

ALLAN BLOCK LANDSCAPES

Newsletter for the Landscape Professional

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*Curb Appeal - The **Apple** of My Eye*

When a retired apple orchard with sloping clay soil banks was redeveloped into a brand new housing subdivision, the opportunity for beautiful landscapes, curb appeal and outdoor living were there for the taking. The owners of this Salmon Arm, British Columbia property built a home to house their large family of 6 children. With the house constructed at the top of the slope, the homeowners needed a retaining wall to hold up the soil, soften the landscape and create the curb appeal that they were looking for.

AB Certified Contractors, Rampton Rockworks Ltd, provided a design and sample of retaining wall blocks from the AB Europa Collection and just like that - the decision was made. The homeowners chose to go with a terraced retaining wall made with the AB Dover to add softness to the front of the house with its time-worn feel.



The challenge for the contractor was to design and build a tiered retaining wall that had easy access for the lawn mower and playing children, all the while creating an attractive and inviting front yard landscape to tackle the slope. By using one style and size of block, the contractor was able to keep the retaining walls from visually over-powering the space.

With a plan in place the contractor got down to work and in just a short time had three curved retaining walls up and ready for landscaping. The sweeping terraces give the front yard of their home an open and welcoming feel and provide some fun and useable space for the family to play outside

Now, just a short two years later, this retaining wall and landscape design has made this front yard the apple of this homeowner's eye.



Top 5 Curb Appeal Tips for a Beautiful

What exactly is curb appeal?

While you may not be able to precisely define it, we all know it when we see it. The trick for a DIY-er is turning what you see into something you can apply to your own space. For a contractor, it's turning what appeals to your customer into a vision you can apply to their unique space.

Most of us could profit from a little more visual interest in our front yards, right? And the more exposed our front yards are to public scrutiny, the more pressing the need for effective curb appeal ideas. Whether your yard is large or small, flat or hilly, there are many design ideas you can implement to enhance your curb appeal. Here are 5 top ideas to add beauty and functionality to your front yard space.

1. *Texture and Color*

Use a variety of textures and colors to create eye-catching beauty and interest for the passer-by. Choose hardscapes with complimentary colors or interesting textures to enhance the beauty of your front door spaces. Patterned retaining walls, like an AB Ashlar or AB Abbey Blend can be a simple way to bring both color and texture to the top.

Don't forget the foliage! Finish the space with vibrant flowers and plants to add contrast, continuity or accents.

2. *Focal Points*

Good landscape designs are anchored by focal points. A focal point captures the viewer's attention, directing their gaze to the desired spot in the design. You can add eye-catching accents to your landscape by incorporating decorative plants, a trellis, or water feature; one of the hottest trends with "sound" reasoning behind it: water features are not only visually appealing, but emit soothing sounds. Once you've experimented with ponds, you may even decide to advance to the next level: simple waterfalls. Whatever your style, choose a focal point that enhances your landscaping to make your home the center of attention.

Water features not your style? Try some decorative posts or a planter/flower bed and make the plants and flowers the focal point of your front door canvas.

3. *Year Round Beauty*

Does your yard have enough curb appeal to turn heads during all four seasons of the year? Hardscapes like terraced walls, stairways or entry posts are essential to attaining this goal. But hardscapes will not be enough: Think about your climate, the type of soil and the amount of space you will need for the plants you will want to incorporate. Strive to have flowering trees and shrubs during spring and summer and fall color in autumn. Then pick the right evergreens to carry the load in winter.



4. **Functionality**

There are many ways to enhance the look of your landscaping with functional elements and structures. These elements can solve landscaping issues such as erosion, steep slopes and water flow. Some of the most common ideas to add functionality are retaining walls, stairways, raised flower beds, and columns or posts with lighting. When choosing your curb appeal elements, select items that add beauty as well as enhance the overall function of the space.



