

# Curb appeal: A home's first impression



[Sue Doerfler](#), The Republic | [azcentral.com](#) 4:47 a.m. MST July 13, 2014



On a recent 106-degree day, Heather and David Baumgartner drove through central Phoenix neighborhoods looking for for-sale signs.

Instead of staying in their air-conditioned car, the Peoria couple braved the heat to get a close-up look at a home they couldn't pass by. It had a charming front porch, a manicured lawn and a brick-paver walkway lined with flowers.

"We stopped because the yard looked so nice," Heather Baumgartner said. "You can see yourself sitting on the front patio drinking tea. I could totally picture myself living here."

First impressions count. Especially when selling a home.

Curb appeal — how attractive a home looks from the street to those driving by — is a home's first impression. It can entice potential buyers to stop or cause them to drive away. And it can affect sales prices and how quickly a home sells, real-estate agents say.

It means an inviting, welcoming exterior that includes trimmed vegetation, well-maintained exterior walls and details such as pots of colorful flowers lining the walkway or porch.

Curb appeal makes a statement about the home and its upkeep, said Laura Boyajian, Realtor with Wise Choice Properties in Phoenix. It tells passers-by whether the home has been well-cared for.

And it can make people want to see the interior of the home, said Cheryl Watson, Realtor with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Scottsdale.

"They say the inside should look like a model home, and the outside should look like the inside," she said.

If the two are equally nice, a seller may get closer to the asking price, she said.

You can create alluring curb appeal by using these tips from Valley real-estate agents.

- Landscaping.

"It's amazing what planting and grooming your lawn can do for your curb appeal," Boyajian said.

Even watering the grass so it greens up can help, she said.

Also, keep the grass mowed, dig up weeds and trim bushes, vines and plants. Make sure the sprinkler or irrigation system works; repair or replace sprinkler heads as needed.

- Plants.

Planting flowers or cactus is an inexpensive way to add curb appeal, said Tom Weiskopf, Realtor with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage's Scottsdale homestore.

He suggests placing pots of seasonal flowering plants at the front door or flanking the garage to create a warm and welcoming feel.

Another idea: "Arrange some Mexican barrel cactus in a tight, symmetrical and organized grouping, perhaps encircling a more dramatic accent plant such as a saguaro, yucca or blue agave," he said.

- Front door.

Because it is the entry to the home, the front door is particularly important, said Realtors Jeri Dube and Tom Donohue with HomeSmart Elite Group, Scottsdale.

The Valley's heat can cause weather damage and the wood to dry out. Doors may become water-stained by sprinklers.

Paint, stain or varnish the door to make it look fresh. Match the color to the house's trim or use an accent color that complements the house.

- House numbers.

House numbers are an often-overlooked detail that can add personality to a home.

Consider replacing the house numbers to make an impact. Look for them at hardware and home-improvement stores or buy wooden numbers at crafts stores and paint or stain them.

"Be creative with the placement, and don't be afraid to go large," Weiskopf said. One way to display them is to mount them vertically on a garage wall or on a post, he said.

- Front walkway.

Add impact by replacing a concrete walkway with pavers or lining it with plants or flowers.

- Garage doors.

Garage doors often dominate the exterior look of a home. Make sure they are in working order and look nice.

Replacing them can be costly, Weiskopf said, but can add to a home's value and appeal.

Depending on the location, you may want to replace the old garage doors with carriage-style doors with dramatic hinges or custom doors, he said.

- Garage interior.

Clean out the garage so cars can be parked inside. Consider epoxying the floor.

- Driveway.

Power-wash the driveway and repair cracks.

- Exterior walls.

Repair stucco cracks. If the paint color looks faded and worn, apply a fresh coat in a neutral color.

Additionally, make sure exterior lights work and that mailboxes and flag poles are in good condition.



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