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**First Impressions: Landscaping**

**Don’t leave yours to chance**

**Melinda Rizzo**

Like a job interview – or a blind date – your home’s first impression and preparation shouldn’t be an afterthought, especially if you’re thinking about listing your property for sale.

“Rolling up to a property and seeing it for the first time, well maintained, well organized, and with clean lines, it’s the entry point of what they are hoping to find in the inside of the house,” said Corissa “Cori” Seraydarian, a Realtor at Addison Wolfe Real Estate in New Hope.

**The Bucks County garden**

Stone ruins or walls, meadow spaces, open fields, wildflower cutting or sculpted formal gardens with water elements, Bucks County gardens appeal to the senses.

Some Bucks County gardens are rooted in Pennsylvania’s Founder, William Penn’s English country, formal or cottage heritage style.

There’s a “Bucks County, country garden feel” according to Andy Eckhoff, general manager of retail and wholesale operations at Bountiful Acres in Buckingham Township.

“It’s classic country, too,” and may include cutting flowers, pollinator attractors (like native plants, and shrubs) for butterflies, hummingbirds, honey bees and various other insects, Eckhoff said.

From rambling roses to climbing perennials, keep in mind your gardening passions may or may not appeal to a prospective buyer.

“From the seller’s perspective, their landscaping is what they think is lovely, but it’s like preparing for a job interview, an audition or a blind date. You want to prepare yourself for what is this whole package,” Seraydarian explained.

Garden barriers like tall fencing or raised beds might prove difficult for new buyers, especially if those elements make caring for the lawn and garden challenging.

A lush cutting garden at lawn level; however, may be easier to maintain and more appealing – even to the novice.

“You don’t want it to be too complicated, because the next owner will have to maintain that,” Seraydarian said.

Don’t leave the next owner feeling intimidated, she said.

Keep in mind evergreens and boxwood offer year-round color, while deciduous trees will lose their leaves in autumn and remain bare over the winter months.

**Take an inventory**

Assess your property’s strengths, your daily life and your entertaining style. Consider much time you have to invest in upkeep and maintenance, or whether you’ll contract those services to a lawn and garden provider.

During Covid gardening activities surged. Even two years since the pandemic began, a renewed interest in vegetable and food gardens continues, Seraydarian said. That means when winter seasonal plantings die off, you have the chance next season to start fresh – and so does a new property owner.

“Keep it simple and keep it coherent. Seeing repeated shrubs and colors does help it feel organized and well thought out,” Seraydarian said.

It’s about making sure the average person can find your property appealing, and maintain the property from summer lawn mowing, weeding and mulching to fall leave clean up and removal, she said.

Jacqueline Evans, a Realtor at Kurfiss Sotheby’s International Realty in Solebury Township, recommends hiring a reliable landscaping service and implementing a care schedule with “someone who will keep things looking neat, and have buyers excited to come in the door.”

**Welcome sight**

Evans favors two large pots at the front of the door to greet visitors and potential buyers – as well as a fresh door mat.

“[During] spring and summer include beautiful flowers. For fall and winter, do evergreens and tasteful decorations for the holidays,” she explained.

“Having a home express that kind of joy and time together with your family, it really makes people light up,” Evans said.

From beautiful flowers and landscaping to ornamentals in containers and pots, care and upkeep throughout the seasons – and sales process is vitally important to continue “through the whole transaction,” she said.

“It’s [all] a reflection of how you’ve treated your home,” she said.