

Smart Moves

with **Kaushansky Brown**

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Spring 2016

Your Community Real Estate News

Market Watch

Toronto Real Estate Board President Mark McLean announced that there were 12,085 sales reported through TREB's MLS® System in April 2016. This result, which represented a record for the month of April, was up by 7.4% in comparison to April 2015.

For the TREB market area as a whole, annual sales growth was experienced for all major home types except semi-detached houses. In the City of Toronto, sales were down for detached and semi-detached houses as well as townhouses on a year-over-year basis. This dip in sales in the '416' area code was due to a lack of low-rise listings. Many would-be buyers were not able to find a home that met their needs, or were outbid in multiple offers.

"While April's sales result represented a new record for sales, that number could have been even higher if we had benefitted from more supply. In the City of Toronto in particular, some households have chosen not to list their home for sale because of the second substantial Land Transfer Tax and associated administration fee. The lack of available inventory, coupled with record sales, continued to translate into robust annual rates of price growth," said Mr. McLean. Home selling prices continued to trend upward in April. The MLS® Home Price Index Composite Benchmark was up by 12.6% year-over-year. The average selling price was up by 16.2%. The higher growth rate reported for the average home price, as compared to the MLS® HPI, points to a greater share of high-end home sales this year compared to last.

"As we move into the busiest time of the year, in terms of sales volume, strong competition between buyers will continue to push home prices higher. A greater supply of listings would certainly be welcome, but we would need to see a number of consecutive months in which listings growth outpaced sales growth before market conditions become more balanced," said Jason Mercer, TREB's Director of Market Analysis.

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Updates From Our Office

Things have been super busy back here at KB HQ on both a business front as well as our community support. We were able to raise \$750 at our Annual Family Day Skate, thanks to all of you. The funds have been donated to the 333rd Scout Troop, here in Etobicoke, to help them host 45 Scouts from Muff, Ireland this summer. Next summer, our Scouts make the journey across the ocean to visit Ireland. Our entire brokerage took the day off on May 12th for Keller Williams Annual Red Day, and re-energized the High Park YMCA Childcare outdoor adventure areas. We landscaped, planted, cleaned, dug out stumps, painted, and created vegetable and herb gardens for the children to tend to and eat from. We're also busy helping out Wedgewood Public School by sponsoring bouncy castles for their upcoming Spring Fun Fair, and continuing to help the 333rd Beavers, Cubs and Scouts with their big Spring Flower and Dirt Drive at Sheridan Nurseries on Thursday May 26th. If you're in need of anything for your yard or gardens, come out to the nursery (2069 Burnhamthorpe Rd E, just west of Mill Road) between 5p.m. and 8 p.m., and we'll even help you load your trunk! I sometimes wonder how we manage all of this while running our team and taking care of the home-front. But you know the old saying: "If you want something done, ask a busy person". From all of us, to all of you, have an amazing Spring!



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How to Prepare your Home for the Spring Season (Whether You're Thinking of Selling...or Not)

Spring has arrived, and for most home owners it's an exciting time to attend to their properties. In the winter time, many areas inside and out are neglected or not used as often because owners tend to stay inside. From the interior to the exterior, getting your home ready for spring will ensure you'll be ready to enjoy the warmer weather once it hits. Space out your maintenance tasks and by the time spring is here, you will be able to enjoy the season!



Start on your exterior: The outside of your home has taken more wear and tear from the harsh winter than your interior, especially with our crazy up and down winter and spring temperature fluctuations...so start here. Walk around and examine caulking around windows and doors, and also open them to look at the weather stripping. Replace old or cracking caulk and replace weather stripping. Inspect the roof for broken or missing shingles or tiles, and clean out gutters and downspouts at the same time.

Landscaping tips: While it may not be time for you to start planting flowers and watering your lawn, it isn't too early to tend to your garden hoses, walkways, and adjacent areas to your landscaping. Replace cracked or old garden hoses, and rake away leaves, tree limbs and debris from sidewalks, plant beds and surrounding areas. Now is also a good time to start planning out your spring landscaping ideas and lawn care maintenance regimen. Pressure wash concrete and paved areas that have become dirty, and power wash vinyl siding, brick walls and vertical surfaces on your home if need be.

