



# Winter Curb Appeal

During summer months when gardens are in bloom and the sun is shining bright, curb appeal comes naturally to many homes. But when the autumn chill turns to winter cold and the sun sets earlier in the day, it becomes more difficult to create that inviting exterior look that grabs buyers from the curb.

**1. Add splashes of green and purple.** Plants, grasses, and evergreens can liven up a home's winter landscape. Experiment with tall grasses, such as fountain grasses, that survive harsh winters. And in late fall and early winter, plants from the cabbage family add a vibrant purple color. Make the front door the focal point with a large wreath adorned with a colorful ribbon. To finish the look, place large, colorful planters filled with evergreens beside the front door, suggests Elizabeth Lord, broker with Carolina Farms & Estates LLC in Rock Hill, S.C.

**2. Give it seasonal sparkle.** Transform an unused bird bath or fountain into a seasonal display by adding twigs with red berries. Or fill frost-resistant urns with twigs, winter greenery, and sparkly baubles (sold at most craft stores), Storozuk says. For extra sparkle, roll twigs in glitter and incorporate a gazing ball—a mirrored glass ball available in various colors—into the display.

**3. Make the garden statuesque.** Roman- or Greek-themed outdoor sculptures can add class and elegance to a garden in winter. Be sure to use frost-resistant statues so they don't crack, Storozuk says. Place the statues strategically throughout the garden to draw buyers' eyes around the outdoor space.

**4. Light it bright.** During the winter, it's more likely that buyers will be viewing home after sunset. Use clear flood spotlights to focus on the home's architectural features, Storozuk says. Keep exterior lighting fixtures at maximum wattage and clean them regularly. When snow covers the ground, Michele Thompson, broker-owner of White Fence Real Estate in Vevay, Ind., takes photos of listings at night with all of the interior lights on—the light bounces off the white snow to create a warm, inviting glow. For the best results, turn off the flash, and use a tripod to avoid blurring, she says.

**5. Show off the lifestyle.** Just because it's cold outside doesn't mean you can't use the deck. Shovel your backyard sitting area and leave your grill uncovered so buyers can envision themselves using the space, Storozuk says. If the home has a hot tub, leave that open and running during showings as well.

**6. Make the deck an extension of the house.** Set up your outdoor tables and chairs just as you would in warmer months. "Home owners often cover their furniture and place lawn objects haphazardly on the deck," says Kitty Schwartz, president and owner of Classic Home Staging in Katonah, N.Y. For added appeal, she adds a weatherproof cafe set with pillows that play off of interior accent colors. "Glancing out onto this type of vignette can make the indoor space feel larger and more interesting," she says.

**7. Create a photo display of sunnier days.** Show buyers what the outside of the home looks like during other seasons by displaying some landscape photos in frames or using a digital photo frame with a slide show of images. "This will give a sense of what the property looks like at other times of year," Storozuk says. If the home has a garden, make a list of what's planted where. "Perennials can be expensive," she says, "so treat them as a selling feature."

**8. Don't forget to clear a path.** If the ground is covered in snow, the simplest and most important thing you can do is shovel the driveway and sidewalks and keep the home's patios and decks as clear as possible so buyers can get a sense of their true size.