

Eye-catching landscaping sells homes Because it creates attractive neighborhoods

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Every homebuilder is eager to see a high volume of home sales when a new development goes on the market. It's an important way to measure success. Many ingredients go into successfully marketing new homes. As lot sizes get smaller, landscaping is becoming more important because it enhances livability. If the landscaping evokes positive feelings on the part of the potential buyer, that buyer more likely will remember the project, talk about it to others, and return for a second look.

What positive images and feelings does good landscape design give to a new neighborhood?

- It reminded me of my old neighborhood.
- I was surprised how comfortable, cool, and cozy the patios in the backyard felt.
- The front yard spaces made it feel like a real neighborhood.
- Even though the yards and lots were small, there was still a sense of privacy.
- I remember the fragrance of those blossoming plants at the entry, it made everything smell so fresh, and the colors were so vibrant.
- Even though the houses were close together, I didn't feel as if the neighbors were right next to me.

How can these positive effects be achieved through good landscape design?

Plant street trees to give a new neighborhood the feel of an older and more established community. If very small trees are planted, the impact will be small. By upsizing the trees, the homebuyer can begin to imagine a cool, shady tree-lined street. The selection and careful placement of larger plant material can also create the feeling of an established neighborhood.

Add visual interest and separate the yard from the street by designing and placing landscape elements in the front yard. The front yard creates the first impression of a home. A well-sized porch or patio creates a space where one might imagine hanging out and relaxing while being able to wave or chat with neighbors, or keep an eye on the kids riding their bikes up and down the sidewalk. Carefully place landscape elements such as trellises, walls, shrub beds, tree plantings, berms, landscape boulders, and small water features to create a sense of privacy, but not close off the yard.



11814 115th Avenue NE
Kirkland, WA 98034-6923

425.821.8448
425.821.3481 fax
800.488.0756 toll free

www.triadassoc.com

Eye-catching landscaping sells homes (continued)

Enhanced landscaping requires more than good design. It is important to follow through with proper soil placement and preparation, selection of healthy and well-formed plant material, and adequate watering and landscape maintenance.

Create highly sought after privacy for single-family residences built on smaller lots. Careful placement of fences, trellises, arbors, hedges, and landscape trees can contribute to privacy. Trellises and arbors are often good alternatives to solid fences. They tend to be more detailed, so they add more visual interest. They also make the outdoor space feel more open and spacious.

Make backyards feel very comfortable and useable. Although space is limited in many newer projects, attention to design and detail can make the backyard function very well. Plants with well-formed overhead canopies lend structure and shade to patios. Patio spaces can also be extended with small lawns, which create a feeling of spaciousness, even in a very small yard.

Select plant materials to create a lasting memory in a new neighborhood. Plants can be combined for interesting textural contrast, striking flower color, fragrance, and seasonality. Plants can provide for continuity throughout the project as well as the opportunity for uniqueness for individual homes. Well-placed vegetation helps to frame views or provide focal points that draw attention to particular areas of the project.

Create outdoor spaces that extend the interior spaces of the home outward and bring the outdoors inside. Well placed “outdoor rooms” (patios, decks and open lawn areas) can become extensions of the living spaces of the home if designed to take advantage of views from windows and patio doors. Planting in and around these outdoor spaces greatly helps to define the spaces, provide shade, and add visual interest. Allowing homeowners to easily move between the outdoor and indoor spaces is a key design consideration.

Incorporating all of the above elements of landscape design may not be financially feasible on every project. However, if carefully planned during the earliest phases of a project, you can get the most out of a limited landscape budget. When setting priorities, you should emphasize landscape elements that will strengthen first impressions and have lasting effects.

Landscape elements improve the neighborhood feel and extend the interior spaces of the home into the yard.



For additional information, contact Jeff Cox, Director of Landscape Architecture and Site Planning, at jcox@triadassoc.com