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## Shaping Your Home's Style, Starting at the Front Door

You want a home with panache. A look that says something about you – whether conservative, fun, classic, contemporary or courageous.

Yes, but how?

If you're remodeling an existing home, changes should blend with your home's current look for consistency. For new homes, you have a clean slate from which to create your style.

Structural features and building products shape a home's look. Size, proportion, roof pitch and types of dormers, columns and porches are structural influences on a home's style. The shape of your windows, the profile and color of your trim, and the texture of an entry door demonstrate how building products impact a home's appearance. As an illustration, Tudor homes are frequently defined by their stucco or stone exteriors, steeply pitched roofs, banks of windows, and dark timbers that break up the façade.

There are countless choices in most building product categories. Looking at one of those categories, entry doors, you will find wood, steel, smooth fiberglass and textured fiberglass doors in a variety of sizes and panels, and with many decorative options to put your signature on the entry. Other product categories have an equal number of options, but the front door takes special consideration because it's the focal point of a home, according to Jeff Kibler of Peachtree Doors and Windows.

"Next to your home's physical design, the entry door contributes significantly to architectural style and curb appeal," Kibler said. "Manufacturers' many styles and options make it possible to create one-of-a-kind, rather than one-size-fits-all, entries that are consistent with virtually any architectural style."

Many of the latest trends in entry doors center around textured fiberglass entry doors. These doors have wood-grain textures to mimic real wood doors but they are more durable, require less maintenance and are six times more energy efficient than wood doors.

What are the choices?

Various grain patterns and textures make textured fiberglass entry doors suitable for a wide range of architecture, including:

- Victorian or other period styles can be enhanced by a Mahogany-grain door, which has a fine-to-medium texture and wavy grain. When it's finished in a dark stain, a Mahogany-textured door is timeless and traditional.

- Craftsman or Prairie styles are best captured by doors with a consistent, vertical-grain fir texture that has clean lines and simple detail. Some manufacturers offer small dentil shelves in the door panel for consistency with these architectural styles.
- Tudor, Spanish Colonial or Pueblo architecture call on entry doors with a rustic appearance conveyed through the doors' vertical grain, uniform and coarse texture. These doors often have a plank style to resemble board-and-batten, distressed wood doors. Rustic doors with ornamental clavos highlight Post Medieval English tendencies.

If you simply want an entry door that resembles wood but offers the resiliency and energy efficiency of fiberglass, manufacturers also offer oak-textured doors, with a straight-grain and coarse texture that can be finished as you please.

"The available textures for fiberglass entry doors have expanded significantly in recent years thanks to advances in manufacturing," Kibler said. "With the number of options available, homeowners can create the entry they like, within their home's architecture but without the cost of a custom wood door. The green attributes of a fiberglass door are an added benefit."

Each of these doors' styles can be enhanced by choosing an appropriate panel. Panels range from flush panels with no windows to panels with full-length windows. Six or eight-panel doors are indicative of the Colonial-period houses, whereas the top ¼ of the door panel in a Craftsman home will often have a window with stained or geometric-patterned glass.

Your entry will take on a look of its own when you combine the door's texture and panel with one of many decorative glass choices, whether intricate floral or geometric patterns, faux and true wrought iron grille work, or stained glass. The patterns in decorative glass are formed by using different types of glass, glass chips and caming, which provides the distinctive outline to the patterns in brass, antique copper, zinc or black patina.

Entry doors are generally sold through lumberyards, home centers and window and door dealers. The installation of a new door, especially a door with sidelites, transoms and complementary fixed windows, can be quite involved. Installation should be left to a professional contractor or a skilled do-it-yourselfer. To help you shape your home's architectural style, visit [peachtreedoor.com](http://peachtreedoor.com) to request free literature and preview the available styles.

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