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# Derek Kirk

## Real Estate Pride in Ownership!

April issue

### GREEN THUMB SECRETS FOR A GREAT LAWN

### Plant a Butterfly Garden

#### Spring is in the Air!!!

I always enjoy spring. Putting around in my garden in the spring is a great joy for me. Since you are special to me, and helped me achieve my business goals, I wish to share my joy of spring together with you in addition to my gift of this package of flower seeds.

I hope you enjoy spring and gardening as much as I do. Planting and seeing your efforts a success when beautiful flowers bloom not only give me a sense of achievement, but the joy of a beautiful garden for many months to follow.

While speaking of homes and gardens, houses are STILL selling for TOP DOLLAR and rates are still LOW. So, if you or someone you know is thinking of up-rooting yours or their gardens please give me a call, because I have qualified buyers looking for homes in your area! As you well know, I will assist you, your friends or family members sell that house and find that perfect home to plant your garden.

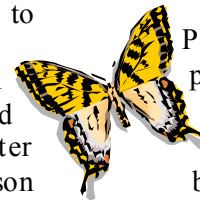
If you want a lawn that will make your neighbors green with envy, follow these important rules:

- 1) **Choose the right grasses.** The right grass for your yard will depend upon your climate, conditions, and soil. Talk to your nursery expert about the best choices. In general, cool-season grasses survive harsh winters but tend to suffer during summer months; warm-season grasses thrive in summer sun but go dormant during the winter—and turn brown in below-freezing temperatures.
- 2) **Water appropriately.** It's better to water deeply to encourage root growth instead of watering frequently. There are not hard-and-fast rules about how often to water. When the surface soil feels dry to the touch, it's time to water.
- 3) **Fertilize.** Apply a nitrogen fertilizer in late spring and summer and be sure to water thoroughly. Fertilize cool-season grasses throughout fall and spring. Again, ask a local nursery person about specific recommendations.
- 4) **Mow properly.** Don't let the grass grow too long; mow it when it reaches about one third taller than its optimum height.

Butterflies need the warmth of the sun and appreciate a flat stone or two for basking. You will see them gather in groups if you provide a shallow puddle where they can drink. Protect them from strong winds with a garden near a few shrubs or trees that act as a windbreak.

You can incorporate butterfly plants into an existing bed or border or plant a separate garden. To a butterfly, fragrance is not as important as color, although it does play a role. The eyes of a butterfly perceive a shade of yellow, red, and blue to lavender.

Attract butterflies by planting a few perennials and shrubs for their larval needs and more for their nectar preferences.



Plant groups of colorful plants/seeds around a weather fountain, and shelter the garden with a backdrop of evergreens.

Some butterfly-friendly plants include anise hyssop, black-eyed Susan, butterfly weed, coreopsis, dianthus, garden phlox, queen anne's lace, red valerian, thyme and vervain. Butterfly weed is a favorite nectar plant.

## Setting a Fair Price

Naturally, you want to get top dollar for your home. But, at the same time, you don't want to scare off potential buyers with a price tag that's too high. Setting an artificially high price may cause your



property to languish on the market for months. Reducing your asking price later on may lead buyers to wonder if there is something wrong with your home. Here are

some of the factors to consider in pricing your home.

- Your location
- Economic conditions
- Supply and demand in the local housing market
- Seasonal influences
- Local schools
- Average home prices in the neighborhood
- Your home's extras -- pool, fireplace, central air, etc.

To determine the value of your home, you will want the advice of a real estate agent or appraiser. Ask an agent to prepare a market analysis for you, showing the recent selling prices of 3 neighborhood properties comparable to your own. The agent can help you adjust for the unique features of your own property.



### GREAT TIPS you may never want to Do

Old telephone books make ideal personal address books. Simply cross out the names and addresses of people you don't know.

Fool other drivers into thinking you have an expensive car phone by holding an old TV or video remote control up to your ear and occasionally swerving across the road and mounting the curb.



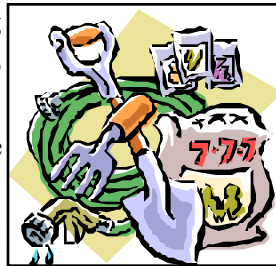
Avoid parking tickets by leaving your windshield wipers turned to fast wipe whenever you leave your car parked illegally.

## PREPARING YOUR SOIL

There's nothing more important than getting your soil ready for gardening. Soil is the foundation for your plants, and your garden can only be as good as its foundation. The soil must be finely worked and ready for the season because you won't be able to rework it once the garden is planted. An added bonus of working the soil well is that each time you stir it, you're killing weed seedlings near the surface, reducing weeding time later.

If you're planting a small garden, you can probably spade it by hand, turning each spadeful over completely.

Dig a depth of 8-10" and continue working the soil by chopping and stirring it to break up clumps and make it loose and friable. An easier way of working the soil well is to use a rototiller. It's a fact of life that few garden soils start out perfect. Don't be discouraged--all soils can be made better.



If you could choose a perfect soil for your garden, you'd most likely want a deep, well-drained loam. Loam soils are a combination of clay, silt, sand and humus, and they usually provide a good balance of drainage and water-holding capabilities because of their high humus content. Clay soils are "heavy" often without good aeration or drainage. Sand is "light" soil which drains very quickly, and often doesn't hold nutrients very well. Sandy soil requires more frequent watering.

## TIPS FOR A LIFETIME

1. Stuff a miniature marshmallow in the bottom of a sugar cone to prevent ice cream drips.
2. Use a meatbaster to "squeeze" your pancake batter onto the hot griddle perfect shaped pancakes every time.
3. To keep potatoes from budding, place an apple in the bag with the potatoes.
4. To prevent eggshells from cracking, add a pinch of salt to the water before hard-boiling.
5. Run your hands under cold water before pressing Rice Krispies treats in the pan-the marshmallow won't stick to your fingers.
6. To get the most juice out of fresh lemons, bring them to room temperature and roll them under your palm against the kitchen counter before squeezing.
7. To easily remove burnt-on food from your skillet, simply add a drop or two of dish soap and enough water to cover bottom of pan, and bring to a boil on stovetop - skillet will be much easier to clean.
8. Spray your Tupperware with nonstick cooking spray before pouring in tomato-based sauces - no more stains.
9. When a cake recipe calls for flouring the baking pan, use a bit of the dry cake mix instead - no white mess on the outside of the cake.
10. If you accidentally over-salt a dish while it's still cooking, drop in a peeled potato - it absorbs the excess salt for an instant "fix me up".
11. Wrap celery in aluminum foil when putting in the refrigerator it will keep for weeks.
12. Brush beaten egg white over piecrust before baking to yield a beautiful glossy finish.