



How to Improve Your Home's Curb Appeal

Your guide to home improvement projects that will boost the curb appeal of your home.

Whether you are getting your home ready to put on the market or are looking to make your home more inviting, there are a variety of projects that will boost its overall curb appeal. In this guide, we take a look at how you can improve the outside appearance of your home by:

- Repairing or Replacing Siding
- Installing a New Fence or Gate
- Updating Your Outdoor Lighting

Siding Project: Give Your House a New Look

New siding can instantly revive or change the look of your home. Whether your current siding has run its course and is in disrepair, or you just want to a new look, there is an abundance of options for siding that will meet every style preference and every price range.



What Siding Options Are Available?

Fiber Cement: It's a composite material made from sand, cement and cellulose that can be molded to mimic virtually any material. Fiber cement, such as James Hardie siding, is one of the most popular options for siding, due to its flexibility, affordability, and longevity.

Softwood: Softwoods are stainable, paintable, and available in various grades to ensure you get the right look. It's affordable and durable, with natural resistance to weather and insects. Wood requires some maintenance – re-painting or staining once it becomes weathered, but it's a labor of love.

Hardwood: Hardwoods like Brazilian Ipe and Mangaris offer a modern and entirely unique façade. Hardwoods are incredibly durable, as well as weather and insect resistant. Most hardwoods are hung using a clip system, leaving space between the wall and the siding to allow moisture to flow through – and to enable the wood to dry evenly and avoid buckling.

Composite: Made from high-density materials, composite siding from manufacturers such as Resysta don't absorb water, don't grey in the sun and don't shrink, splinter or crack. With a wide variety of available styles – and virtually no maintenance except for a hose down every now and again – composite siding answers the bell for almost any style preference.

Shake: Southern California has a generous share of stucco homes, though many SoCal homeowners are re-siding with more visually pleasing materials. Shake siding – a cedar-based material cut into shingles that stack on top of each other – can turn your home into a New England beach cottage-inspired rustic dream. Shake siding is affordable (about the same price as softwood siding) and brings a unique bit of the east coast to your west coast abode.

Stone: Impervious to weather, rot and just about anything else that mother nature throws its way, stone is a great choice for siding. Stone siding can have a higher price tag – especially traditional stone which requires extensive masonry work. New products like [Boral Versetta Stone](#), however, offer a far easier and more cost-effective solution. These manufactured stone “shingles” screw into walls individually without the need for masonry.

Metal: While it is used mostly for “working” structures, some homeowners have utilized metal siding as accent walls to create a unique, semi-industrial look for their homes. Metal is by far the cheapest siding solution, incredibly durable and is easy to install. Metal siding can be cut in single sheets to the exact size of a wall. Metal siding can also be a popular choice in wild-fire prone areas.



Does My Siding Need to Be Replaced or Repaired?

If your home has wood siding, a simple eye test is a great start. You most likely already know if your siding looks like it needs some TLC. However, until you see what's underneath it, you won't truly know whether your siding needs a complete overhaul or a restoration.

A great way to make this determination is a spot check. Find a board on your siding that looks less than stellar – broken, chipped, warped – and remove it. You'll be able to get a peek inside of what's going on behind the facade and determine how to proceed. Simply bring the removed board to your local J&W Lumber. We can match just about any type of wood, and cut a perfectly sized replacement.

The Right Siding Option

There are plenty of siding options that will allow you to reinvent your home. When you are ready, make sure to take the time to explore all the options. Speak to the siding experts at J&W Lumber to determine the siding material and look to fit the exterior design of your home.



Fencing Project: Form & Function

When looking to improve the outdoor appearance of your home, the right fence or gate can make a big difference in delineating your property lines, creating privacy, complementing the aesthetics of your home's design, keeping your landscaping looking great, and hiding eyesores (like trash bins) from the street.

A home with a fence is classically American, but we've come a long way from the traditional white picket fence. Technology, taste and necessity have spurred the development of a variety of different fence types in both look and material. There are options to match nearly every consideration and functionality. Before you choose your fence, consider your design and function needs, as well as preferences for privacy and maintenance.

