



ah Harmonious Home Adventures

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Hello!

May is the month that turns your mind to being out doors - warm weather, flowers, trees in full leaf.

If you're thinking about selling your home, it's the perfect time to do some exterior staging. Landscaping and freshening the outdoor spaces of your home can have a huge impact on buyers.

So, this month, we're moving back to the selling side and talking about those touches outside your home that will set it apart from the crowd.

Let's go for a stroll, shall we? The weather's fine.

xo



Exterior Staging - It's a Thing ...

Curb appeal.

It's not just a catchy name for TV shows. It's a critical part of selling your house.

When prospective buyers drive up to your home, they form an impression even before they get out of the car. That impression stays with them throughout their entire visit.



Photo by Freeze Media

Have you seen those listing signs that some real estate agents have that say "I'm gorgeous on the inside"? I find them a bit ironic. The truth is, if the exterior of your home doesn't make that claim just by its appearance, you're starting the race at a six-length disadvantage.



First Step – Pictures

Take some photos of the outside of your house. I'm not talking about professional, MLS-listing pictures – just some snapshots that you can stick up on your computer screen or print out and view on paper that will let you

take an objective look at the way your home appears to others.

What do you see?

Is there obvious evidence of disrepair? Broken shutters? Peeling paint? (Remember this light fixture from last month's article? If you missed it, you can find it [here](#).)

Does the yard and landscaping appear well-cared for? Particularly at this time of year, do you have some bright flowers blooming?



What jumps out at you that is less than welcoming? Whatever it is, you'll

need to fix it.

Specific Tips



Plant Matters

Any plants that block or interfere in any way with the sidewalk to the front door or the entrance to the home, itself, need to be trimmed back. This includes long runners of St. Augustine grass reaching out across the concrete. Make sure that the yard is

mowed *and trimmed*.

Be aware of the overall effect of the plants near the entrance. In the picture above, the overgrown bushes don't actually prevent you from reaching the front door, but they make it kind of scary.

Flower or plant beds should be as free of weeds as possible. Invest in a few inches of new mulch. But – PLEASE – no artificial colors. No reds or blues or greens. Natural cedar is great (and the aroma of fresh cedar is very welcoming), but pine bark or other natural materials work well, too.

If you have a problem with mosquitoes, plant some lemon grass near the front of your home. It really does help and smells great, as well.

The Entrance

The entrance is not just a place for ingress and egress. It's the first place that potential buyers will linger. They will wait at the door while their agent retrieves the key from the lockbox and opens the home. The entrance actually is the first "room" of the house that they will visit.

If you have the opportunity to do so, turn it into a living space.

If you have a porch, put some furniture on it.

You say that there's already a porch swing? Fantastic! Put some pillows on it! Make it an invitation, not an afterthought. You want to say, "At this house, comfort begins before you ever get inside!"

If it is at all worn or shabby,

paint the front door. Nothing – *nothing* – gives you more bang for your buck in freshening up a property than paint. And the front door is one of the best places to make things look bright and shiny, clean and welcoming.



Speaking of shiny: *clean the light fixture.*

Most people ignore their front entrances – particularly if they usually park their cars and enter their home from other access points. And the light fixture is one of the most neglected parts of the entrance. Spider webs, dead moths and mayflies, dirt and grime on the glass – they all need to go. Make the light fixture at the entrance sparkle. It's a promise of good things to come.

A Couple of "Don't" Illustrations

Here are a couple of pictures showing mistakes.



The one on the left is too, well, boring. There's no pizzazz, nothing that says "welcome!" In fact, there's nothing that says anything at all, which is a statement of the wrong kind.

The one on the right is a well-intended effort that misfired. The chair, rather than being welcoming, creates an obstacle - a barrier to entry. It's exactly the opposite of the effect that you want at your front door.

A Couple of "Do" Shots

The pictures below illustrate entrances that have been well prepared, although a little sparsely. I would put some greenery on the porches, away from the doors, themselves, to soften the approach a bit.



But you can see how both of them are clean, tidy, unobstructed, and welcoming.

Two Final Tips

NO FLYING STINGING INSECTS.

The very last thing you want as a seller is for a potential buyer to get stung by a wasp while trying to get into your home. If there are nests anywhere near the entry, get rid of them. If you need to, hire a professional. But get rid of them.

Make Sure They Can Find It

House Numbers. They should be big and contrasting enough to be seen easily from the street. Personally, I wouldn't rely on numbers painted on the curb. The variety of styles of numbers available online or at your local hardware store presents an opportunity to show a little unexpected style.



A side note about those curb numbers: if you have a university logo beside the numbers, re-paint them to remove it. It may sound silly but some people take that kind of thing very seriously and might not even go in the house if it has curb numbers painted with the logo of a rival college. Truth.

The same principle applies, by the way, to political signs. The only sign you want in front of a

property for sale is the one with the agent's name and phone number on it. Period.

Before & After Shots

Here are a couple of shots of the same house, before and after exterior staging.



It wasn't exactly "bad" before. But much better after, don't you think?

If you pay attention to the outside of your house, your buyers may just walk in already feeling like they're at home.

And that's *exactly* what you want to happen.

So, until next month – happy planting!

Remember – it's time for you to *love where you live!*



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Debra's experience in home renovation, staging, styling, and redesign

sets her apart from the crowd in the Fort Worth area real estate market.

- Creativity to re-imagine existing spaces for broader appeal.
- Vision to see opportunities where others see problems.
- Insight to know what buyers are looking for.

Debra doesn't just listen - she empathizes.
She matches buyers to spaces.

Debra doesn't just sell property - she maximizes potential.
She helps her clients find *harmony* in their lives.

You can - and should - love where you live!



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