

# Presentation can be evergreen

WRITTEN BY KATHIE SUTIN

**S**ome homeowners give barely a thought to their front door, especially if they usually enter their home through the garage or a side door.

But if you haven't paid much attention to your front door, maybe you should. After all, it's the entry to your home for visitors. And if you are trying to sell your home, it's the first thing potential buyers will see.

If they can see the door when they park at your house, it should be the focal point of your front yard landscape, says Richard Poynter, president of Poynter Landscape and Construction, a Ballwin landscape architecture firm.

Also consider the walkway that takes you from the street to the front door. "It's a huge piece of how that all comes together," Poynter says.

To make the door the focal point, pay attention to what you plant and where you plant it. While you can't move your front door, with a well-laid out, functional design you can direct attention to it by your plantings, Poynter says.

But take care not to pull the eye away from the entrance, Poynter says.

"When you pull up and park and walk up to the door, you shouldn't be distracted too far to the left or the right. Fountains and sculptures a lot of times aren't really appropriate for the front of a house because they can distract your eye from the front."

While going to a nursery for an assortment of vegetation to plant in your yard can be fun, it pays to have a well thought out plan keeping in mind how each plant fits into the bigger picture of a landscape design.

For St. Louis' five- to six-month dormant growing period, evergreens should be a key component of a front yard landscape so that it has some color year round, Poynter says. "We like to see 50 to 65 percent of the planted area be evergreen. The rest of it can be things that provide color

— flower color, fall color, spring color and sometimes both if you choose plantings that flower in the spring and have fall foliage color."

Flowers that bloom for long periods of time are best planted along the pathway or near the front door because they help draw your attention there, he says.

"If you put in annuals like an impatiens, they're going to flower consistently during a five- or six-month period, Poynter says. "If you put that kind of distraction too far from the front door, you're drawing your eye there. In that case, the front door is not as strategically visible."

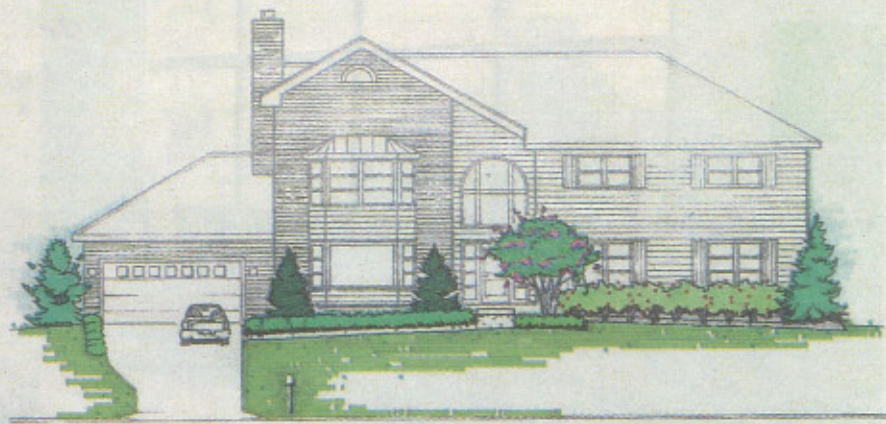
While you may like the look of ornamental trees, planting them in front of your house can be a mistake, Poynter says. As they mature, they may get so big they block the view of your house and your view from upstairs windows.

Instead, choose trees that will be the right height for your home at maturity.

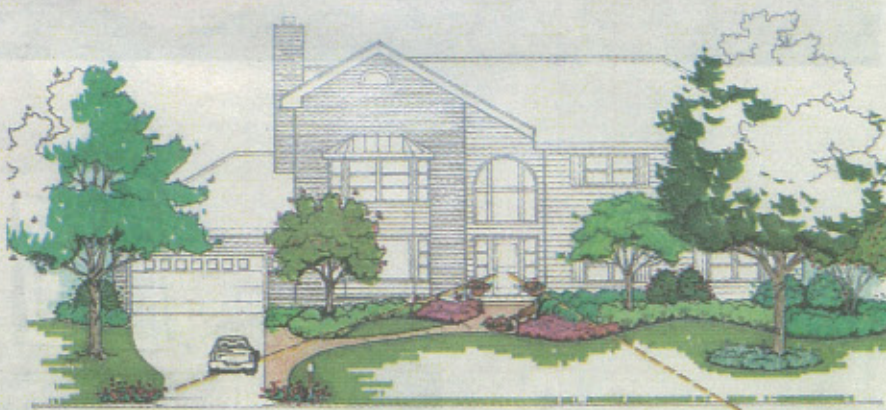
## Design tips for the front yard

Poynter offers these tips when you consider landscaping your front yard:

- **Your front door** is key — make it the



Before elevation view



After elevation view

focal point of your landscape design.

- **Limit distractions** from the front door.
- **Use long-lasting displays** of flowers near the door — but not too far to the right or left — to draw the eye to the front door.
- **Make sure your walkway** draws visitors to your front door.
- **A functional design** is important.
- **Think about all of the pieces** of your plan even though you may implement them in stages.

- **Avoid the tendency** to line your plants flat against the house.
- **Evergreens should** be a key component of your front yard making up 50 to 65 percent of the planted area. The rest can be plants and trees that provide color.
- **A young tree** may look good in your yard now but keep in mind what it will look like in 20 years.
- **For low maintenance**, consider natural stone or concrete paving materials for walks and drives.