Privacy

When choosing your fence design, make sure to keep in mind the level of privacy you want – and how that will impact the look and feel. There is a happy medium between privacy and style. The ultimate privacy fence may detract from the curb appeal of your home if a passersby can't even see the front door.

Maintenance

If performing upkeep on your fence sounds like a great way to spend your Saturday, you're likely not the type of homeowner to be scared off by a little maintenance. However, if you're the type who would rather spend Saturday at the beach, or anywhere else that does not require you to do physical labor, you'll want to choose a low-maintenance material for your fence.

The Right Fence Materials

Once you have identified the main functions of your fence, it's time to choose your materials. The most popular choices are wood and vinyl. Each has its benefits, and each can deliver a gorgeous, long-lasting fence for your home that will positively impact the appearance of your property.



Wood: Classic, Natural and Affordable

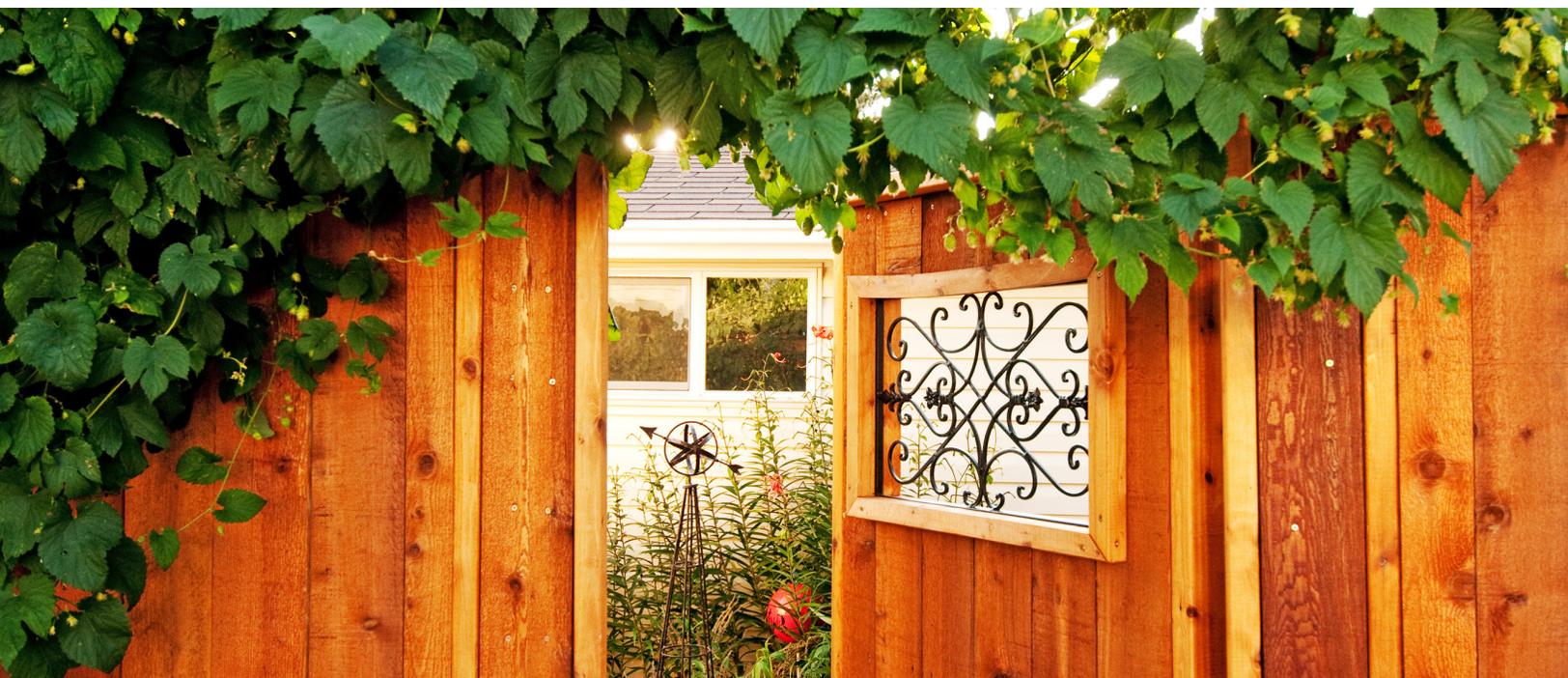
There are a variety of woods to choose from: Softwoods, like Redwood and Western Red Cedar, are lightweight yet sturdy, and very affordable. Hardwood fences, like Brazilian Ipe and Mangaris, add a touch of elegance and an incredibly unique look to your fence but do come at a higher price. Wood also offers a variety of shades, since it can be stained to match your design preferences.

