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A Fresh Approach to Real Estate

REAL ESTATE UPDATE

REVIEW THE LANDSCAPE BEFORE YOU BUY OR SELL

Spring is a great time for homeowners to start preparing to sell their homes. Typically families interested in moving will often look now so that they can buy a home in time for the kids to go on summer break.

Curb appeal is critical. Landscaping is the area of a property that is noticed first! In fact, some studies indicate that good quality landscaping can increase the value of a home from 5 to 11 percent. Elements such as curved flower beds along with sophisticated design attract more buyers than just rectangular boxes filled with flowers. Plant size and the diversity of plant material are also important. And colorful annuals that aren't expensive can really brighten the look and the appeal of a yard. Make your yard irresistible!

However, these things can bring unwanted guests as well. If you don't plan carefully, you could be building an attractive home for many pests. If a mulch garden around your home is in the plan you will want some sort of a concrete barrier or some other material besides wood between the mulch area and your home. It's very important not to have any earth-to-wood contact. Having a garden too close to your home without any barrier can encourage ant and termite colonies

to develop. So while you may be looking to create value and appeal give consideration to things that might attract pests as well.

In addition check on how the elements all function together. For instance, are the plants healthy? Is the placement of large trees, the garden or lawn in a hazardous position or sloping toward the home? Is foliage too close to the home? Again, this can become a breeding ground for pests. Taking note of these types of possible landscape issues can help to ward off future headaches.

Here are a few things to watch for when either readying your yard for sale or when looking to buy.

Get to the root of it: while seeing exactly where trees roots are located can be a bit difficult, spotting any obvious signs of lifting or cracking sidewalks or driveways can be an indication that there is a root problem. The opposite also poses a problem. If you see areas where the yard is sunken in, that could indicate a leaking sewer line resulting from a root interference problem.

Know the topography: understand potential risks such as if you're located at the bottom of a hillside. In heavy

rains the water will flow downward toward the foundation of your home, possibly causing flood/water damage.

Limb control: notice if tree limbs are out of control, branching out in various directions and touching the roof or interfering with power lines. Watch out for tree limbs that are hanging over chimneys as animals can climb down the chimney or the branches could block the draft, creating higher carbon monoxide levels in the home.

Close-up look: closely examine plants in your yard and be sure that you don't see mushrooms or fungus growing at the bottom of the trees. That can be a warning sign of a health issue.

Landscaping that's been thoughtfully created and taken care of will be a huge benefit to both the seller and the buyer.

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Monthly Home Maintenance

June

- **Repair or replace damaged window screens and weather stripping.**
- **Caulk open joints, particularly around windows and doors.**
- **Clean and inspect rain gutters for rusted or damaged areas.**
- **Clean lint from clothes dryer vent.**
- **Repair or replace gates, fence posts, landscape borders, etc.**
- **Replace worn faucet washers.**
- **Clean decks, gazebos, fences and patio furniture. Refinish if needed.**



PRICING THE HOME YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH

Okay, so you love that house. But just how much is your love worth? That's the question that faces every home buyer during any economic season. Sometimes the answer is easy. In hot markets, the answer can be short and sweet: If you have to ask, you can't afford it. Not too long ago, in our sizzling market if you even took the time to ask, the property was gone!

Enter the cooler markets. Today, most markets have a good supply of houses and buyers can take a little time to look for the right house at the right price and make a reasonable offer. Still, just how an offer is written can make the difference between acceptance and rejection. Professional agents know which houses sell and for how much. A good real estate agent will prepare a market analysis that compares the seller's asking price to other sold homes in the area before an offer price is determined. Typically in volatile markets, agents will look at selling prices for homes in an area during a two to four month period. In stable markets, a twelve-month standard could be employed.

Although knowing what the seller paid for a home doesn't tell you much about current property values, it might, however, reveal how much equity and emotional attachment the seller has to a home. Sometimes hiring an appraiser can give home buyers some comfort since buyers can insist that the house appraise for the asking price.

Nonetheless, even in cool markets, an insultingly low offer on a great house will probably not win. Whether there is a buyer or not, a charming home is still valuable and is worth holding for the right buyer.

Best case: Do your research and trust your real estate expert's analysis!



KEEP COOL STARTING FROM THE TOP

With summer coming and temperatures rising quickly, many people are already turning on the air conditioner. But did you know that what's atop your home may or may not be helping you stay cool?

Clay and concrete tiles have been around for thousands of years. They are the *original* green product! They have a reflectivity quotient that's above and beyond any other roofing product on the market.

Roofing tiles are made from the only natural materials that possess two inherent qualities necessary for energy reduction. They contain natural thermal resistance in the raw materials, and also the installation of the individual tiles creates a natural airspace around the tiles allowing for ventilation that helps cool air that circulates through the roof. This can greatly reduce the amount of heat going in and out of a home, resulting in less air conditioner usage and lower electrical bills.

Despite the cost-savings, currently only eight percent of the US residential market uses concrete and clay roof tiles. However the market is rapidly warming up to these products for many reasons.

With the rising cost of oil making asphalt shingles more expensive the price points are equaling out. Clay and concrete tiles last the longest, are the most efficient and are truly *green!*

Replacing a roof is, of course, a major project that many homeowners put off. However, changing your roof can help curb energy costs while being more attractive than once thought. The big misnomer with tile is that's it red, round, and heavy. Now days that's not true. It comes flat and it comes in a multitude of colors -- blues, greens, browns, and blacks. It's very versatile.

The Tile Roofing Institute (TRI) has just launched its "Go Green with Tile" *green* building campaign in an effort to help consumers understand the advantages. The purpose of the campaign is to educate homeowners

and architects about the environmental *green* benefits of concrete and clay tile roofs. It also helps homeowners learn about the many *green* benefits including life-cycle cost, recycling, reflectivity, and sustainability.

Roofing tiles on average come with a 50-year warranty. Solar products on average come with a 25-year warranty and any reputable roofing contractor will give a minimum of half of the life of both products for a labor warranty. These warranties are far superior to the 20-year limited warranties offered by more traditional asphalt-based shingle roofing products. Additionally, a tile roof will not clog a landfill once its useful life has been exhausted.

Another *green* energy saving effort that's making its way to roof tops is the integration of solar usage and tiles. They're more affordable now and they're making solar roof tiles that actually integrate with the actual tiles themselves so it's more aesthetically pleasing. Plus it's walkable! A roofer alone can install it versus having two different contractors.



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CALL ME TODAY FOR A FREE, NO OBLIGATION MARKET ANALYSIS OF YOUR HOME
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JUNE 2008 REAL ESTATE UPDATE

Take A Summer Drive! - Win FREE Gasoline

The weather is beautiful and sunny. What better time than now to take a long relaxing summer drive to your favorite destination.

Don't let the price of gas get you down. Enter to win a \$250 gasoline gift card to get you where you want to go!

Sure to make for a great weekend! A \$250 VALUE!

Prize to be awarded by a drawing of all entries. Drawing to be held August 28, 2008. Winner need not be present. Odds of winning depend on the number of entries received. No cost or obligation to participate



I am interested in:

A free market evaluation of my property (with no obligation)

I'm interested in buying a home

Now In 3 months In 6 months

Purchasing investment property

Giving you a referral

I have a question for you

Enter me in this month's drawing for: "A \$250 Gas Voucher" Giveaway (8/28/08)

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Telephone _____

Email _____

I am here for ALL your Real Estate Needs!



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