

## **Curb Appeal – First Impressions Count When Selling Your Home**

People selling their homes via real estate brokers get lots of coaching. People selling their own homes as FSBOs need the same. One of the most important topics on which FSBOs can benefit from coaching is “curb appeal.” How does your home look when a potential buyer drives up to the curb and takes that all important first look?

### **Be Sure It Looks Great**

Single family residences require the most work. The FSBO seller of a single family home also has the most control of what is seen from the curb, so let’s start there. Make sure grass is cut, leaves are raked, sidewalks swept and edged, and planting beds are freshly mulched. That’s just the beginning.

Narrow walks leading to front doors are not inviting. If you can afford to have the walk replaced with a wider one, do it. A walk with some curve to it is often appealing. One which is wider where it meets the public walk and wider as it reaches the front steps can look particularly inviting. If two men can approach your front door side by side without jostling each other, your walk is sufficiently wide.

What if you have a narrow walk and a small budget? You can improvise with brick, stone, or concrete pavers from Lowes or Home Depot if you’re handy and healthy. Choose whichever material is most compatible with your house. Dig out the grass on either side of your walk and lay a line of the chosen paving materials parallel along each side of your walk. Fill in with mulch (not the colored type, just good earth toned natural stuff, please), sand, or river gravel. Make sure there’s a crisp edge where the grass starts.

Large, overgrown shrubs that crowd the house and cover windows are a negative. Prune them back. If there is a narrow planting bed along the front of the house, widen it. Have the bed swoop in a curve around to the side of the house. Depending on the size and scale of the house, plant something like a dogwood, a butterfly bush or a holly in the curve at the corner of the house. Make sure it will not be so close or so large as to overwhelm the house in a few years. Fill in with smaller plants at the front of the widened bed. Mulch. Mulch. Mulch. But the mulch should be only two or three inches deep. Don’t let it pile up on the trunks of trees.

Plant colorful flowers in containers on either side of the front door if the season is conducive. Geraniums work well in sunny spots. Impatiens are good in shade. Make sure the containers are of natural materials. Most plastic containers look tacky and cheap. Advertisements for luxury cars show them near expensive houses and beautifully dressed people for a reason. Association. You want the things seen on the way to your front door to be in good taste and of excellent quality. Fortunately, that doesn’t necessarily mean they have to be expensive. Clay pots are good. Old iron urns are great with traditional homes. Oak barrels can look wonderful with rustic homes. The addition of a bit of trailing ivy or sweet potato vines can be attractive. It’s possible to achieve a miniature garden by combining several sorts of plants in larger containers.

Make sure the front door is clean and the paint is in good condition. Be sure it swings on its hinges well. It needs to open and close well and firmly. The doorknob should work well and not have any “bobble” motion when it’s used. Exterior light fixtures should be clean and free of rust. Front windows should be clean and shining.

When preparing to sell your house, make sure you get everything in order. As superficial as it may sound, curb appeal is a dominant factor in getting sales.

About the Author: Raynor James is with <http://www.fsboamerica.org> - providing homes for sale by owner, "FSBO", properties. Are you thinking, "Should I sell my home?" Visit <http://www.fsboamerica.org/seller.cfm> to list and sell your home for free for one month. Source: [www.isnare.com](http://www.isnare.com)