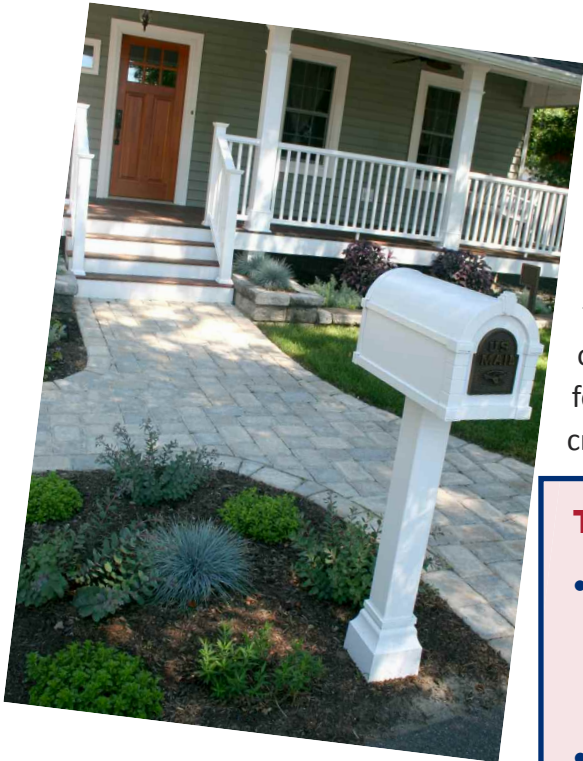


Curb Appeal

Starting With Your Mailbox



July 1 is National Postal Worker Day! In honor of the day let's talk about improving our mailboxes. Here are five ways to make the mailbox your mail carrier's favorite stop on the block--as well as a beautiful place in the yard for you to enjoy all year long.

Since mailboxes tend to be a focal point on the exterior of the home, take some time to make it look great, especially if you are in the process of selling your home. This will literally add to its curb appeal. Here are a few suggestions for "beautifying" your mailbox and the surrounding area, creating a memorable first impression of your home.

Top 5 Ways to Improve Your Mailbox

- **Make the Area a Focal Point.** Instead of just a post in the ground, now your mailbox is becoming a focal point! Finish that thought by adding a mulch circle and edging the area with stones or decorative trim. Voila!
- **Think Four Seasons.** No, don't make your mailbox look like a 5-star hotel. Think about the four seasons of the year during which your mailbox holds a very prominent place in your yard! When you are picking plants for around your mailbox, choose a couple different varieties that bloom at different times of the year, plus evergreen--so the area always looks groomed and attractive.
- **Grass and Succulents.** Ornamental grasses and succulents are a great, low maintenance alternative to traditional flowering plants for around your mailbox. They don't require much watering; just let the rain take care of that and call it a day. This low maintenance is especially nice if your mailbox is far from the house and less likely to be watered by hand.
- **Say Thanks.** We've been talking about the outside of the mailbox; let's talk about the inside. It doesn't have to be on the mail-carrier's holiday; any day is a good day to say thanks to the people in your life. So why not leave a note in the box today for your mail-carrier instead of the other way around?
- **The Buzz.** If you choose to plant flowers around your mailbox, especially ones that climb the box itself, avoid those that attract bees. The last thing your mail carrier wants to do every day is fight to avoid being stung by a swarm of critters around your mailbox--and you probably will feel the same way when you retrieve the mail.

