

MAXIMIZE YOUR CURB APPEAL

When you're selling your home, first impressions are everything. A prospective buyer will decide in a single glance if they want to consider purchasing your home, or even step inside and take a look. How does your home look at first glance? Stand on the sidewalk in front of your home and take a good look. Do you like what you see? Will anyone else?

What you do with your front garden, walkway and entrance will help you tempt the most discerning house-hunter. Follow these guidelines to ensure your property has plenty of curb appeal.

DRIVE BY

Compare your home to the others on the street. How does it measure up? Is the yard clean and well kept? Do the eaves and trim have a crisp, clean appearance? How are the exterior paint and roof holding up? Pick out the nicest house on the street and take note of any features or items that you can emulate on your own property – without appearing too obvious, of course.

A CLEAN SWEEP

No matter what the season, ensure sidewalks, driveways and pathways are free of garden debris and litter. That goes for eaves and porches too. When is the last time you cleaned your storm door or mailbox? Get out the vinegar and newsprint, and make your front windows sparkle, too.

WEED AND FEED

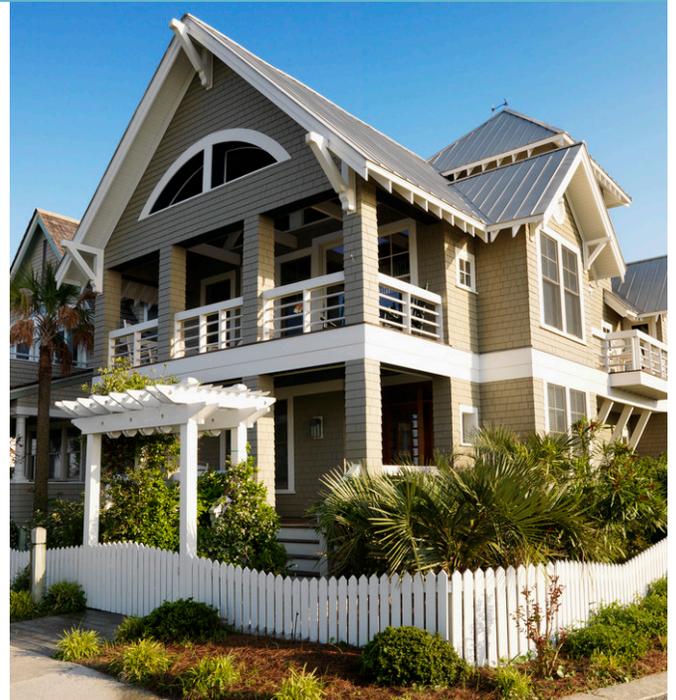
Even if your lawn is the envy of the neighborhood, take the time to ensure that any edges are neatly trimmed and the area is relatively free of weeds. If new sod is required, plant it as soon as possible, since it will take a few weeks to blend in with the rest of the grass. Add a splash of life to your porch or window boxes with colorful plants. And keep your garden neat year-round. Even in winter months, shrubs and trees look their best with old leaves and growth cleared away.

OUTER LIMITS

If your siding is looking more shabby than chic, consider repainting it. Sometimes simply touching up the trim and fascia is all it takes to brighten up your home's exterior. Or, if your property has vinyl siding, bring on the power-washer to whip it back into shape. Start at the top and work your way down and, if you're pressed for time, focus on the side that prospective buyers see first.

NIGHT VISION

Don't forget about what your home's exterior looks like once the sunsets. Savvy homebuyers have been known to swing by properties of interest at all hours. Is your front yard still inviting



in the dark? Are walkways well lit or do children even pass by your house on Halloween because it's too darn scary? It could be as simple as changing your front porch fixture or adding some solar-powered garden lights to give your yard some evening appeal.

WILD LIFE

A prospective buyer should not be aware that you own a pet just by looking at your lawn. Birdfeeders, while appreciated by wildlife, should be moved during an open house to keep the yard neat and stop squirrels and sparrows from jumping out at passersby. Be sure to keep personal items such as sports equipment, toys and other items tucked away as well.

A WARM WELCOME

Polish up the doorknobs and dust off the welcome mat! One thing a lot of homeowners overlook is the placement of their house number. Can you see it from the street? If not, consider relocating it or, better yet, purchase some striking new numbers to identify your home with. Now stand on your front porch. Do you feel welcome? Take note of what your eye is drawn to first, whether positive or negative, and make any adjustments if necessary.

*A little effort can make a big difference in ensuring that your home has the curb appeal necessary to attract prospective buyers and encourage bids.
Good Luck!*