

The Value of Curb Appeal

Landscaping plays a crucial role in creating a positive first impression for potential home buyers.

Sellers have the opportunity to significantly enhance their property's allure and increase its market value by incorporating certain landscaping features. Most real estate agents, according to the National Association of Realtors, rank curb appeal as a significant factor for buyers. Consider sprucing up some of the following areas to make your home more attractive.

WELL-GROOMED LAWNS

Lawns and gardens are often the first thing potential buyers notice. A lush, well-manicured lawn exudes a sense of care and attention to detail. Regular mowing, weeding and fertilizing are essential for maintaining a healthy lawn. The NAR estimates that a well-groomed lawn can add \$1,000 to the value of a home.

Consider planting colorful flowers and adding mulch or decorative stones to garden beds for an extra touch of vibrancy. Stick with just a few color palettes that complement your home colors.



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REAL ESTATE 101

Repairing Your House

Michael Lyons, a Florida real estate broker, told Realtor.com that cutting corners on home maintenance will cost you more money than it saves you. Buyers will catch shoddy repairs during home inspections and you'll have to either redo the repairs or reduce your selling price. He recommends fixing such things as rotted wood, cracks in the ceiling or chipped paint, all of which buyers see as red flags that there might be more serious problems. However, he said, with major repairs, you're better off lowering the listing price or giving a buyer a credit at closing.

HARDSCAPING ELEMENTS

Integrating hardscaping elements such as pathways, patios and decks can greatly enhance a property's functionality and visual appeal. These features provide defined spaces for outdoor living, entertaining and

dining. Consider using quality materials like natural stone or pavers to create durable and visually appealing surfaces.

Adding seating areas, fire pits or water features can create a focal point and increase the desirability of the outdoor space. A well-designed hard-

scape complements the overall home architecture and creates a seamless transition between indoor and outdoor living.

PRIVACY ENHANCEMENTS

The truism "good fences make good neighbors" contin-

ues to be true for many home buyers who are concerned about privacy. A survey by YouGov found that 60% of high-end home buyers listed privacy as a top concern.

SUSTAINABLE FEATURES

Buyers often appreciate properties that incorporate sustainable landscaping features. Consider installing a rainwater harvesting system or a drip irrigation system to conserve water. Use native plants that are adapted to the local climate and require less maintenance and water.

Incorporating permeable surfaces such as gravel or permeable pavers can help with stormwater management. Highlighting these sustainable features can attract eco-conscious buyers and potentially increase the value of the property.

OUTDOOR LIGHTING

Outdoor lighting can enhance the safety and security of the property while providing an inviting ambiance. Illuminating pathways, highlighting architectural features and showcasing landscape elements can create a visually stunning effect. Consider installing energy-efficient LED lighting fixtures that reduce energy consumption.



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HOMEWISSE GLOSSARY

Non-conforming loans: Loan amounts that exceeds the Federal National Mortgage Association's \$417,000 (as of July 2006) maximum lending. SOURCE: MLS.com

AD SPACE