



*Around the House*

Tips and tools to help you make your home better for you and better for sale.

*Welcome!*

Now that I can see my flower beds and can brave the outdoors without a parka, I'm thinking about gardening. I found a great website with a lot of useful information and tips: GardenGuides.com. An article written by Carol Wallace made me happy with my less-than-perfect gardens and inspired me to include some tips to pass along. Let these tips, as well as this entire newsletter, give you some great information this spring.

*Upcoming Events*

**Neighborhood Rummage Sale — June 6, 7 & 8  
Hillcrest Drive in New Berlin**

Do you have an event you'd like listed? E-mail me at [bbay@shorewest.com](mailto:bbay@shorewest.com) and I'll be glad to include it.

*Tip for today:*

8 THINGS EVERY GARDENER SHOULD KNOW:

- 1. You will fail from time to time.**  
Sometimes, even when you do everything right, things can still go wrong. This is what makes a good gardener a *great* gardener — learn from your failures and grow from them.
- 2. You will make mistakes.**  
There are those times where you will make an error or not do something the best way. This too is all a part of the process. The next time you face the same situation, you will almost certainly do it right.
- 3. Even beginners can succeed.**  
Factors such as soil and weather can give even the most experienced gardener a rough season, while beginner's luck can happen at any time.
- 4. If you can't stand the dirt, get out of the garden.**  
When it comes to a hobby like gardening, the most important thing to remember is that it requires you to get dirty. Soil is the lifeblood of your plants and can make or break your garden.
- 5. Practice and patience make 'almost' perfect.**  
The best way to learn what works for your garden is time and experience. Each garden is different and knowing the nuances of your own garden will give you better results.
- 6. Be realistic about your expectations.**  
You may have your mind set on your garden turning out a certain way, but with many factors you cannot completely control, this is a hard thing to accomplish. Allow your garden to have good and bad unexpected results.
- 7. It will always be a work in progress.**  
Gardens are constantly evolving. We choose different plants, things happen that we don't expect, and sometimes we adapt our plans to better the garden the following season. This sense of change is what makes gardening so appealing to those who enjoy it. You will never have two gardens that are exactly the same.
- 8. Enjoy, enjoy, enjoy.**  
Gardening takes a lot of patience, practice and time. Many are not cut out for it, but those who weather the challenges really enjoy the journey.

*Good news:*

How's the market? I think I hear that on a daily basis. The news media is filled with bad news about the real estate market, so everyone is worried and curious. They hope I have good news. Well, I do.

Most of that bad news is coming from other parts of the country, but there is no national real estate market. Real estate is local. According to statistics compiled by the Wisconsin Association of REALTORS®, Wisconsin is one of the most stable real estate markets in the Midwest, continuing to outperform most other states. Nationally, Wisconsin is ranked 29th in foreclosures at less than one-half of 1%. Wisconsin median home sale prices in 2007 rose 0.2% — that's not a misprint, our house prices went up last year. That shows there is stability and strength in our housing market. Over the past 30 years home values have risen more than 6% annually. On average, home values nearly double every 10 years.

Owning a home builds wealth in a way that renting can't. According to the Federal Reserve Board, the average renter's net worth is \$4,800, while the average homeowner's net worth is \$171,000. Clearly, it pays to own a home. It's prime time for second homes. Savvy investors and prospective retirees know real estate is important to their portfolios. About one-third of all home sales are second homes or vacation properties. With interest rates on 30-year fixed-rate mortgages at historic lows, I'm telling everyone who asks, the market is GOOD.

*Bethel says:*

One of the most common challenges of staging is making the listing appeal to potential buyers using rooms that have been 'repurposed.' Bedrooms that have become hobby rooms, dining rooms with pool tables, bedroom closets with kitchen gadgets stored there. All of these scenarios tell the buyer that there may not be enough room in the house. Revert the areas to their original purpose for a quicker sale.

*Bethel Cohoon is with Staged Home Designs in Hubertus, Wis.*

*Want more?*

Congratulations to Jim Snyder of Waukesha for being selected in the drawing for a **\$25 GIFT CARD TO HOME DEPOT.**

Would you like the opportunity to win? Sign up to receive the e-mail version of this newsletter before June 30 to be entered in the next drawing.

To receive this newsletter in your inbox, e-mail me at [bbay@shorewest.com](mailto:bbay@shorewest.com) with the subject "Sign Me Up." Please include your name.

*Barbara Bay* GRI  
Direct Line: 262/797-3515, ext. 211  
Cell: 414/559-2297  
[bbay@shorewest.com](mailto:bbay@shorewest.com)