

(Style on Dime) 6 ways to add curb appeal

Written by Marcia Humphrey
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My initial thought when I drove up to our house for the very first time was, "That's ugly!" You see, I could barely see the front door, which faced the side of the house. I had been accustomed to homes with front doors that faced the street, and this L-shaped home, with the side entry, was very odd.

Rewind one year. After the economy began to go south, we found ourselves revisiting some of the homes we had looked at a year earlier. Still on the market was the ugly-duckling house that I had given two-thumbs-down. My husband, who had never seen it, decided to go in and take a look.

Convinced that he would find it as strange as I did, I went along with him. We were both surprised at discovering that there were many things we liked about the inside. Most important, the price was right, compared to all our other options. So what did we do? We bought the house which lacked any curb appeal (at least in my opinion) and since then I have been putting my touch on it and making it more inviting. I have had some success, and although I am not completely finished with "project curb appeal," I enjoy driving up to my home a lot more these days. Most of these strategies don't cost much-just the usual elbow grease and some creative forethought.

1. Paint Your Door a Crisp Color--A Fresh coat of paint in an inviting color works wonders! When selecting your colors, consider the overall color of your home and find a door color that will compliment it. If your home is white, your options are endless. If you want me to come visit, paint your door either red or yellow-the two door colors that really make me feel welcomed! When the paint is dry, add a beautiful wreath that fits with the season.
2. Hang Shutters- If your home is looking rather bare and boring, consider adding interest with shutters. With so many styles to choose from, you could select any option from traditional to contemporary.
3. Paint Your Vinyl Siding-If you think that just because you have siding on your home that you are stuck with that color forever-think again! Sherwin Williams makes a vinyl-safe paint in a range of colors that won't make your siding buckle or warp.
4. Install Window Boxes-This is the next project on my home improvement to-do list. Window boxes add interest and charm to an otherwise ho-hum home. Fill your boxes with seasonal flowers and natural twigs or grasses and your home will scream style.
5. Fine Tune the Landscape-A large pot of summer flowers on your front porch adds a wonderfully inviting vibe. Also, in front of your home, think about planting colorful perennials, which come back year after year. If your plants and shrubs are overgrown, trim them back or pull them out and relocate them-they should not completely cover your windows. My latest garage sale find was an apparently overgrown and unneeded clump of hostas, a hardy perennial. I separated the plant into six pieces, and was able to add interest to the whole side of my house for only \$2!
6. Let Your Light Shine-Outdoor lighting says, "We're expecting you." Update your current

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porch-light fixture by spray painting it a new color or replacing completely if your budget allows. In addition, landscape lighting and spotlighting an interesting tree adds a dramatic finishing touch.

I am reminded of a scripture that says "...man looks upon the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart." I Samuel 16:7 When I first looked at the outward appearance of our home, I did not see its beauty or potential, so I overlooked it. While I hope the six practical tips have been useful, here's the important message for this week; if love and peace are at the heart of your home, then it is already beautiful. It's that beauty which will be helpful in inspiring you toward creatively enhancing the outward beauty and appeal of your home. Enjoy!