



# CREATING CURB APPEAL

## BOOST YOUR CURB APPEAL

When it comes to the value of your home first impressions do matter. So, increase the allure of your home by maximizing the appearance of your garden and grounds.

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First impressions always count. Every home is in a context or surroundings that give it meaning. Choosing and locating appropriate trees, shrubs, flowers, lighting and hardscape can make a significant difference.

To begin, let us address the issue of how landscape design can help keep architecture in harmony with its surroundings that give it meaning. A house needs a designed setting, one which embraces it as an element in the landscape. The planting in the foreground of a house should contain only such plants that complement the architecture and create a natural setting nevertheless; there are many houses that appear to be starkly misplaced because of their total insensitivity to the scene around them. Some unwritten social code has determined that a “well-dressed” house must sport a skirt of shrubs. The evergreen shrubs so often used to conceal the foundations of houses have succeeded only in masking one kind of eyesore with another. In most cases, these stiff little evergreens are not in agreement with the architecture of the surrounding landscape. Too often, a design looks like it is forced into a space rather than a pleasing fit. An example would be forcing something formal onto an informal property or using exotic plants that do not really belong.

The hardscape is the foundation to every major landscape project. A common hardscaping flaw is a minimal three-foot wide front walk which does not make for an appealing entryway. The walk up to the front of the house should not feel like a tightrope. Guests do not want to get dumped off at a little sidewalk next to the driveway where you creep under the eaves next to the windows up to a small landing. Another common hardscaping design flaw is using the same material for the driveway and the front walk. It is nice to know where the cars belong and where the people belong. Consequently, concrete paving brick has taken the market by storm because it is so versatile that it can be used for driveways and walks as well as it plays up the details and colors in a house.

A thorough landscape designer will review lighting needs and opportunities. Low-voltage lighting systems are relatively inexpensive to install and are proving to be very popular. Lights can provide a sense of security as well as highlight architectural aspects of the house. A clump form birch looks great lit from below in summer and in the dead of winter when the light catches the falling snow. When professionally designed, lighting can be breathtaking and is a wonderful extension of the home landscape.

Some general common sense tips for creating curb appeal include being honest with yourself about how much time you plan to spend maintaining your landscape. Plan for low maintenance not no maintenance. Foremost, install our landscape properly the first time by using healthy plants and quality products. You can make your landscape dynamic with seasonal color change and using a variety of small trees, perennials and ornamental grasses. Finally, create an appropriate landscape, one suited to your locale, your neighborhood, and the architectural style of your home. An appropriate design places the right plant in the right spot.