

## Ten tips for summer selling

By Erin K. Witt

Summer has officially arrived. For some, June signals the end of the school year. For others, it welcomes the beginning of peak tanning season. But for many homeowners, June kicks off one of the peak home-buying and selling seasons in the Midwest.

June is traditionally a busy month for home sales, as many families plan moves during their children's summer vacations. The good news is that summer is typically a good time to sell, according to the Web site RealtyTimes.com. The pace of home sales—propelled by stable interest rates, a recovering economy, and improving job outlook—should help the market remain steady.

However, this means that sellers will probably have plenty of competition, too.

If you hope to capitalize on the hot summer housing market, RealtyTimes.com offers the following tips:

**Tip #1: Curb appeal** is arguably more important in the spring and summer than any other time of year. With sunny days, everything will be on display. Your shrubs and perennials will be in full bloom. Your deciduous trees will be fully leaved. Be sure your lawn is mowed and is lush and green, and consider planting a few annuals to provide an instant burst of color.

**Tip #2: Air conditioning** must be in proper working order. The heat and humidity will help you market your home's summer assets, such as patios, decks, landscaping and even air conditioning—but it can also draw attention to any shortcomings. Try to have your system inspected before you put your house on the market and make sure it's working properly. Also, make sure you turn it on if you're away and potential buyers will be looking at your house. Nothing will turn buyers off more than entering a stifling and sticky house on a 90-degree day.

**Tip #3:** The backyard will receive extra attention from buyers during the summer months. They'll be envisioning an area for barbecues and a space for their children to play. If you're selling your house in a neighborhood with a lot of young children, set up a swing set or place a sandbox in back. Make the back yard look as child-friendly as possible so potential buyers can envision what the space will look like for their own children.

**Tip #4: Patios** should also be inviting and attractive. Clean your patio furniture and arrange it keeping the views from indoors in mind. Spruce up the area with a few container plantings as well.

**Tip #5: Landscaping** can help better present your home in all seasons, but particularly during the summer when buyers may linger outside before and after a showing. Make sure your lawn is mowed and healthy, and keep shrubs and plants framing your home pruned and tidy. If possible, lay some fresh ground cover and plant a few colorful annuals, too.

**Tip #6:** Attractive **windows** can help increase the appeal of your property. Replace any cracked or broken glass, and make sure the windows are sparkling clean. If you have extra time and money for improvements, add shutters to the front of your house, or install window boxes with bright flowers. These will help showcase your windows, and your home.

**Tip #7: Walls** should receive a fresh coat of paint, if at all possible. Keep the colors neutral and light—light yellow or beige will make the room feel cooler than a brick red or dark taupe palette.

**Tip #8: Light** will help illuminate your home's interior and create a feeling of openness—so make sure blinds and curtains are open. And even on the brightest summer day, it is a good idea to turn on all indoor lights. This prevents harsh shadows from sunlight and brightens up any dim areas of your home.

**Tip #9:** Pools and spas should be clean and in good working condition. Repair or replace broken tiles, and power wash the patio or concrete decking around the pool. The pool filter and heating equipment area should be cleaned as well, and any worn or broken pool equipment, like brushes, hoses and pool covers should be replaced. If your pool is stained, you may even want to have a professional service drain and acid wash or refinish the surface.

**Tip #10: Special summer touches** can really add a little something extra to your summer showing. Try leaving out a large pitcher of lemonade with a stack of glasses on the kitchen counter during an open house or when you expect multiple showings on a weekend.