

# MANAGEMENT TRENDS

## Beautify on a Budget

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Spring is in the air and so is another season of planning for community projects. For some of you, that may include the rejuvenation of common areas with vibrant annuals or sprucing up the grass after a cold winter. We've all had a long year of planning for bigger ticket items on the reserve so a little TLC of the planting beds should be well received by your members. I've connected with one of our business partner members to share insights on enhancing landscapes while staying within budget. See their tips and tricks for presenting thoughtful spending plans to your boards on how to keep costs down but curb appeal high.

### Focus on Your Community Goals

**Where to Start** – Review the areas that get the most traffic from your members. It could be starting at the entrance to the community or addressing small planting beds near amenities. Little upgrades to these areas won't go unnoticed and will increase morale among members.

**Curb Appeal** – Looking to boost curb appeal? Consider focusing on landscaping, entryways and lighting as they make the biggest impact. Well-maintained plants and strategic outdoor lighting make a property stand out. Some ways to do this is to look for focal points around the community that need a little dressing up. For example, it could be a bare courtyard island with a strategically placed Cherry Blossom or electrical boxes that are hidden with a deer resistance hedge. Don't forget the lighting! Choosing locations that highlight signage or attractive planting beds are an easy, inexpensive way to bring attention to areas worth looking at. With solar options available, you can make any property stand out on a budget.

**Hedges** – Looking to offer privacy within your community? Consider opting for plants or shrubs that offer the most bang for your buck. Consider boxwood, privet, and arborvitae. Another great option are grasses that fill in



*"Hedges – Looking to offer privacy  
within your community?"*

spaces nicely and offer different heights and colors. Not only is grass a nice contribution to brighten up any area, but is also pet resistant!

**Deer Resistant** – Choose deer resistant plants to avoid the headache and heartbreak of losing plants to wildlife. The best deer resistant flowers are daffodils, lavender, salvia, and coneflowers. If you are looking for deer resistance shrubs try boxwood, holly, and barberry.

**Planting Beds** – Consider bloom times of your shrubs and flowers to play with colors all season long. Hydrangeas and knockout roses bloom all summer so choose a spring and fall shrub or flower to offer colors all year round. Don't forget the Winter! Adding junipers are a great way to give ground cover and stay green even during the coldest months.

### Long Term Solutions that are worth the money

**Sustainable Mulch** – As of April 15, 2025, NJ law requires in some but not all community associations, depending on the building configuration, that mulch beds

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be at least 18 inches away from combustible building areas, making hardwood mulch a less viable option for some communities looking to increase their overall appearance. This new law has communities considering the installation of river rock or stone. This option has a cleaner look, does not

move around at the sight of rain, and lasts forever!

**Paver walls** – Trying to replace your railroad ties to avoid the carpenter bees? Get a proposal for a paver wall! This provides a more sustainable option with less maintenance and removes all risk of being stung while on a stroll through the neighborhood.

**Perennial vs. Annuals** – Who said you can't do both?! Perennials are best for a long-term investment with



*"Perennial vs. Annuals – Who said you can't do both?!"*

lower maintenance and return every year. Annuals bloom for one season and provide vibrant seasonal color during the season. Danielle recommends a blend of both perennials and annuals for the biggest impact.

Regardless of your communities' financial circumstances, there are easy, effective ways to beautify on a budget. If all else fails, we recommend reaching out to a CAH/NJ recommended vendor to help you tackle the problem areas within your community. ■



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