



# How to Boost Curb Appeal

If you're thinking of selling this year, I would be happy to help you decide which of these projects would net the best value based on my experience. Even if you're not planning to sell any time soon, updating and maintaining your home regularly shows you take pride in owning it.

**Wash the exterior.** Over the years, dirt, grime and cobwebs can collect on your home's exterior. A pressure washer can remove this buildup and give your home a fresh look that may even add \$10,000 to \$15,000 to the value of your home.\* Also, wash the windows (inside and out) and clean the gutters, downspouts and all doors, including garage doors.

**Paint.** Paint is a sure-fire way to boost the curb appeal of your home and make it the envy of your neighborhood. Update your home with a coat or two of the same color or choose a new shade. If you'd like to paint it the same color, scrape a small swatch and bring it to the paint store to match it. Specialized paint stores may retain the name of the color you choose to use again for touch ups. Also paint the door, trim and shutters in a shade that complements the rest of your home. Remember to prep the surface area before you start painting to help the paint last longer.

If you're planning to sell soon, avoid unusual colors. Homes painted unusual shades may be appraised lower if they don't fit in with comparable homes on the market.

**Install vinyl siding.** Protect the exterior of your home with vinyl siding. Vinyl and premium vinyl siding are offered in a wide range of colors and are durable and low-maintenance. Premium vinyl lasts longer and may also integrate insulation. To keep it looking like new, clean it with a power washer periodically.

Although vinyl siding tends to be low-maintenance, you may have to replace your siding if you notice moisture or damage from hail, wildlife or extreme weather.

**Repair or replace the roof.** If your roof is in good shape, hire a professional to clean and remove moss and dirt that have built up. If your roof is due for a replacement, it may be best to do so before you list it. Although the median cost of a new asphalt shingle roof is \$7,500, if you install a new one before you list, you may have a return on investment of 109 percent.\* If you aren't planning to sell your home soon, maintaining it may help you avoid expensive repairs in the future.

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**Pay attention to the details.** These details include door hardware and handles, light fixtures and house numbers.

- Polish the hardware or replace it with a style that complements the home, such as oiled bronze for traditional styles and brushed nickel for contemporary styles.
- Purchase new numbers with the same finish as your hardware or purchase an address plaque to affix to your home or place in your yard.
- Update the style of your exterior lighting. If you're replacing lights, look for ones that have the same mounting system as your current ones.
- Add more lighting to increase the safety of your entryway by adding an overhead fixture or wall sconces.

**Nurture your landscape.** A well-maintained landscape and lawn add to the home's appeal, creating colorful dimensions and attractive lines. Mow the lawn regularly, mulch and weed the garden beds and prune any overgrown shrubs. Also, clear away any overgrown vines or invasive weeds that have crept into your landscape.

In addition to mowing the lawn, add seed or sod to any bare spots you see. Add color to your landscape with a few potted plants and flowers. If you have window boxes, be sure to maintain them throughout the growing season.

Many people find symmetrical landscapes aesthetically pleasing. Affix light fixtures to either side of your front door, place potted plants on either side of your front porch or plant trees on either side of the front walkway to highlight this balance.

\*Source: HouseLogic.com

## 6 money and timesaving tips for creating a lush landscape

**1. Design it right.** Survey your property and make notes regarding the land's topography, existing vegetation, soil type, rainfall, wind patterns, lighting and areas where water collects.

**2. Amend your soil.** Plants thrive in healthy, loamy soil. Amend your soil with compost to help clay soils improve absorption and sandy soils hold water.

**3. Group plants together** based on their soil, sun and water requirements. For example, place sun-loving plants in the sunniest part of the garden or landscape.

**Build a fence.** A fence not only increases privacy for homeowners, it may add value to your property as long as it fits with the style of the home and neighborhood. A three-foot high and 100-foot long gated picket fence will likely cost between \$2,000 and \$3,500 on average.\* If you already have a fence, keep it well maintained, and replace any broken gates, latches or planks.

**Stay on top of maintenance.** Performing regular maintenance not only helps prevent costly damage, it can also augment the value of your home. Studies show deferred maintenance may decrease your home's value by as much as 10 percent.\* Tasks such as replacing missing mortar between bricks, resealing cracked asphalt and touching up faded or cracked paint may seem insignificant; however, these small imperfections may stand out to potential buyers and leave a negative impression, especially in competitive markets.



**4. Incorporate native plants and perennials to reduce maintenance and water needs.** Native plants originate from your region and are used to its soil, climate, rainfall, etc. Perennials are plants that come back every year. Both can be low-maintenance once they're established.

**5. Water early in the morning.** The best time to water is early in the morning when evaporation is less. You may also water after six in the evening; however, try not to leave standing water on plants as it may encourage mold or disease.

**6. Fertilize lawn** before watering so it's green and lush.