

? curb appeal

My house has a plain-Jane exterior. What can I do to enhance its curb appeal?



Text by Troy Bankord • Illustration by Clint Miller

A house with street appeal sends the message that a home has been well taken care of, and it also adds value to the property.

A more interesting exterior can be created by making changes to the landscaping and even the structure itself. Such simple touches as adding a new light fixture near the front door or filling pots with colorful flowers can make a big impact. Following are more ideas for adding visual appeal to the outside of your home:

- Focus on the front door first. Try painting your entry black, pomegranate, slate gray, lemon yellow or any other color you like. Adding a wreath or swag of dried flowers, feathers or branches can make a bold statement.

- Topping or replacing existing concrete walkways with flagstones, bricks or cobblestones will set your home apart from others in the neighborhood. While you're at it, create an entry stoop for a welcoming feel.

- When guests arrive at your home, they want to know where they are going. To draw visitors in, flank the entry walk with hedges. If your garage is adjacent to the entry, consider adding a ramada between the two spaces to tie them together.

- Replace an old, stained or cracked concrete

driveway with brick, exposed aggregate or cobblestone. Concrete can easily and inexpensively be cut out to create new planting spaces; or, remove a strip of concrete from either side of a wide driveway and install bands of brick or stone, strips of grass, or crushed granite. If you have a circular drive, consider replacing it with a courtyard garden. This adds visual interest, provides a transition area to the house, and creates a spot for entertaining.

- Many windows on Valley houses lack dimension; they are not recessed, nor do they have windowsills. Surrounds of carved cantera, brick, tile or stacked stone create a more substantial, dimensional feel. Awnings over windows, shutters, hanging baskets, or pots flanking either side of a window can lend character. Vines trained on iron or wood trellises, or bougainvillea, pyracantha or Banksia roses espaliered to walls and over windows add charm.

Any home, no matter how simple, can be made special with a little work and imagination. The key is to highlight the unique features of your exterior, and improve upon its weaknesses. 🌿

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