5. **Low Maintenance**

You can follow every landscaping tip in the book and still not be happy with your yard if you have not taken the time to think about how to maintain the look you have created. Beautiful or not, you'll resent your yard if it causes you too much work. Unless you enjoy the hours on upkeep, plan your design for low maintenance.



Take that time on the planning side of your curb appeal project to really think about what you want the space to look like today, tomorrow, and for all the years to come.

However large or small your front yard project may be, the moral of the story is to plan out your design before you begin. Talk to your local hardscape dealer or landscape contractor for suggestions, planning ideas and project estimates. When it's done, you will be able to sit back, relax and watch all the neighbors ooh and ah over your new front yard.

Want to see some more ideas for curb appeal? Check out the *photo gallery at allanblock.com*, where you can find a wide variety of hardscape ideas, installation instructions, videos, technical support and more!

Have a great curb appeal project? We would love to see it! Send your project photos to us at info@allanblock.com or share them on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/allanblockwalls.

Do you have Questions? We have Answers.



We have been in business for over 25 years and have a wealth of knowledge and information we are willing to share to help with your projects.

Besides allanblock.com we also have our blog/forum site where you can go and ask questions and get answers direct from us.

Check it out, and let us know how we can help!

www.allanblock.com/blog



Make A Stunning Entrance



A driveway is a great way to welcome guests and direct people's focus to your home, putting it on display. In terms of square feet and its high visibility, a driveway can be the major component of a front yard which makes it a good idea to landscape. The design can range from simple and functional to one that incorporates sweeping curves that add interest to the overall look of your home and front yard.

Passing up the opportunity to accent your driveway could leave it looking like a long scar running up and down your yard, something you would just like to forget about. Fortunately there are many ways Allan Block can make this space beautiful, functional and unforgettable.



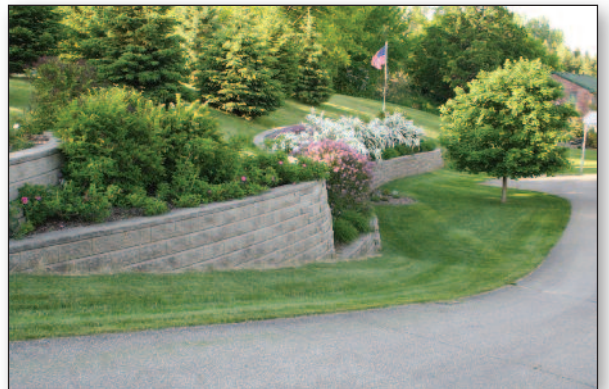
Making an entrance with walls can greatly enhance the look of your driveway. Stone walls (like AB Courtyard Walls) can be either parallel to the driveway along its whole length, or meet it perpendicularly, at the entrance. Posts or columns can be added to attach driveway gates, arches, light posts and more.

If your driveway curves around your property or is very long, a focal point, like a flower bed, fountain, pond or accent garden will draw your gaze to the beautiful landscapes.



Add lighting, sign plaques, vibrant flowers or lush foliage to further enhance the entrance.

Using Allan Block's retaining wall products or the two-sided AB Courtyard Collection are perfect options for creating an impressive entrance to your home. To learn more about how to build with Allan Block, check out our website at allanblock.com for ideas, installation info and helpful videos. With a little elbow grease and a lot of vision, you can make your entrance to your home one that your neighbors will be envious of.



Allan Block Has An App For That

Block Head Walls
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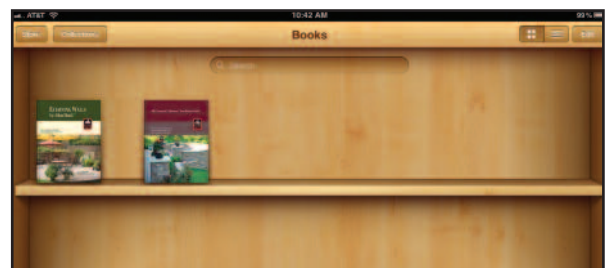
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