



Question: What can I do to improve the “curb appeal” of the house I am trying to sell?

Curb appeal – how your house looks to people driving by or as they walk up to the front door – can be critical to getting your house sold. A good first impression can encourage a potential buyer to take a closer look and be more willing to overlook other negatives the property may have. Just as easily, a bad first impression may be impossible to overcome no matter how attractive the inside of the house may be.

Start by imagining how buyers will see your house when they first pull up. Park where you think they will park when they come to visit and walk to the house along the same path they will take. How does the house look to you? How does the yard and landscaping look? Is the property in tip-top shape? Does it look like the paint is up-to-date and that the owners take pride in how their house looks to others? If you, as the seller, are concerned about how your home looks you can expect that potential buyers will be, as well.

Try the same experiment at dusk so that you can see if there are any negative curb appeal issues at that time of day when the lighting is different. Your first job is to repair any obvious problems so that buyers see your house in its best condition.

There are some simple things you can do at almost no or very low cost to make sure that your house makes a great first impression.

- ❖ Remove any debris or trash from the site (even it is not yours) and move the garbage cans to the side of the house or into the garage
- ❖ Mow the lawn and edge along the sidewalks
- ❖ Power wash the sidewalks, porch, driveway and front patio
- ❖ Put away tools, garden implements and children’s toys
- ❖ Clean the gutters
- ❖ Wash front facing windows (including those pesky little ones on the garage door)

Landscaping can make a significant difference in the appearance of a home – and you don’t have to spend a fortune to make yours look beautiful. Plant some flowers to add color to your landscaping and use strategically planted bushes and shrubs to hide unsightly objects like air conditioning units, pipes or damage to the exterior of the home. And be sure to water the lawn and flowers regularly to keep the property looking inviting and well maintained.

Exterior areas often overlooked are the front door and surrounding area. Staining or painting the front door an inviting color makes a good first impression. Make sure the

locks on the door all work properly and easily and that nothing appears to be loose or in need of repair.

Curb appeal also extends to the sides and back of your home. Clean up the backyard, add some landscaping if it is needed and make sure the pool, or water features (if you have them) look clean and well maintained and the storage shed in the corner isn't on its last leg and rusting. Serious buyers will walk around your house several times so be attentive to the same issues out back and on the sides, just like you would do for the front.

For nighttime appeal you may want to add some lighting along the driveway, at the front door or on the sidewalk leading to the front entrance. Low voltage lighting can be an effective enhancement at relatively low cost.

Finally, if the house has not been recently painted or is painted your favorite color of Jello you may want to consider repainting to a more neutral color.