
Enhance the Curb Appeal of Your Home

If your home's curb appeal makes a great first impression, everyone -- including potential homebuyers -- will want to see what's inside. Check out these simple, low-cost curb appeal improvements that you can do in a day, a week, or a month.

Dress Up the Front Door

Your home's front entry is the focal point of its curb appeal. Make a statement by giving your front door a blast of color with paint or by installing a custom wood door. Clean off any dirty spots around the knob, and use metal polish on the door fixtures. Your entry should also reflect the home's interior, so choose a swag or a wreath that reflects your personal style.

Even with a small budget, there are ways to draw attention to your front door and improve curb appeal. Molding acts like an architectural eyeliner when applied to the sides and top of the doorway.

Replace Old Hardware

House numbers, the entry door lockset, a wall-mounted mailbox, and an overhead light fixture are all elements that can add style and interest to your home's exterior curb appeal. If they're out of date or dingy, your home may not be conveying the aesthetic you think it is. These elements add the most appeal when they function collectively, rather than as mix-and-match pieces. Oiled-bronze finishes suit traditional homes, while brushed nickel suits more contemporary ones.

Install Outdoor Lighting

Low-voltage landscape lighting makes a huge impact on your home's curb appeal while also providing safety and security. Fixtures can add accent lighting to trees or the house or can illuminate a walking path. If you aren't able to use lights that require wiring, install solar fixtures (but understand that their light levels are not as bright or as reliable).

Create an Instant Garden

Container gardens add a welcoming feel and colorful curb appeal to any home exterior -- quickly and affordably. You can buy ready-made containers from garden centers or create your own with your favorite plants. For most landscapes, a staggered, asymmetrical arrangement works best to create a dynamic setting.

Do a Mailbox Makeover

Mailboxes should complement the home and express the homeowner's personality. When choosing a hanging drop box, pick a box that mirrors your home's trimmings. Dress up mail boxes for curb appeal by painting the wooden post to match the house's exterior color, or by surrounding it by a beautiful flowering garden.

Renew Planter Beds

Get garden beds into shape by pruning growth, pulling weeds, planting flowers, and adding new mulch to restore color that was taken away by sunlight and harsh weather. If stone or brick borders your bed, consider cleaning and resetting any pieces that are soiled or dislodged. If your border is old or tired-looking, try upgrading to stone or a decorative cast-concrete edging system for improved curb appeal.

Add Arbors or Fence Panels

Arbors, garden gates, and short sections of decorative fence panels will enhance your garden and the value and curb appeal of your home. These amenities can be found in easy-to-build kits or prefab sections you simply connect together. For best results, paint or stain these items with colors already on your house.

Add Outdoor Art

Give your yard a little spunk and curb appeal by adding weather-resistant artwork. Choose pieces that complement your home's natural palette and exterior elements. Birdbaths, metal cutouts, sculptures, and wind chimes are good choices for outdoor art. Water sculptures not only function as yard art, but the burbling sounds soothe and make hot days feel cooler. Place fountains on level ground in optimum hearing and sight vantage points. Avoid spots in leaf-dropping range.

Add Shutters or Accent Trim

Shutters and trim add a welcoming layer of beauty and curb appeal to your home's exterior. Shutters also control light and ventilation, and provide additional security. Exterior shutters can be made of wood, aluminum, vinyl, composite, or fiberglass. New composite materials, such as PVC resins or polyurethane, make trim details durable and low maintenance.

Create a New Garden Bed

Add contrast and color to your home exterior with a new planting bed. Prime spots for curb appeal are at the front corners of the yard, along driveways or walkways, and immediately in front of the house. When creating a new bed, choose features that will frame your home rather than obscure it. Opt for stone or precast-concrete blocks to edge the bed. Include a mix of plant size, color, and texture for optimal results.

Replace Gutters and Downspouts

If your home has an older gutter system, odds are it's also suffering from peeling paint, rust spots, or other problems that can convey a sense of neglect. Replace old systems with newer, snap-fit vinyl gutter systems that go together with few tools and require no painting. Copper systems, while pricier, convey an unmistakable look of quality and pretty curb appeal.

Renew Paint, Siding, and Trim

An exterior facelift (new paint, siding, or trim details) automatically transforms the look of a home. Periodic maintenance of that exterior surface is the surest way to keep your house and its curb appeal looking its best. Any obvious defects, such as cracked or rotting material, can downgrade the aesthetic and quickly turn away potential homebuyers. Once defects are repaired, look for ways to add personality with color, trim, or shingles.

Build a Walkway or Path to Your Front Door

Well-designed walkways make your home feel warm and inviting. For a dramatic improvement to a straight concrete path, replace it with a contoured one made of stone or brick. For a less radical upgrade to your curb appeal, apply a colored concrete resurfacer to the old walkway, then edge with brick or stone borders. Brick pavers offer traditional, classic beauty to the landscape of any home.

Upgrade Railings

Porch and stoop railings can deteriorate quickly if not treated properly. If your railings are past their prime, look for quality wood or metal components to replace the existing material and improve curb appeal. As with other improvements attached directly to the house, make sure the color, scale, design, details, and material are compatible with the home's main features.

To see photos that accompany these suggestions go to the source for this article:

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