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## Tips for Showing Your Home in the Summer

As we enter the sweltering days of late spring and early summer, homebuyers' thoughts will naturally turn to patios, decks, landscaping, air conditioning, and in some cases, pools. So if your home is on the market, you'll want to make sure your house is in top order and summer-friendly.

Spring, particularly March and April, is typically the time of year that garners the most home sales; summer runs a close second. June is traditionally a busy month because many families want to get moved during their children's summer vacations and get them acclimated before the new school year begins.

That means if you're selling your home this summer, you'll likely have more competition as more of your neighbors put their homes on the market, too.

But the good news is that this summer in particular should be a good time to sell. The pace of home sales - propelled by stable interest rates, a recovering economy and improving job outlook - is expected to stay steady through the rest of the year.

"The momentum of sales will push us into another annual record, even with a somewhat lower pace of home sales activity going forward," said David Lereah, chief economist for National Association of Realtors.

As you set out to put your home on the market and add your home sale to this summer's statistics, keep the following summer tips in mind:

- **Curb appeal.** This 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. Plant a few annuals to provide an instant burst of color. Make sure your door area is clear from bicycles and toys.
- **Air conditioning.** First, be sure it's in proper working order. Try to have your system inspected before you put your house on the market and make sure it's working properly. Second, be sure you turn it on during those days that you're away at work and potential buyers will be looking at your house. Nothing will turn buyers off more than entering a stuffy, hot house on a 90-degree day.
- **Back yard.** Buyers will be paying extra attention to the back yard while house hunting during the summer months. They'll be envisioning an area for barbecues and space for 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.
- **Patio.** Likewise, make sure your patio area is 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.

- **Back yard landscaping.** If you have lawn area in your back yard, make sure it is mowed and healthy. Keep shrubs and plants pruned and tidy. Lay some fresh ground cover and plant a few colorful annuals.
- **Windows.** Make sure your windows are sparkling clean, especially if you live in a sunny region that doesn't get much summer rain.
- **Walls.** If you're thinking about touching up the paint on your walls before you put your home on the market, keep the colors neutral and light. A light yellow or beige will make the room feel cooler than a brick red or dark taupe.
- **Let the light in.** Open blinds and curtains so plenty of light illuminates the home's interior.
- **Pool.** If you have a pool or spa, make sure they are clean. If you have a fence, make sure locks and latches are working properly.

And, just like any other time of year, get rid of the clutter throughout your house. And get rid of any offensive odors that may come from cigarette smoke or pets.

Finally, if you're selling your home during the summer, it might not hurt to leave 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.

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