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Tips And Tricks For Adding Curb Appeal To Your Landscape

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CPC (ARA) - You only get one chance for your home to make a first impression. With a little help from Mother Nature, you can demand a second look from passersby with a show-stopping front yard.

"Every canvas needs to start fresh and clean," says James A. Baggett, editor of Country Gardens Magazine. "So roll up your sleeves, stick your hands in the dirt and get ready to personalize your yard with color and style."

With a little ingenuity you can transform a ho-hum landscape into a real stunner with these simple tips that add professional-looking curb appeal to your home:

* First things first

You can't enhance anything until you have a clean slate. So mow the lawn, get rid of the weeds, rake up and dispose of any leaves, edge the sidewalks and remove the grass growing between concrete seams and brick pavers. Prune the trees -- especially the ones near or touching the roof -- and add a layer of dark, natural mulch to any flower beds or under trees.

* Cover up the bald spots

Now you need to take a good look at your yard. How can you enhance your best features and minimize your worst? Here's a great trick: Print photos in black and white and you'll easily see the problem areas. Determine what "flaws" you want to fix. To update your look, fill empty spaces and add interest to a drab corner or "hide" unsightly spots with colorful, ever-blooming plants like the very popular shrub roses in The Knock Out family.

* Put out the welcome mat

The entry garden is the most visible garden space and sets the mood for your entire home. Whether formal or relaxed, it should draw your eye toward the front door. Plant a pair of carefully pruned boxwoods on either side of the front door to add symmetry. Add a light fixture that matches the home's exterior and shows your personal taste.

* Contain yourself

For those with minimal or no yard, or if you just want the elegance and ease of containers, pot up pretty annuals and perennials around your entrance, mailbox or along the front walk. To have striking color year after year, use perennials for fistfuls of continuous blooms that help stretch your dollars. Yellow and red are hot colors this year so plant the newest Sunny Knock Out rose paired with your favorite red annuals to be in step with the latest trends.

* Express yourself

Decorate a garden with a favorite antique, treasured collectible or statue. Look for objects such as driftwood, rocks or even empty mailboxes to punctuate certain areas. Use color to attract the eye. Paint your front door a bold, welcoming color or try a bright, punchy color on the shutters.

* Plan for sustainability

Look for plants that are easy to grow, save water and don't require a lot of work. Pick plants that are native to your area for low-maintenance beauty. Eco-friendly shrub roses are a great choice, especially

when paired with perennials for year-round color.

Baggett thinks shrub roses are perfect for first-time homeowners since they are extremely easy to grow and are low-maintenance. "Shrub roses give you a lot of bang for your buck," he says. "They are really no work for the homeowner -- and don't require spraying, harsh chemicals, pruning, deadheading or lots of water. They bloom from May to the first hard frost in the late fall, offering season-long color and visual impact in the home landscape."

The most popular shrub roses are The Knock Out Family of roses. They are available in seven shades ranging from hot raspberry pink to soft yellow, fitting any homeowner's taste and landscape style while providing continuous year-round curb appeal.

Enjoy the days you get outside to renew your yard and garden. You'll have folks taking a second look.

For more information on The Knock Out Family of roses visit www.theknockoutrose.com.

Courtesy of ARAcontent