Vinyl: Maintenance-free and Built to Last

Vinyl fencing is quickly gaining in popularity with homeowners. While vinyl can't always emulate the same beauty of a wood fence, emerging designs – like DuraGrain – do a great job of recreating the look of traditional wood fencing, without all that pesky maintenance. Vinyl fencing is available in a variety of styles, from the classic white picket to modern horizontal slats.

Design Preference & Functionality

Vinyl and wood fences each have their own pros and cons, and both are a great option for any home. But in the end, personal design and function preferences determine which option is right for your home. Learn more about your options, from style to price to functionality, by stopping by your J&W Lumber showroom and chatting with one of our fencing specialists.



Lighting Project: Brighten Your Landscape

Landscape lighting can turn a dark, gloomy house into a beautifully lit showpiece that accents the highlights of your front landscape. With various lighting options and types available, you can create a truly unique approach to your home.

Envision Your Space

With a variety of options from LED to floodlights, the first step in designing your lighting is deciding what you want to accomplish. Here are a few options:

Flood an Area: Shining a soft light over an entire area can create an inviting approach to your home – or simply show off your beautiful property. A well-placed floodlight will cast a soft glow that allows you to enjoy the outdoors 24 hours a day.

Spotlight: You may have a certain feature in your front yard that is the crown jewel of your space. It could be a gazebo, a flower garden, a Koi pond, or other focal point. A strong, direct spotlight will highlight the best features in your front yard.

Wall Wash: Lighting placed in the ground and directed onto a wall of your home will announce your home's presence, highlighting the beauty of its structure. Creatively-placed wall wash lighting will give your home a dual-personality in the day and the evening.

Decorative Lighting: Decorative lights aren't just for the holidays. Whether it's a string of lights on your front deck, gazebo, or garden bridge – or overhanging LED lights across an outdoor dining space – decorative lights create a welcoming environment in your front yard.

Porch Lighting: Installing porch or front deck lighting around your deck posts and rails creates a beautiful ambient light that welcome visitors and passersby. There is a bevy of lighting options available for porches and front decks that provide a subtle glow, and give it a post-modern look. From riser lights that illuminate the front steps to under-rail lights and even in-deck lights, there are lighting packages that enhance your home's curb appeal.



Well Lights: Like highlighting a portion of your home with a wall wash, well lights can do the same for beautifully landscaped trees and bushes in your front yard. Held in place by a removable spike, well lights illuminate bushes, foliage, and small structures to bring your landscape to life.

Path Lights: Path lights provide ambient lighting for front walkways and with various styles available, the right path lights will complement your home's design. Solar is a great option for lighting your front path, as there are no wires and virtually no installation involved.

From a small condo yard to a sprawling estate, there are lighting options for every property – and every taste. And with new styles from companies like Trex and Highpoint, you can find the perfect fit for your home.



Looking to improve the curb appeal of your home, but not sure where to start or what materials to use? Contact the experts at J&W Lumber or visit your local store to check out our in-store displays for inspiration.

If you're looking for more inspiration or ideas, visit www.jwlumber.com or visit our showroom!

Contact J&W Lumber Today!

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