



A SELLER'S GUIDE

Curb Appeal 101 for Home Sellers

Buyers decide how they feel about your home before they ever step inside. Here's how to make that first impression work for you — on almost any budget.

Prepared for homeowners across the greater Houston area



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Educational guide — current as of 2026. Costs and value impacts vary by home, neighborhood, and condition; figures here are general and not an estimate for your property. This is not professional appraisal, inspection, or contracting advice. If your home is currently listed with a REALTOR® or broker, please disregard any solicitation — this is shared for education, not to interfere with an existing agreement. Equal Housing Opportunity.

START HERE

Buyers form an opinion before they reach your front door.



By the time a buyer walks across your yard to the front door, they've already started forming a feeling about your home. People make a first impression in a fraction of a second — and a home is no different. What your yard, your flowers, and your entry say sets the mood for everything they see inside.

Here's the encouraging part: you don't need a big renovation budget to make that first impression a good one. A weekend of cleanup, a little color, and a few small fixes can change the whole feel of your home from the street. Many of the highest-impact changes cost very little.

This guide walks you through why curb appeal matters when you sell, the handful of changes that move the needle most, a long list of budget-friendly options, and how to capture all that effort in photos — because most buyers see your home online first.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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- 5 Spending smart before you list

SECTION 1

Why curb appeal matters when you sell

Curb appeal isn't just a nice-to-have. The way the outside of your home looks shapes whether buyers slow down, click your listing, and walk in ready to like what they see. A tidy, welcoming exterior tells them the home has been cared for — and that confidence follows them through every room.

What a strong first impression does for you



It sets the tone

A buyer's opinion starts forming the instant they see your home. A clean, cared-for exterior makes them expect the same inside.



It signals upkeep

How you've tended the lawn, flowers, and entry quietly tells buyers the whole home has been maintained — which lowers their guard.



It earns showings

Most buyers scroll listings online first. A great exterior photo is often what makes them stop scrolling and schedule a tour.



It supports your price

Thoughtful landscaping and a clean exterior can add real value, and a fresh, well-kept look helps justify your asking price.

THE GOOD NEWS

Almost every agent will tell you to spruce up the outside before listing, and almost every buyer agrees it matters. You're not guessing here — first impressions are one of the few things in a sale you can fully control, often for very little money.

SECTION 2

The five highest-impact changes

If you only have time and budget for a few things, start here. These five changes do the most to transform how your home looks from the curb.

1

Trim the trees

Overgrown, ragged trees make a whole yard look neglected. Have them professionally clipped and shaped so the house and yard read as cared-for and open to the light.

2

Green up the lawn

A bright, healthy lawn makes an enormous difference. Reseed thin patches or lay fresh sod where it's needed — a lush green carpet is one of the strongest value signals a yard can send.

3

Add color

A pop of color draws the eye and feels welcoming. Plant seasonal flowers, repaint the shutters, or set out furniture with bright cushions to bring the entry to life.

4

Clean the roof

Even when buyers don't notice it consciously, a dirty or streaked roof drags down the whole look of a home. A professional cleaning brightens the entire profile from the street.

5

Touch up paint or pressure wash

Faded, dingy siding ages a home fast. A coat of touch-up paint — or even a quick pressure wash — can make worn paint look practically new for a fraction of the cost.

HOUSTON-AREA NOTE

Our humidity and heavy rains leave mildew streaks on siding, fences, and walkways faster than in drier climates. A good pressure wash of the home, driveway, and sidewalks is often the single most cost-effective curb-appeal move a Gulf Coast seller can make.

SECTION 3

Best budget-friendly improvements

Not everyone wants to pour money into a home they're about to sell — and you don't have to. Plenty of high-impact changes cost very little. Work down this list and stop wherever your budget and time run out; even a few of these add up fast.

Low-cost, high-return touches



Clean and tidy

Power-wash the home, driveway, sidewalk, and mailbox. Weed and clean up every flowerbed. Pick up clutter, store trash and recycling bins out of sight, and keep cars out of the driveway during showings.



Brighten the entry

Paint the front door, add fresh house numbers, and update or repaint light fixtures — sometimes just changing the bulbs does it. Add lighting along the walkway so the entry feels warm at dusk.



