



Curb Appeal

‘Curb appeal’ refers to the impression your home gives to a person from the street. It is given as an individual walks or drives by your house, or parks in front and prepares to ring the doorbell. This initial impression is usually received unconsciously, yet it can affect the way a visitor feels about your home before they even enter it.

As a redesigner, I sometimes get visually sidetracked on the way to the inside job, because I see so much potential not being utilized outside. The wrap-around porch has become a catch-all for faded silk wreaths and several pots of spindly plants, or the front deck has patio furniture, but it’s not arranged, decorative or inviting. The outdoor living area is usable area that can increase the square footage of your home during the warmer months, so try to look at these spaces as additional ‘rooms without walls’.

As you view your property from the curb, is your attention drawn to peeling paint, a broken fence, or overgrown bushes that obstruct the view of the house? Can you identify your home from the street by an address number or family name plaque? Do you need to devote some time to clearing the yard of stray toys or dead plants? Even these simple things will make a big difference.

Now walk towards your front door. Is there a clear and designated walkway? What do you see when you look through the windows? Are there areas along the way that might benefit from some additional plants, flowers or decorative accents? Does it look well maintained? A quick sweeping of the walk and front porch may be all that’s in order to give a better first impression.

Step up onto the doorstep. Is the front door clean and well-maintained? Is the porch light working and cobweb free? Is the welcome mat clean? The front door area can usually benefit from a little sprucing up, with live greenery, a wreath, decorative thermometer, or wind chime for interest. This is the first spot to greet visitors, so take a minute to look at it objectively, and make improvements as needed.

Any kind of container can be utilized for plantings on the front porch. I filled my kids’ old red wagon with ivy ten years ago, and it is still thriving on the front stoop. Think antique wooden tools, rusty metal work, or a terra cotta planter: an item doesn’t have to be purchased from a fancy garden shop to add a touch of whimsy or color to your home’s exterior.

The front façade of the home can also be embellished with details like flags, trellises, pots of annual or perennial flowers, or metal artwork (an old iron gate mounted on the outside wall can be a lovely and interesting detail). If your exterior has a big expanse of empty wall, chances are it would benefit from a splash of color or texture, so use your imagination.

Check out your home's curb appeal before company arrives this spring!

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