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**Easy Landscaping and Curb Appeal for Florida Homes**

**By Bob Lippy**

The idea that an appealing outside is your best offense for intriguing potential buyers is based on the simple concept that first impressions really count. The great thing about learning some key elements of landscaping is that you can apply them to a home that you are just settling into, as well as one you are about to sell. For those who are selling or buying real estate in Tampa Bay Florida, some extra curb appeal advice will go a long way.

Florida is popular for nature-lovers. Instead of trying to keep up with garden hobbyists, present a clean, green impression, rather than a mini-arboretum. The decluttered impression that you want for the inside, should apply to the outside. Imagine a buyer coming to view your Tampa Bay Florida real estate house and all they can think is either, "how will I keep up with all those tropical flower beds?" or "how long will it take me to undo all of this?" Not that you should tear down all your hard work from a spectacular garden; just be sure to have it freshly pruned, trimmed and weeded for buyers, so they don't feel like they have to have a green thumb if they want to buy your home.

Select your plants according to how much sun and water they need. Then, focus on buying smaller selections (or larger if your budget allows) of some of Florida's award-winning specimens like the East Indian Holly Fern, which is wonderful for mass ground cover, and the Dwarf Golden Dewdrop for a beautiful border shrub with its yellow-gold leaves. Make up for size with color, with the purple-blooming Princess Flower, or the Yellow Elder, that will grow quickly (up to eight or ten feet tall). The plants you pick should attract the eyes to the house with their complimentary shades. For example, forest green trim on a house is complimented by shrubs with yellow leaves, and homes with neutral features can always use a few splashes of dramatic color in their landscaping.

Take a picture of the front of your house with you as you visit nurseries and garden shops. Garden professionals can suggest which colors and varieties will work best for your particular home. They should also be able to tell you what kind of mulch, pebble or lava stones you should use for each. The colors of these can also add a lovely contrast of color.

Plant a few annuals near the mailbox and an odd number of shrubs or hedges in front of the house to create depth. Make your house inviting with colors that compliment, but don't complicate. If your house is basic in design, plant a few romantic Magnolias or exotic Calathea to break up the lines. Likewise, a house with a modern exterior can be dressed down for the conservative eye with neatly

trimmed *Serissa Foetida* hedges and simple splashes of annuals.

If you want something even more simple, try buying big, decorative pots and filling them with a few shades of hardy flowers. This takes care of catching the eyes of the buyer, yet implies the perfect level of impermanence for the more fickle-natured. You can offer to leave the pots, or take them with you if the buyer doesn't want them. This can be a quick fix for those who are trying to move, sell and maintain a family and full-time job at the same time. There are plenty of ways to get elaborate with landscaping, but if you need to keep things easy, focus on complimentary colors, hearty specimens and as neat of an exterior as possible, so buyers and visitors will see your house as a breath of fresh, tropical air

Bob Lippy is a licensed broker associate with Remax Realtec in Palm Harbor, Florida. He has many

years of experience in selling

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## **Landscaping, An American Pass Time**

**By James Calvin**

Landscaping has been a favorite American pass time for hundreds of years. Recently through the added exposure of popular TV shows, the interest in sprucing up one's landscaping has become greater than ever. Today, many shows are introducing everyone to new and fun ways to enjoy landscaping. There are even dedicated television channels, such as the Home and Garden channel, that explore all things beautiful to improve one's living space and take it from just functional to luxurious through improved landscaping.

Landscaping is a pass time no longer limited to just seniors or those that enjoy a relaxing activity. Today, all across our great country, families are finding landscaping to be a great activity that everyone from Grandma and Grandpa down to the youngest children can enjoy together. Landscaping is a family activity that everyone can get on board with.

Landscaping, although relaxing, can also be a good source for exercise. With an ever increasing spot

light on weight loss, adding landscaping to your routine can increase calorie burn.

Landscaping's appeal has so many facets. Those looking to improve the look of home they want to sell as well as those looking to improve the look of their current home and neighborhood are finding landscaping to be a viable option. It is simply amazing to see what a difference a little landscaping can do to add curb appeal to a home or neighborhood. Many communities are improving their aesthetic appeal with professional landscaping.

To be an expert in landscaping, one must understand that it is not as easy as it seems. You need to do appropriate research, design and implementation in order for any landscaper to appreciate the outcome. This of it the way an artist looks at an empty canvas. The beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Take that into landscaping and you'll see results that you never thought you could achieve.

James Calvin is bringing awareness to the web topics such as landscaping through his website

<http://www.landscaping-ideas.org>

For more details on landscaping be sure to visit his website. You

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