to enhance a color scheme to suit your taste and best accentuate your lawn with colorful window treatments at bargain deals.

To save even more, try signing up for a home improvement class at your local garden center for ideas and installation information to do the job yourself and save money.

Add a few pieces of garden statuary or water fountains, and your front yard is transformed into a place that is sure to leave a pleasant impression with potential buyers.

Alex Mason is a former real estate agent and mortgage broker living in Los Angeles.



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HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

Market value: The most probable price that a property should bring in a competitive and open market, provided that all conditions requisite to a fair sale are present, the buyer and seller are knowledgeable and acting prudently, and the price is not affected by any undue stimulus.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

AD SPACE