Add small charm

Create a little front-yard seating area or garden, add landscaping around the mailbox, and set out a flag or a few tasteful garden accents. Small, friendly details make a home feel loved.



Fix the small stuff

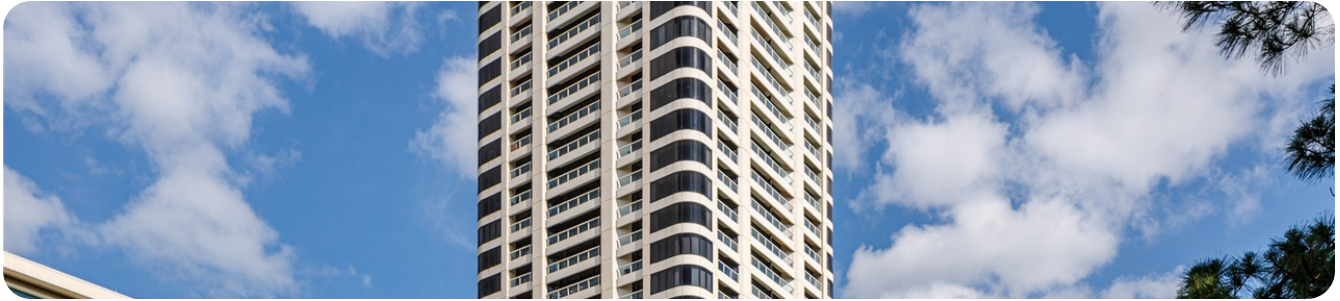
Update tired window shutters, trim trees and bushes, and repair any sagging or broken fencing. These quick fixes erase the 'deferred maintenance' look that makes buyers nervous.

A SIMPLE RULE

If it's free or nearly free — weeding, cleaning, decluttering, moving the cars — do all of it. Then spend your real dollars only on the visible items buyers will photograph and remember: the door, the lawn, the light, and the entry.

SECTION 4

Capturing it all in photos and video



Lead with the exterior

Strong outdoor photos are what make a buyer click into your listing. Whether you hire a pro or not, exterior shots should always be part of the package — they set the stage for everything else.

Shoot the front

Capture the front of the home from across the street, then again up close, plus a clear view of the front door. These establish the home's character and welcome.

Show the living areas

Photograph any front-yard outdoor living space and other outdoor seating or entertaining areas. Buyers love picturing themselves using the space.

Cover every angle

Get a side view of the home from both sides, plus the backyard from the back door and facing the back door, so buyers see the whole property — not just the prettiest corner.

WORTH THE INVESTMENT

Professional photos and a short video tour can meaningfully increase traffic to your online listing. It's usually one of the best-value dollars you'll spend in the whole sale — and something I help my sellers arrange as part of getting your home to market.

Spending smart before you list

Curb appeal is about getting a good price by helping buyers fall for your home before they're even inside. Here's how to make those dollars count.

1

Start with the free stuff.

Clean, weed, declutter, and tidy first. These cost nothing but time and often deliver the biggest visible jump.

2

Then invest where buyers look.

Put your real budget into the entry, the lawn, color, and lighting — the things that show up in photos and stick in a buyer's memory.

3

Match the effort to your market.

Don't over-improve. A modest home doesn't need a designer landscape; it needs to look clean, cared-for, and welcoming for its price range.

4

Capture it well.

Great photos and a video tour turn your curb-appeal work into showings. Don't let good effort go unseen online.

5

Get a second set of eyes.

It's hard to see your own home the way a buyer does. A quick walk-through with your agent shows you exactly where to focus — and where to save.

LET'S TALK

Work with Allen



Before you spend a dime on the outside of your home, it helps to know which improvements will actually move your sale price for your neighborhood and your buyer. That's a conversation I'm always glad to have — no pressure, no obligation.

Thinking about selling? Let's make your first impression count.

I'll walk your property with you, point out the curb-appeal changes buyers in our market respond to most, and help you decide where to spend and where to save. I'll also give you a clear, current picture of what your home could sell for today. When would be a good time to connect?

Reach out for a free home-value and prep consultation

Call or text: (832) 709-2540 · allen@allenmarkel.com · allenmarkel.com

If the smartest move is a few targeted fixes — or none at all — I'll tell you honestly. My goal is to help you net the most from your sale, not to send you to the hardware store.