

What Makes Good Front Landscaping?

By BETTY FRANKEL
Special Writer

First impressions definitely do count — especially the impression one gets of the entrance to your home.

That first glimpse creates a mood that lingers on after the guest has arrived or the motorist has driven past. It can be a feeling of friendliness and hospitality or a feeling of aloofness and seclusion.

This feeling has nothing to do with the size or magnificence of the home, but is due to the way in which it is landscaped. Landscaping, however, includes more than trees and shrubs and flowers.

In addition to the selection and arrangement of plants, landscaping includes the placement of the house on the lot, the location of walks and driveways, and the grading of the lot.

Effective landscaping depends on having all the elements — house, site, grading, driveway, walks, plants, fences, lights, ornaments — compatible so they work together to make one strong unified impression.

Although the landscaping in front of a house should be kept simple, it does not have to be dull or conventional. These Farmington area homes are examples of landscaping that has individuality and personality.

Shelter And Protection

The Richard Steiger residence on Quail Hollow Drive is low and nestled against the ground. This feeling is enhanced by several clumps of tall white ash trees. The trunks frame the view of the front door and give a feeling of shelter and protection.

These trees were on the site before the house was built, and care was taken during construction to protect them from damage. When the final grading was done and the level of the yard raised, the original level was kept around the roots of the trees. The resulting swale adds an informal charm to the scene.

The planting across the front of the house complements the horizontal lines of the house. A tall burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*) banked with Pfizer's junipers strengthens the corner and an upright specimen yew accents the front door. A row of dwarf rhododendrons parallels the walk leading from the door to the driveway.

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The photographs are by Gary Garetson of the Observer Newspapers staff. He is a design major in Wayne State University's school of art.

Formality And Dignity

The home of Richard and Carol Founce on Wicklow Street is a beautifully proportioned, symmetrical house whose center doorway and balanced pairs of windows produce a feeling of formality and dignity. The land area is the most important feature of the landscaping.

Carefully placed in front of the house are three trees — the only front yard planting. They have a de-

licate foliage is clear yellow as it unfolds in spring, ripens to a deep green in summer and then turns bright gold in autumn. The most prominent of the three trees is a pin-oak that is located somewhat off center.

A crock of red geraniums serves as an accent beside the deep red front door. Nothing could be simpler than the landscaping of this house — but it is completely effective.

Restraint, Simplicity

The plantings in front of the Daryl Caterman home on Westmeath show the restraint and simplicity that characterizes good landscaping. Only a few kinds of plants were used and care was taken to space them so they are not crowded but have ample room for growth. The beds are edged with railroad ties for a neat, trim look, and a few rough boulders

serve as accents for the planting of special interest.

A simple row of Pfizer's junipers lines the front of the house. At the corner the bed has been widened and juts into the lawn at an angle. A pink-tinged flowering dogwood is the focal point of this bed, with Pfizer's junipers planted around the base of the tree.

A complementary bed has been constructed in the angle between the walk and the driveway.

Two Pfizer's junipers and a globe yew are the underplanting and the featured tree is a shapely young redbud (*Cercis canadensis*).

These trees and shrubs were planted four years ago and are now just beginning to attain the grace that comes with maturity. Because of the way the plants were arranged in groups, the landscaping never had the spotty look that new plantings often have.

Japanese Harmony

The Henry Hansen house on Hunter's Row was built on a site that was considered "impossible" — rugged, rocky and sloped steeply from the road down into a wooded ravine. However, these very characteristics were turned into assets.

A shelf was scooped out and the very contemporary oriental-inspired home was tucked into the hillside. As one approaches from the road, the view is down onto the roof of the house. A flight of sturdy steps constructed from railroad ties leads down the steep hillside which has been terraced and planted with myrtle and creeping junipers.

The steps end at a small level area paved with exposed aggregate concrete. This leads to the little raised wooden deck at the front door. Crushed white stone borders the paved area, and several ever-

greens in redwood tubs accent the front door. Hanging oval lanterns of bronze add an appropriate oriental touch, as does the small pagoda-roofed lantern and big boulder at the foot of the entrance steps.

In true Japanese style, this landscaping is in harmony with nature and with the character of the site and the home. It is not formal, but nonetheless has a quality of restraint and refinement.

Rustic And Informal

The rustic Frankel house at the end of Rockshire Road has a wooded natural setting with big old trees and a gently rolling terrain. The driveway winds between the trees and past the paved patio which serves as a front entrance. Informality is the keynote here, and wild flowers and natural ground covering are used instead of a lawn.

The entrance area is trim and tailored, to provide a bit of dramatic contrast. A rectangular bed beside the front door contains a flowering white dogwood and a variety of spring bulbs and wild flowers. Myrtle has been planted to make an evergreen mat-like covering.

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