



## **Adding Value through Landscaping**

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Garden season should be opening up, if the snow will melt! How about planning to fix up the yard, especially if you are considering selling your home? The home landscape design can increase the property's value as much as twenty percent. There are many other benefits to homes through wise use and design of the outdoor space. Screening shrubbery and trees can make a home look luxurious and appealing, reduce dust in the air, provide privacy and soften noises from traffic. Recreation, lounging and eating areas can be fenced off by strategic plantings.

All these improvements and additions to the landscape can add to the marketability of the improved property. "One study demonstrated that a lot with trees will sell for 7-14% more than a lot without trees." So says Dr. Ness of Penn. State University in his article, "Good Landscaping Enhances Home Values."

When planning the use of outdoor space, keep in mind the amount of labor the landscaping and plantings may require to install and maintain. This is an important consideration for people with today's hectic life-styles. Still, gardening is a national pastime for a lot of homeowners. Garden is a safe way to reduce stress for busy people by taking them out into the fresh air and providing relaxing exercise like digging and weeding. A mature perennial garden and a cultivated vegetable plot are a joy for garden owners as well as the passer-by. A lush and fruitful vegetable garden also has monetary value.

When considering the value and curb appeal of the home landscape, the layout of the yard is important. The design should complement and encourage the activity and use of the property. In a commercial property the landscape design is for a specific purpose. A tightly designed garden walkway with attractive and alluring plantings leading to the

front entrance of a retail store may encourage strollers to walk down “the garden path” and shop.

If landscaping is being done only to encourage the sale of a home, the cost of the installation and plantings needs to be factored in. A few select specimen trees, shrubs and flowering plants may be all that is needed to give the home a finished and cared for look. Globe-shaped arborvitaes flanking the entrance to a home, and a flowering crab apple tree used as a focal point in the front yard, provide a buffer for the eye and add to the home’s overall appeal.

The landscape can add value in terms of dollars saved over the years as well. Certain plants used to surround dwellings can save in heating and cooling costs. Wind barriers and buffers can represent big savings in fuel bills. Consider the saving you might have had this past winter if northern wind exposure is an issue where you live. “Studies of windbreaks show that windbreaks can reduce winter fuel consumption by 10 to 30 percent.” USDA Fact Sheet: “Energy Conservation in the Rural Home.” 1981.

If you want to sell your home for more money than comparable properties sell for in the area, consider sprucing up the landscape surrounding the dwelling. Homes with attractive landscaping sell for more and faster than properties that are bleak and bare. A nicely landscaped home is easy to sell, when the home is in good condition too. A cheerful looking flowering yard often piques home buyers’ interest and can be the selling feature.

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