



Improving Your Curb Appeal

Let's head outside to improve your home's curb appeal, without spending much money.

1. **Yard Art:** Art is subjective. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. But when it comes to yard art, buyers see clutter. Do you have gnomes in your garden beds? A goose wearing an Easter bonnet at the front door? Solar lights that have fallen over, and stepping stones with cute sayings? When you decide to sell your house, these items need to go. They distract from the home, and you don't want to give buyers anything to blatantly criticize.
2. **Gutters & Downspouts:** It's very important to direct water away from your house and foundation. During a house inspection, loose gutters and missing or displaced downspouts are often called out for repair. Instead of waiting until the buyer points them out on the Inspection Response, be proactive and have them fixed before listing your house. Gutters hanging at an angle, and puddles at the corners of your house because water is not draining properly due to missing downspouts, does not bode well with buyers. Don't let something this minor stand in the way of getting offers.
3. **Removing Mildew:** The north side of a house usually gets less sun than other areas, staying damp and shaded. This allows algae, mold and mildew to grow, and almost every home has this. Take a walk around your house and see if the siding, patio, walkways and your deck have a green tint. If so, study which cleaning supplies will take care of the issue, in the gentlest manner so as not to harm the material. Be sure to use products designed for the substrate, such as those for brick, stone, siding, wood, or concrete. When appropriate, a power washer comes in handy, just be careful not to damage the area you are cleaning. It's easy to get carried away, and then I'll see you with a brush in your hand, because the power washer stripped the paint off your house.
4. **Landscaping:** When I use the term landscaping, I don't want you to hire a landscape architect and spend thousands of dollars on new plants. What I want you to do is to take things out. If your foundation plantings are 20 years old, most likely they are overgrown, yet spindly on the inside. Or they are so large that you can't see the lower third of your house. If you can't cut them back without making them look anemic, take them out. A home looks better with no shrubs versus those that have grown over the walkway, and up the side of the home, where they start looking into your windows. Put mulch in the spots where you removed greenery, and let the new owner be creative about what to plant. The area might look bare to you, but to others, it's a cleaner look. After all, they are buying a house, not a shrub, and you want them to clearly see why yours is their next dream home.

By paying attention to the outside of your house, and improving its curb appeal, you will attract more buyers. People want to buy a house that has been cared for, both inside and out. Stand out from your competition, and give your exterior the consideration it deserves. You only have one chance to make a great first impression.

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