



Cost-effective Ways to Boost Curb Appeal

(ARA) - Anyone who's ever bought, sold or even just looked at a house can tell you first impressions matter. A house can be filled to the rafters with luxury touches, but if it lacks curb appeal, few potential buyers will ever step in the door to see what's inside.

Curb appeal is taking on a new meaning for many homeowners. While an attractive home exterior can still boost potential resale value, homeowners are also looking at curb appeal as a way to enhance the enjoyment of their homes. Giving the exterior of their home a facelift not only makes the house stand out on the street, it also allows homeowners to "move up" without the expense of remodeling or moving.

Fortunately, many curb appeal-enhancing projects can be cost-effective too, yielding significant improvements for a modest investment.

If you're looking for low-cost, high-impact ways to create or improve curb appeal, consider these ideas:

- **Make small improvements that have a big impact.** Simple touches like repainting the front door, window trim and shutters, planting flowers, and switching outdated light fixtures can create a whole new look. Plus, these simple improvements have the advantage of being scalable. Instead of re-siding the entire house, you can freshen the facade by tackling smaller portions, such as a porch or garage. Later, if you want to continue the improvement, you can re-side other areas of the facade.
- **Choose materials that are durable and stylish.** Skimping on materials may seem like a great way to save money, but you could end up spending more in the long run if you have to redo a job that was first done with lower quality materials. Purchase the best quality materials you can afford - not only will they look better than cheaper goods, they'll last longer and provide more enjoyment and value.
- **Dress up the exterior with accents.** Adding touches like accents to gables, posts and beams, drain chains in place of downspouts or planter boxes is a great way to improve curb appeal while stretching your budget. Quality materials retain their beauty over time better than cheaper materials.
- **Illuminate.** Light is a powerful accent, and, thanks to the availability of easy-to-install solar lights, you don't need to pay a professional to light your landscape. Solar lights - readily available in home improvement stores - provide decorative illumination to driveways, walkways and gardens.
- **Introduce shade.** Arbors and trellises adorned with flowering vines are not only beautiful in warm months; they're a great way to add areas of shade to your landscape. They can even be used to block the scorching heat from the afternoon sun from parts of your home's interior. Building an arbor or trellis is well within the capabilities of most do-it-yourselfers.
- **Add a splash of color to your landscape with low-maintenance plantings that require little attention.** As an added "green" step, consider plants that require less water, too. Your local home extension office can help you identify what types of plants will grow best in your region.
- **Think "green."** Whenever possible, choose materials that are truly sustainable. Sustainable materials are ones that have been harvested and/or manufactured through methods designed to reduce their impact on the environment.

Source: ARAcontent