

Sequim appeal

Sequim's "Blue Hole" has been a little black this year, with all the late spring rains we've had. But don't despair, the April and May showers will bring June flowers. Thanks to the generosity of local donors, Sequim's streets will again be lined with vibrant bouquets of flowers that speak to the civic pride of its residents.



GUEST OPINION

Lauren Turner

It's spring, the perfect time to be thinking about polishing the face of your own property and neighborhood. You may know about "curb appeal," a term real estate agents commonly use to refer to the first impression a home has when viewed from the street. I refer to what we have going for us here as Sequim Appeal. Situated in such beautiful surroundings as we are, keeping our homes attractive and well maintained seems like a natural

thing to do.

And the extra energy that accompanies spring for many of us makes getting outside and working in the yard seem more fun than work. Besides the obvious benefit of holding or even increasing the value of your home, keeping your property attractive increases the attraction of the entire town.

Now is a good time to take a fresh look at the appearance of your home. For the most part Sequim residents do a good job of maintaining neat yards, but we all need to give it a little extra attention occasionally. Over time, little things deteriorate and can begin to add up to a shabby look. After you've lived for a while with things like a makeshift, ramshackle fence that was intended to be temporary, fading paint or shoddily hung rain gutters, you probably don't even see them anymore. If you asked a friend to look at the front of your home with a new set of eyes, would he or she find it attractive? What might you do to improve it?

A little effort, big difference

Keeping your home looking good doesn't need to be a huge investment. Your labor can go a long way, and with the weather improving, isn't it great to get outside and move around while doing something productive? You can do things like trimming the vegetation around your home, simple weeding, keeping the lawn mowed (all the way to the street, including ditches on the perimeter) and the gutters clear. And Sequim is a wonderful place to plant flowers, creating vivid splashes of color! Consider natives. If you want the look of a manicured yard, put some fresh mulch or bedding material around the plants in the yard and use a hoe to sharpen the edges of the bedding.

Get rid of any dead branches and fix anything that's hanging or broken. Assess the condition of your paint. If you want to make the house look great without painting the whole thing, just paint the trim and the front door. But if your house is a wildly different color from the rest of the homes in your neighborhood, consider painting the whole house a new color to blend in better.

You'll be doing yourself and your neighbors a big favor.

Take out the trash

Another significant improvement you can make is to clean up any clutter or outright trash that has accumulated around your yard. It's another of those things that you tend not to see anymore over time and it's an eyesore that can really hurt. The same goes for clutter that may have piled up in your carport, if you don't have a garage or other storage option. This is the time to get hard on yourself and really evaluate how much you need (or will ever use) the stuff you've been stashing in your yard/carport/garage.

Giving up belongings can be difficult, but knowing that someone else might be able to make better use of them may help. A yard sale or giving to charity can make you feel good about unloading things. A trip to the dump can be cathartic to get rid of the truly useless. Then straighten up the items you choose to keep.

If you are renting your property, be sure you have made your tenants aware of their responsibilities and check in once in a while to be sure they're keeping up their end of any maintenance agreements you have made with them and that you are doing your part.

We are fortunate to live in such splendid surroundings, nestled in this valley amid green spacious fields, crisp towering mountain ranges and the ocean. Sequim has done an excellent job of keeping our downtown clean and attractive for all of us and for the tourists who help support our lifestyle here. Keeping our properties up can show our appreciation for this special environment. We all can do simple things to be neighborly and maintain our town's values for all of us. Together we can ensure that our neighborhoods shine and reflect the pride we have in our community.

Lauren Turner recently retired from the U.S. Forest Service. She is an avid organic gardener living in Sequim with her husband and three cats.