



# Money *does* grow on trees!

## THE VALUE OF LANDSCAPING

**H**ere's a simple but highly effective way to increase the value of your commercial or residential property: landscaping. By investing in shrubbery, trees, grass, plants and flowers you increase a home or building's worth by nearly 15 percent, according to several studies. In fact, landscaping is one of the best means of immediately improving a house's appearance without exceeding your budget. Consider the alternative: a rundown building, particularly one that is nothing more than an eyesore in an otherwise good neighborhood, is a serious handicap; renters don't want to live there, and potential owners don't want to buy there. The property delivers precisely the wrong message: that no one cares about its preservation or image.

Now, think about the benefits that naturally accrue from properly landscaping your house or any other real estate: the building looks attractive, signifying that the owner takes the time to prune, mow, water, seed and sculpt the surrounding styles, features and ornaments. At minimum, an investment in some basic landscaping is a virtual guarantee that your home's value will increase more easily.

Studies abound concerning these issues, proving that landscaping is a sound idea. In recent years, homeowners spent \$37.7 billion caring for their property, up from \$22.5 billion five years previously, according to the National Gardening Association. More to the point, consumers almost always value a landscaped home more than a non-landscaped one, according to a Clemson University and University of Michigan report.

Additionally, a Society of Real Estate Appraisers survey revealed that 95 percent of the appraisers responding to the survey believed that landscaping adds to the dollar value of residential real estate, while 99 percent of them said it enhanced the sales appeal of residential real estate.

By any definition, these figures are phenomenal. These studies clearly establish the huge impact landscaping can have on property values. Bear in mind that landscaping is a rather inclusive term, covering everything from decks, trees, patios, fountains and paths. Given the latitude of this subject, and based upon people's own priorities, it



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is essential for homeowners to avoid arbitrary decisions that undermine the inherent worth of landscaping.

Thankfully, the resources for home landscaping design ideas are so numerous, homeowners will have plenty of information at their disposal. Start by providing your home landscaping with as much potential as possible for fall color and beautiful winter scenes, because this never goes out of style. Observe what other owners are doing with their home landscaping designs.

Consult with your real estate agent since they see the reactions of potential buyers to home landscaping day in and day out. Talk to your agent about trends and styles. In addition,



contact a professional in the landscape design field. If this option is too costly, then try to mine some ideas from your local nursery. These experts are more than happy to assist you.

Landscaping is an affordable way to increase the value of your property. As the studies confirm, this investment, far from being a merely subjective issue of taste, is an excellent financial tool. By taking care of your property — by respecting appearances and doing some easy tasks — you can stand apart from other sellers in almost any real estate market. The first step involves embracing the concept of a smartly landscaped home. Thereafter, you will reap the benefits of this suitably tailored environment.

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