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JULY/AUGUST 2005

Boost Your Curb Appeal

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THE BIGGEST, SINGLE investment for most of us is the purchase of a home. We also spend dearly on remodeling. We pay property tax on every square foot purchased. Yet often we overlook a singular opportunity to capitalize on this colossal investment by neglecting the space outside.

Think of your landscaping as "exterior design." The design principals that apply indoors and to your back yard have even more impact when used in the front. Incorporating basic design essentials amplifies your curb appeal and can increase your property value by more than 15 percent.

Making an Entrance:

A poorly defined entrance makes guests feel unwelcome and confused about where to go. Angled or curved paths are best. In this Marina garden, the zigzag path is almost 5 ft wide—space for 2 people to walk side by side. It is offset at two junctures with focal points. These act as guideposts; lights lead the way at night. The door itself is clearly visible, painted a warm hue to draw out highlights in the stone pathway. Upon arrival at the door, guests feel welcome and relaxed.

Size and Scale:

Contrary to intuition, a few large items are more effective in small spaces than a clutter of tiny objects. A patio or path of large stone slabs visually enlarges small spaces. In large homes, smaller paving stones suggest a more intimate setting. When every feature is in proportion to the architecture and the space, a sense of harmony is created. If in doubt, err on the side of generosity and select the larger feature. Trees of appropriate size, properly placed, also visually enlarge or diminish the scale of a house. Weeping trees in this Marina garden shrink the comparatively larger scale of the house to something more intimate, drawing the eye into the garden and toward the entrance.

Repetition:

Install your primary objects first. In the garden, these are trees. Instead of selecting one each of three different trees, choose three of the same species. Repeat the color of inside walls on fences, arbors, patio furnishings. This visually expands both spaces. Never plant one single color or plant. For impact, designers always plant in minimums of three—and always in odd numbers. Mass planting similarly hued plants creates a lush sense of abundance and spaciousness. A row of day lilies accentuates this pathway, reminding you

