



## Day Eight - Creating Curb Appeal

Many times curb appeal is at the top of my "Top Ten" list, because it literally is the first impression. This first impression is all-important because it sets the tone for the way a buyer will view the rest of the house. (And can even determine whether he or she will view it at all.) Within fifteen seconds, a buyer will develop an attitude toward a house, either positive or negative. He or she will then be looking to reinforce this attitude throughout the rest of the home tour. By making the first impression a positive one, we ensure that the buyer will seek other positive aspects of the home to reinforce that initial impression.



### **Your First Impressions**

It is always difficult for home sellers when you stand outside viewing—and helping *them* to view—their home with critical "buyers eyes." Yet, this is essential to the success of the sale. Ask them not to take it personally. This is business.

How do you think your client's house compares to others in the neighborhood? Or to houses in home decorating magazines? Be sure to drive around the neighborhood prior to the staging appointment in order to assess and compare the competition.

In the above photo example, shutters are such an easy fix to boring windows. The profusion of colorful flowers in the foreground set against a background displays a nice "layering" of texture.

**Plantings should be arranged like accessories: tall, medium and short for maximum appeal.**



<<Another idea is to create an emotional connection point in the front area if there is room...

A simple wooden bench surrounded by flowerpots is a welcoming sight. Add outdoor pillows and a cup and saucer to really give it punch.

Use your imagination and see where it takes you.



## *Curb Appeal Continued...*

Three key ingredients to great curb appeal are:

### **1. PLANT! PLANT! PLANT!**

After assessing a front yard, have your clients plant flowers in areas where there is little appeal. They are a cheap but valuable investment in the sale of the home. Don't have the slightest idea what to plant in your area? Many local nurseries have individuals who will come to a home and make planting suggestions for less than \$100/hour. It is a good idea to talk to these people to obtain great ideas for plantings that are fast-growing, striking and long-lasting.

### **2. Flowers always have a dramatic impact on our perception and mood**

\*Hint – Fragrant flowers, whether sitting or hanging in pots or overflowing in beds, go miles toward impressing buyers. Flowers are relatively inexpensive, considering their impact. An overflowing bowl of flowers costs only \$10 at most nurseries. Have your clients shop various nurseries to find the best looking pots, and flowers that really stand out. You cannot overkill in this area.

### **3. Fresh tan bark should be used to cover any bare areas in planters for a manicured look**

\*Hint – This is such an inexpensive way to give the yard a clean and finished look. The fresh bark chips make everything around them look newly landscaped; they smell good, too. I suggest you only buy the large chips to cover hills as a last resort. Choose the small bark chips for everywhere else.

**Here is a before-and-after of a small home that needed some cosmetic adjustments...**



## *Curb Appeal Continued...*

The goal for the exterior of the home is the same as the interior: A clean, open, sunny and well-manicured look. To achieve this goal, we recommend you assess and ask for the following of your clients:

- Keep grass mowed and edges trimmed regularly (weekly)**  
  
*\* Hint – Now is the time for weekly “blow and go” gardeners if your client’s don’t already have one*  
  
*\*\* Referral – Have a gardener referral if you don’t already have one*
- Fertilize the grass with a good nitrogen based turf builder to make it look lush and green**
- In bare lawn spots under trees, simply create a planter by planting flowers and filling in with fresh bark chips to create finished look, as well as emphasize the tree areas.**
- Water the yard more often for a more lush, green feel**
- Prune the hedges into neat, square shapes**
- Prune the bushes into round, soft shapes. No shagginess!**
- Remove and replace any dead or dying shrubs**
- Remove fallen sticks and leaves**
- Pick up garden equipment, kids toys and empty clay pots.**
- Hide trash cans out of view**
- Keep driveway clear of extra cars (park down the street)**
- Clear the street in front of the house of any litter or debris so it looks impeccably clean from the corner right up to your front door**  
  
*\* Remember, buyers are not only critically surveying your client’s house but the neighborhood as well.*
- Wrap up the hose or hide it altogether**
- Trees should be trimmed so that the bottom 6 feet is visible**

## ***Curb Appeal Continued...***

- **Paint the front door for a more updated, clean, dramatic look**  
*\*Hint – Two to three flowerpots of matching color really help to dramatize your entrances. Make sure to not overcrowd the entry way, rather give it just enough warmth by adding something everyone loves...flowers.*
- **Give the garage door a fresh coat of paint for extra shine**
- **Consider updating your light fixtures in the front of the house. Brass is outdated so consider buying iron, black, rust or brown.**  
*\*Hint – You can find fairly inexpensive ones at Home Depot or Lowes*  
*\*\*Referral – Have an electrician referral if you don't already have one*
- **Consider having client's remove or trim large trees and especially palms.**  
*\*Hint – Too many large trees make a house appear small and create a dark, forbidding sort of look for buyers*
- **Add inexpensive "walk-up" lights**

### **Obligations – Cleaning and Repairs**

The front yard usually needs the most help in the cleaning department because, let's face it, we don't live in our front yard so we have a tendency to overlook the many cobwebs, grease stains and water stains that have accumulated. A buyer's critical eye will not miss a detail especially when they are standing on the front door step waiting for the Realtor to arrive or open the door.

- **The front door area should be thoroughly cleaned or power washed**
- **Power wash the driveway and walks. This will make them look new which consequently will make your home seem new.**  
*\*Hint – you can either purchase an inexpensive one or have the area professionally washed. For tough stains use dish washing liquid or coca-cola.*
- **Remove mildew and cobwebs from eaves**
- **All Windows must be sparkling clean**
- **All light fixtures should be cleaned and shined**

## *Curb Appeal Continued...*

### **Easy Ways to Update the Curb Appeal**

Believe it or not, certain yard styles can appear "dated". A yard covered with those small, orange rocks, for instance, would be considered old-fashioned and sterile. There are a lot of details you can add to bring the yard up to date.

**1. Invest in a new, oversized, natural bristle doormat**

*\*Hint – This gives the doorway a larger, cleaner feel. It can be purchased inexpensively at Target*

**2. Consider purchasing furniture in the form of a bench, rocker or bistro table and chairs, so buyers can imagine a front yard resting place**

**3. Consider replacing and updating the mailbox**

**4. Update or add house address numbers under light fixtures**

*\*Hint – This helps to ensure buyers and Realtors can find the house*

### **Nightmare Neighbor? No Problem!**

Inexpensive bamboo fencing from Home Depot can be a good alternative to other fencing options that are out of your client's budget...

