

Improve Your Rental Property's First Impression with a Landscape Makeover

Your rental property is in a prime location and has the features and amenities you are certain will attract potential renters in droves, and then – silence. Often, landlords spend too much time on the interior of a property and overlook the exterior aesthetics causing a negative first impression. To remedy the issue, consider investing a little time and sweat into a landscape makeover.

There are many ways to makeover a landscape and all within a limited budget. The goal is to give your property enough curb appeal while incorporating a low maintenance design. Be careful not to invest too much; tenants rarely maintain landscapes and don't expect it to be their responsibility.

Here are some helpful tips to get you started:

1. Cover Ground Space

- Try to reduce the size of your lawn by covering ground space with materials such as pavers, gravel and mulch.
- Grass requires a lot of water to maintain and is not cost-effective – try thyme or lamium instead. Planting a compact, low-growing ground cover will eliminate the need to spread out mulch every year and it crowds out weeds.
- To save money over time add layers of mulch in areas reserved for planting. There are many different types of mulch from which to choose. Bark mulch has a disadvantage in that it needs refreshing once a year, but stone mulch comes in a variety of colors and sizes and does not need to be replaced. Rubber mulch is a green option as it does not decompose or attract insects.

2. Flowers, Shrubs, and Grasses

- Go with perennials over annuals because they return to flower every year, without any additional time, money, or work. They cost a little more upfront, but over time it pays for itself.
- If you want to add some trees or shrubs, begin with younger, slow growing varieties, which are less expensive than already grown, established options. Also choose

native species which are more suited to the climate where your property is located and will require less care.

- Ornamental grasses are a good way to bring a modern touch to areas that would benefit from planting. Check to see which varieties do well in your climate zone.

3. Hardscaping and Outdoor Living Spaces

- Relying on fewer living plants is key to a low-maintenance outdoor space. This can be done with hardscaping - using stones, rocks and paths in place of grass and plant beds.
- When hardscaping, make sure to pay attention to the drainage setup. Without plants and shrubs to break up the flow of water, the drainage needs somewhere to go. Make sure the hardscape designs grade away from the home to protect the foundation and crawl space.
- Consider using paving paint, low-cost pavers, or long-lasting stamped concrete to cover up old concrete slabs. All of these materials come in unlimited colors and patterns.
- Create a living space outdoors that stands out from the other rentals. Including a fire pit, outdoor cooking area, and/or outdoor dining space will allow your tenants to take full advantage of the property. Make sure you have terms and conditions regarding the use of outdoor amenities clearly outlined in the lease.

Need more assistance? Call the experts today to talk about how to enhance your rental property's outdoor space.