

Are Plants and Investment?

Try to think of an investment that you have complete control over, never stops growing, adds value to your homes worth and you can enjoy everyday. How about your landscape, and more specifically plants?

In our society we are constantly striving to get ahead, whether it is saving for a home addition, a new car, a child's education, putting groceries on the table, band lessons. The list goes on. These are the things that we consider important in our day-to-day lives. And if there is money left over we invest for our future, for our retirement. These investments are made with the thought that they will grow. We have no control over how they grow or where they grow. We give that responsibility to someone else in hopes that the investment will help give us the contentment we envision in the future.

Now let's look at plants. In all my years working in this profession I can think of very few inexpensive things you purchase that you have total control over, can watch grow, that keep you in touch with nature's rhythm by their changing through the seasons, and continues to add value to your property. Plants do that and healthy plants do it best. When I refer to plants I mean all plants; tree, shrubs, perennials and grasses. There are many other parts to the landscape like patios, decks, walkways, walls and all of these add value to the landscape too, but they would be very plain if not softened by plants.

What is it about plants that give us so much pleasure? I am not sure if I have the expertise to give you an answer I just know how good it feels to be in the company of plants. Why do so many people enjoy golfing when they are so bad at it? I think it has something to do with the grass under their feet, the long views of beautiful fairways & greens, the smell of grass. Maybe it has something to do with our primal instincts that once kept us so tied to nature. It is in us and we truly appreciate it regardless of why we feel it. This is what makes plants so special.

You are able to drive to a nursery, walk thru a sea of plants, some in bloom, some not. You are able to hand pick the one or ones you want, take it home and make it part of your landscape. Your care for the new plant gives you the benefit of its beauty or your lack of care allows it to languish and maybe die. But these are your choices and you can see the results of your choices on a daily or weekly basis. This is very special. If that isn't enough your hard work is viewed every time someone comes to visit you and sees your gardens. Getting kudos for your gardening prowess has to feel good inside.

I am not speaking of a large investment to make this happen although sometimes it includes an entire landscape project. But it could be as simple as picking out a handful of plants for less than \$100.00. You also have choices as to the size of the plant you want to purchase. You may not want to wait long for it to fill a space so your investment cost more on the front end, or you buy small knowing it will eventually fill that same space. It is also nice knowing that your investment adds value to your home. Research has shown that a home's value when well landscaped can be increased 12-15%. I have a saying that goes like this "a nice landscape can make a dump home look good and a poor landscape can make a nice home look bad". When looking for a home to purchase the prospective buyer sees the outside landscape before they even set foot in the front door.

With our current economic turmoil it is nice to know there is an investment that can be made that gives so much and takes so little. Your small investment with minimal care can reward you with beauty for many years to come.