



From the Broker's Desk Nancy C. Rowe

summer blooms. Don't strip your decks or patios of all lawn furniture but leave some furniture so the potential buyer can envision summer use. Lawn

The sun is setting earlier, temperatures are dropping and the rustle of dried leaves is a prevailing sound. Fall has arrived without a buyer for your real estate, so what should you do? Sale statistics have established that the spring and summer markets experience the greatest activity but real estate sells all year. Often a Seller will receive better offers in the fall and winter markets because there is less available inventory for buyers to select from and these buyers tend to be more serious in their search. Because of this limited inventory, buyers are also forced to be less demanding as to the criteria of the real estate being sought. The concern about having to show your house during the Holidays or bad weather is valid but remember that there should be fewer showings with more serious buyers during this period. If you elect to continue your marketing, here are some tips for winter marketing. Have your Realtor exchange the summer pictures for fall pictures at advertising sites but keep a photo album or digital slideshow of your

maintenance may be over for this growing season but don't neglect to add fresh mulch to beds and remove leaves and twigs from the yard and walkways for a well-kept look. The addition of solar powered lighting will help enhance the exterior for evening showings or on gray winter days. Keep equipment and supplies close by to remove any snow or ice on pathways used by potential buyers to access your house. When snow accumulates, it is often hard to determine the lot lines so adding some identification flags at your corners would be greatly appreciated by anyone viewing your property. For interior staging, light is extremely important so retract blinds, widen curtains, wash windows and remove screens to capture all the natural light available during the winter months. Make sure that lights have adequate wattage and working bulbs and use extra lamps for those dark corners so the rooms appear larger and cozy. If you have hardwood flooring, you might consider removing some of the area rugs so that there is more surface for

light to be reflected from. An excess of holiday decorations is not only distracting but often shrinks the room size so decorate tastefully and moderately. You can appeal to the sense of smell by baking or cooking something fragrant prior to a showing and leave a plate of goodies out for the visitors to enjoy. The use of too many candles or deodorizers creates the question of whether you are trying to mask an odor. Music playing low or a glowing fire in the fireplace helps to set the mood of the room for the potential buyer. The fall and winter market can prove beneficial for the buyer too. For sellers who have to sell, the buyer may be able to negotiate a better price. Inventory will be limited so less time will be spent viewing properties. Even a couple of months will help on taxes when you consider the property tax and mortgage interest deductions. When furnishing or remodeling your recent purchase, did you know that September is a great time for buying carpet and paint, October focuses on the sale of lawn equipment and November has appliance and cookware sales? Houses sell year round so when you are ready to buy or sell, call on the experienced Agents of WILLOW Realty.

Leaves have multiple purposes in the yard and garden. They can even enhance your home. Scoop them up and use them as a free and sustainable garden treat. © thespruce.com/Marie Iannotti

Compost-Leaves are the perfect "brown" or carbon ingredient for your compost pile. Layer them in between all the "green" garden debris you gather as you clean up the garden and prepare it for winter. They will decompose even faster if you shred them first, but it's not required.

Leaf Mold- Leaf mold may not sound like a good thing, but it does miraculous things for your garden soil. Leaf mold is the crumbly, compost-like product that remains when leaves are left to decompose on their own. It's what makes the forest smell so earthy. Leaf mold doesn't add a lot of nutrients to the soil, but it improves the structure of soil, greatly improving its water holding ability. It also attracts the beneficial organisms that are so important to a healthy soil.

Mulch- Leaves make an excellent, attractive mulch, suppressing weeds and eventually decomposing and feeding the soil. This is one time when it really is wise to shred them first. A thick layer of wet leaves will form a solid mat and block water and air from getting through to the soil. However when shredded, they form an airy cushion that slowly settles in and settles down.



One caveat – shredded leaves will blow around in a windy fall. Hose them down, when you first spread them. It won't take long for them to stay in place on their own.

Use Them for Insulation- Leaves can be used to insulate tender plants or even for cold storage of vegetables. To provide a few degrees of protection for plants or planted containers, circle them with wire fencing and stuff leaves all the way around. In the spring, rake them up and toss them in the compost. If you have a root cellar or storage basement, you can use dry leaves to layer your vegetable in, rather than saw dust or newspaper. They will easily last through winter.

Leave Them Be - Run the lawn mower over them and let them stay on the lawn and feed the grass. Of course, you don't want a layer so thick that it smothers the grass, but if you mow a few times, as the leaves gradually fall, the shredded leaves should disperse enough to allow the grass to breathe. At the very least, you can probably get by with only one raking and then mow over the rest.

Preserve Them - We all know how beautiful fall leaves are when they're on the trees, but they don't lose that beauty just because they drop. Gather some up and dry, press or otherwise preserve them. This is a fun project for kids and it's also a great way to decorate your home with a fall theme. The leaves won't last forever, but they will certainly get you through the holiday season.

Amend Your Soil - Add your leaves directly into your soil. Soil is constantly in flux and you never have enough soil amendments. Leaves make a great, free alternative to carrying bags of manure home. This works best if you shred them first, but don't let that stop you. You can either turn them into the top few inches of soil or simply spread a layer of leaves on top of the soil and chop them a bit with a fork or spade. Just make sure they are making good contact with the soil, then let nature work its wonders. The leaves will begin to disintegrate and provide a wonderful habitat for earthworms and other beneficial organisms that reside in your garden soil.

Slow Cooker Vegetable Beef Barley Soup

© BettyCrocker.com



- 3/4 c frozen cut green beans
- 2/3 c frozen whole kernel corn
- 1 1/2 lbs beef stew meat
- 1/2 c chopped bell pepper
- 1 large onion, chopped (1 cup)
- 2/3c uncooked barley
- 1 1/2 c water
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp chopped fresh or 1/2 tsp dried thyme leaves
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 1 carton (32 oz) beef flavored broth
- 2 cans (14.5 oz each) diced tomatoes with roasted garlic, undrained
- 1 can (8 oz) tomato sauce

Spray 5- to 6-quart slow cooker with cooking spray. Rinse green beans and corn with cold water to separate and partially thaw. Mix green beans, corn and remaining ingredients in cooker. Cover and cook on Low heat setting 8 to 9 hours.

We all wear masks, and the time comes when we cannot remove them without removing some of our own skin. ~ André Berthiaume