



CURB APPEAL

Dear Readers,

In this issue of our newsletter we are going to talk about “curb appeal.” Whether you are designing, building, or selling a residential or commercial property or just trying to catch the attention of a business prospect or present a positive “quality” brand image. Curb appeal is similar in many ways to the personal—first impression. How people initially perceive you (appearance) is a key factor in whether or not they stop and engage you and your brand (property or business).

In today’s hypercompetitive marketplace it’s the attention to details and how you present or package your products/services that will add value and make a major impact on whether you are successful. If you don’t get the attention of your prospect—get them to stop—then your ability to fully present your offerings is not possible.

Poorly designed and maintained landscaping can be as much as a 5% to 10% deduction in price/value relationship in the eyes of a prospect. When you add hardscape elements to this number it can escalate more rapidly.

When we are working with our clients we want to know and understand our customer—in every way possible. Some of the questions we ask are:

- ▶ How will you use this property or facility? Do you live in your yard, or just maintain the lawn?
- ▶ What are your favorite colors?
- ▶ Consider texture—what is the building constructed of and how will it sit on the property or land?
- ▶ What are your visions over the long-term and how will usage change?
- ▶ If you are a commercial property—who are your tenants or customers?

It sounds so simple, but there are a wide range of professional options in any given marketplace. The old adage is true—“you get what you pay for.”

Nevertheless, most professionals agree that curb appeal and a well-maintained appearance prevent your property from losing “immediate” value. Here are the top suggestions from real estate agents, appraisers, and landscape designers for boosting the curb

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appeal of your yard and property:

Overall Statement

What is the overall impression when you first drive by or see the property? Does it look nice, inviting, and present a well-designed and maintained property?

Grass

If your house has a front yard, make sure it’s neat and green. You don’t want bare spots, sprawling weeds, or untrimmed edging around driveways, sidewalks, flower beds, and trees.

A little spring fertilizer and water will do wonders to keep the grass lush and green. If you don’t have an irrigation system, consider adding one—this might make watering easier, more efficient, and conserve water over the season.

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Planting Beds

Flower beds add color and help enliven otherwise plain areas, such as driveways, and the edges of walkways. In general, annual flowers are a bit cheaper but must be replaced every year. Perennials cost a bit more, but come back annually and usually get larger and spread with each growing season.

Landscape Lighting

For homeowners who have made a sizeable investment in landscaping or hardscaping their property, it makes sense to think about adding lighting. This will allow your key high-lights to be seen after dark and will accentuate the focal points of the property—trees, flowering shrubs, flower beds, and also provides an added security and safety benefit. Solar panel lights are now available at a reasonable price and can make the installation simple and fast.



Solar lighting is an easy and affordable way to enhance your curb appeal.

Planting/Trimming Trees

Trees add value (mature trees as much as 10% of the property value) and can add privacy, shade to cool your home, and windbreaks, as well as give the home or commercial property a sense of personality.

If you have mature trees on the property, proper trimming is critical to the overall appearance and health of the tree. It will also allow grass or flower beds under the trees to receive proper sunlight and moisture if you trim your trees annually.

Shrubs

Shrubs are a great way to hide unwanted power boxes, provide color and visual appeal to a certain area that needs help. Great for lining or defining a corner, driveway area, walkway, or provide foliage for the front of a home. Use a mixture of sizes, colors, and texture to really give your property an appealing look.

Planters

A great way to extend your gardens, flower beds, and color to add even more beauty to patios, decks, front sitting areas and outdoor recreational areas.

As we continue to expand our outdoor usage – for relaxing, entertaining, and meals, the addition or attention to hardscape elements will also compliment and expand the curb appeal. Not only will these items add functionality, they will also enhance the value of the property.

Here are just a few of the more popular items that we are incorporating into our designs:

Walkways

Add a little style and appeal with a nice stone walkway or entrance to the property. This eye appeal and focal point will direct the viewer's eyes directly to the front door or key entrance areas. Make sure that all hardscape items are well maintained and present a good look.

Driveway Design

At the point of ingress—at least on upscale properties or ranches—the driveway may be framed by a gate, rock pillars, or laser-cut steel sign that display your ranch name or brand identification. These distinctive entry ways really enhance the first impression of our property.

Stone Grills/Fire Pits

A great way to add value and extend the outdoor season. These two amenities are very popular, and with the right design and construction can be a real enjoyable addition that can make an impact.

Hardscapes can be significantly more expensive than landscaping. And while it won't be the first thing you see from the street, if you're trying to sell your house, it's probably a fix you should seriously consider. Cracked and damaged walkways take away from the look of the house, and they're a safety hazard that will probably be called out during your house appraisal or inspection.



Walkways add value and guide your eye to the front entrance of your house.

SPRING LANDSCAPING TIPS (March–May)

► Trees and Shrubs

- Prune trees as necessary
 - › Shape, thin, raise the undercarriage, and clear out dead, damaged and infected branches
- Prune rose bushes
- Fertilize trees and shrubs as needed
- Inspect for insects and diseases (this is the time of year they begin to be active)
 - › Check early for signs of damage
 - › Treat promptly and as necessary
 - › Consult an expert
- Apply fresh mulch around trees and shrubs

► Lawns

- Apply pre-emergent weed control over entire lawn
- Apply post-emergent weed control as needed
- Fertilize lightly
- Inspect for insects and diseases (this is the time of year they begin to be active) check early for signs of damage
 - › Look for abnormalities in the lawn
 - › Treat as necessary
 - › Consult an expert
- Routine Maintenance
 - › Mow, trim, and edge lawn areas as needed
 - › Water when needed. Both drought and over watering can create serious problems

► Softscapes (Planted Beds)

- Remove weeds and debris from planting areas
- Apply pre-emergent weed control
- Apply post-emergent weed control as needed
- Inspect for insects and disease
 - › Look for abnormalities in plants
 - › Treat promptly and as necessary
- After last frost begin spring flower installation of annuals, perennials, herbs, etc.
 - › Conditions for establishment become ideal as temperatures rise and rain falls
 - › Usually around May 15th or later
- Apply fresh mulch to the beds
- Routine Maintenance
 - › Deadhead flowers, weed, and fertilize as needed



Proper pruning: cut 1/4 inch above the nearest outward-facing bud with the cut at a 45-degree angle (the higher point above the bud)

► Hardscapes (Water Features, Irrigation, Outdoor Lighting, Driveways, Patios, and Walks)

- Water Features
 - › Remove debris
 - › Fill, treat, and open as necessary after May 1
- Irrigation Systems
 - › Turn on and inspect after no later than mid-April.
 - › Test to make sure it is in good working condition
 - › Make any repairs and adjustments needed
- Outdoor Lighting
 - › Reset automatic timers on outdoor lighting when Daylight Savings Time begins
 - › Check outdoor lighting fixtures for damage, replacing bulbs as necessary
- Driveways, Patios, and Walks
 - › Inspect for and fix any uneven surfaces
 - › Consult an expert for assistance

► Additional

- Spring clean up
- Test soil; take measures to adjust pH if necessary
- Finalize design and installation plans for this year's landscaping projects
- Finalize and sign maintenance contracts with a reputable landscape management firm



WAGNER & CO.

P.O. Box 175
Harrison, MT 59735

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