

Money Grows On Trees

By Brian Madigan



If I were to tell you that I have an investment for you that will provide you with a tax free return of over 1,000 per cent, you'd think that I was crazy.

However, this opportunity is available to many homeowners. What is the best improvement that you can make to your house? The one that will provide you with the greatest return?

Now, just about everyone is going to say "kitchens and bathrooms". But in most instances, they only return about 70 to 80 per cent of their original value. So, what kind of an investment is that?

The answer is found as close as your nearest garden centre. Trees, shrubs, perennials and grass is the answer. You can improve your property's streetscape and curb appeal immensely by adding only a few modest improvements. A few hundred dollars invested could provide you with thousands at the time of sale, and of course, it's all tax free. After a few years, in a good market you could easily have a 1,000 per cent return, and in a bad market, yours will be the first to sell.

Like any other investment you should take time to consider your options and invest wisely. Let's say you wish to have a Colorado Blue Spruce on your front lawn. Fully grown it will have a 12 foot diameter. So, it must be placed at least seven feet from the property line.

Maybe you would like to have a nice Maple tree, but don't forget about its 25 foot branch width and below the ground, the 25 foot reach of its roots. You will be responsible for any damage done by the branches and roots of your trees to neighbour's property and to the underground utilities.

Make sure that any trees you select will grow in proper proportion to your house. And, don't place the tree directly in front of your front door.

If it obstructs the view of the front door from the street, then it will not add value. Overgrown shrubbery and trees that block the house will detract from your property. Try to place large trees around the perimeter of your property for the best increase in value.

Aside from trees, a good well cared-for front lawn is one of your best investments. This time of year is the perfect timing for over seeding and winter fertilizer.

And remember, if you are planning to put your house on the market before next May, take some digital pictures while everything is still in bloom.

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