

Importance of Curb Appeal

For people thinking of selling their homes, spring is a very important time to do a major cleaning out and sprucing up. This includes focusing on the yard and the landscape.

In this market, fewer homeowners are engaging in big remodeling jobs. An e-mail survey by the Zoomerang research company found that about two-thirds of homeowners said they were deferring their home improvement projects until the market improved. That leaves many looking for more inexpensive ways to give their home a makeover.

Another factor in the decision to maintain or improve a home's landscape is to stay competitive with other properties. A survey conducted in June 2007 by Harris Interactive Inc. for the National Gardening Association, found that the amount of money spent on lawn and landscape services increased from \$24.5 billion in 2001 to \$44.7 billion in 2006. With 27 million households hiring lawn care and landscape maintenance services, that means there are many more well-landscaped and well-cared-for properties on the market.

Whether people hire a professional or have the skills and tools to do it themselves, the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET), the association for lawn and landscape professionals, offers ways to improve a home's lawn and landscape.

Clean up — Weeding, edging, planting beds, and mulching goes a long way toward improving a yard's look.

Add color — Planting annuals in beds, in pots around the house and patio, in hanging plant holders, or in flower boxes really makes a house look cared for and cozy.

Add plants — To solve problems or add interest, plant new trees and shrubs to create focus areas and to camouflage foundations, old fencing, or unsightly views.

Do the maintenance — Have trees and shrubs professionally pruned, fix brown spots in the lawn, and remove or replace any diseased plants.

For homeowners who want some help with their lawn, hiring a professional firm to do a walk-thru is a good way to start. A professional can assess the health of the lawn, plants, trees, and shrubs and offer recommendations for improvements and fixes.

To find a PLANET professional in your area, visit LandcareNetwork.org/findaprofessional or call the PLANET office at (800) 395-2522.