



Hints For Homeowners



Increase Your Home's Value With Flowering Shrubs

(NAPSA)—There's good news for homeowners whose thumb is only a little green: It may be easier and less expensive than you think to add value to your home.

The secret? Plant more shrubs and bushes in your landscaping.

A recent study by Michigan State University found that high-quality landscaping often increases a home's value by 5 to 11 percent. A separate study by Clemson University estimated this increase to be 6 to 7 percent.

According to research by the American Society of Landscape Architects, when selling your home, you can recover from 100 to 200 percent of every dollar you invest in your landscaping.

Improving your landscaping with shrubs can save you money as well. Replacing part of your lawn with a mass planting of shrubs can reduce costs for lawn mowing and lawn care, such as the cost of fertilizer and gas. Plus, landscaping can reduce your air-conditioning costs by as much as 50 percent, according to the American Public Power Association.

Landscaping is also one home improvement that may actually appreciate over time. As the plants grow larger, they should improve their looks, which can then improve the curb appeal of your home.

Shrubs often provide colorful flowers for years, rather than just one season, making them sound long-term investments for your landscape. Many of the newest flowering shrubs available today are hardy, bloom each year without special care or pampering, and sport interesting colors such as



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pink or purple, which can add even more value to your landscaping.

Consider the new Lo & Behold "Blue Chip" buddleia, a miniature butterfly bush with loads of bright blue flowers. Lo & Behold "Blue Chip" bloom continuously, so you won't need to prune this plant as you do older varieties of buddleia. Like all butterfly bushes, it also attracts butterflies and hummingbirds.

Another new shrub, the Invincible Spirit Hydrangea, is the very first pink-flowered form of the 'Annabelle' hydrangea. Like all 'Annabelle' hydrangeas, it's superhardy, adaptable and easy to grow. It also blooms on new wood, so it will flower even after an early spring pruning, giving you pink color all season.

A close cousin to the Invincible Spirit is the new Incrediball Hydrangea. Some have described this hydrangea as an "Annabelle" on steroids." Its huge, basketball-

sized flowers are the biggest ever seen on a hydrangea, creating a burst of white in your landscape or garden.

For repeat color and a wonderful scent, there is the new Bloomerang Purple, a reblooming lilac. Bloomerang is the most compact, heaviest-blooming dwarf lilac ever grown. It produces a bumper crop of fragrant lavender flowers in spring and then continues to bloom again from mid-summer until frost.

Common sense says that the brighter and bigger the color of your shrubs and other ornamental woody plants, the better the chance of catching a potential homebuyer's attention. And in a difficult housing market, increased curb appeal might be the edge you need to sell your home.

All these shrubs are available at better garden centers. To find one, visit www.provenwinners.com/findaretailer.