

# Take Some Pictures!

*By Brian Madigan*



Most homeowners spend a lot of money on landscaping, from trees and shrubs to perennials and annuals. However, when they go to sell their home they don't even have one decent picture. Sure, they may have pictures of the family with some trees in the background or the kids splashing in the swimming pool, but, what they don't have is a series of photographs that will "sell" the house in the wintertime.

Most houses are put on the market in the Spring. Nothing is growing! At best, you have to use some pictures from last year. The problem is that you just don't have them.

Now, the task is relatively simple. Just take some pictures. Even if you don't have a digital camera, prints can be digitized. Naturally, digital pictures with sufficient resolution would be best. Anything 3.0 Megapixels or higher will be fine. These pictures can be uploaded to a realtor's website and the MLS system.

So, how does your garden grow? This will dictate the timing. You should see what you have and determine when it blooms or the best time for pictures. Tulips, daffodils and crocus will flower in March and April. Magnolias, forsythia, apple trees and most fruit trees bloom in late April to late May, but, not for the whole month, just for a week or two. The optimum time may only be a few days. The same is true for perennials; lilies in July and snap dragons in September. Take some pictures at the height of their beauty. Grass looks better green. Over the summer you should probably be out with the camera almost every week.

It will be worthwhile to have a portfolio of 50 to 100 pictures of your home, your garden and your landscaping from various angles and over the seasons.

And while you have the camera in hand, don't forget the front door and a nice panorama shot of the house from across the street. If you have a pool, try to photograph it from the second storey. If you don't have a second storey, get on a step-ladder.

Also, don't forget to move the cars. Four or five cars on the driveway are not appealing. By the way, when the fellow from MLS comes out to photograph your house for the listing, he's not going to move any cars. In fact, he

doesn't even have enough time to come to the front door to get you to move them. Sorry, it's not your realtor's fault. They had no idea when the photographer was going to be there.

So, wouldn't it be nice if you had a great picture of your house taken on the very best day, with everything in bloom and the sunlight just right. Now, just think about some of the pictures you've seen on MLS taken on a dull February day. How good are they? One more thought, the first thing potential purchasers will see about your house is the picture. And, if they don't like it, you're gone in less than 2 seconds! That's all it takes, and you're gone forever. Your first impression is on the internet, no one's coming to the front door.

While I'm assuming that most interior shots can be taken when you list the house, don't forget about repairs. You might want some pictures to feature and document repairs and renovations. Let's assume that your leaky bathtub on the second floor marked the finished ceiling in the dining room. Actually, you can still see the repair mark. If the purchasers miss it, the home inspector won't. So wouldn't it be nice if you could show the repair, the removal of the old bathtub, the replacement of the flooring, the installation of the new jacuzzi along with the location of the motor that is now covered with tile? No one will be deducting anything from the purchase price with these photographs in hand.

Now, I appreciate that most people reading this will think..."well, that's a pretty good idea", but far less than 1% will actually follow through.

One more small piece of advice, when you're taking pictures, waste the rest of the roll on your family. In twenty-five years those will be the ones you'll cherish, the ones I told you to take will be worthless.

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