Check your interior systems: Fall and spring are the two most important times to review your home's major HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems, right before the harsh climatic changes are going to occur. Ensure air filters have been replaced or cleaned and stock up on new air filters if you use disposable ones; check your air conditioner before the summer to ensure it is in good working order. If you need to have a service person look at it now, it will be a lot less expensive than 3 months from now.

Interior spring cleaning: By now your windows – inside and out – could use a cleaning. You will be surprised by how much you can see out your windows, once they are cleaned! Clean off ceiling fans, and clean out fireplaces from use over the winter. Test your emergency systems in your home: home alarm, smoke fire alarm, fire extinguisher, and carbon monoxide alarms to ensure they are working properly. Most homeowners forget to test these regularly; fall and spring maintenance time is a perfect opportunity to ensure they're in good working order.



Preparing your home for the spring is rewarding now, and 3 months from now! Houses go through changes as they age, and as climatic conditions change...spring maintenance is a good idea for everyone, and even more important if you're considering going on the market soon. Home buyers want to ensure that all systems have been well attended to and taken care of before buying, even in a hot market. If you're concerned you will miss something, hire a professional home inspector – they will cover the entire home from top to bottom, eliminating the possibility of surprises for you down the road.

Based on an article written by Ronique Gibson for www.freshome.com

Spring Time Plant Care

By Alexandra Pavlova Chow, Real Landscape Design & Consulting, Etobicoke



After many months of cold weather, low natural light, and dry heat from furnaces, all houseplants need a bit of assistance to spring back up. Here are few simple tricks what will get them ready for another season of healthy growth and beauty:

Clean up

Remove each plant from its usual spot, turn it around, and take a good look at its overall shape, stem health, branching pattern, and quality of leaves. Trim with scissors any bare, wilted, or dry growth.

TIP: Breaking leaves, branches, or roots by hand will damage your plant.

TIP: Regular pruning of certain plants will promote flowering.

Re-pot mature or overgrown plants into larger pots or enhance old soil with new.

TIP: Trim up to 1/3 of roots to make room in the pot for fresh soil, water, and air to nourish your plant.

Washing and Dusting

Small plants: Spray with lukewarm water in the sink or shower.

TIP: Wrap plastic bags around the base of the pot to keep soil from washing out. Let the plants dry in the tub for ½ a day.

Large plants: Wipe each leaf gently with damp rag.

TIP: Support each leaf with the other hand in order to get good contact without breaking the leaf off.

Hairy-leaved plants (such as African violets): Dust with a dry or nearly dry tea-towel or a cotton swab.

TIP: Beware of moisture; water drops can make these leafs rot.

Watering and Feeding

Always use a proper watering can with a long spout. Spilled water can cause furniture damage and leaf decay.

TIP: Chlorine in our tap water is harmful to plants and can build up over time. Fill up watering can at least 24 hrs before use and let stand at room temperature.

Purchase a reliable household plant fertilizer, and use it at least once per year or as directed.

TIP: Nitrogen gives plants lush foliage. Phosphorus keeps roots and stems strong and healthy. Potassium encourages blooms.

Welcome New Preferred Professionals

We proudly welcome Geoff Hartley as a part of our service professional directory. As an Investment & Wealth Advisor with RBC Dominion Securities, Geoff helps Canadian families, professionals and executives build and protect their wealth. His team works closely with personal clients, assisting with investment management, tax strategies and retirement planning. Geoff also focuses on assisting newcomers to Canada, including Americans living in Canada, with cross-border investment and tax concerns.

Geoff has been our personal financial advisor for close to two years and we have been very happy not just with his results, but also with his attention to detail and high level of customer service. You can reach Geoff at 416-842-3573 or geoff.hartley@rbc.com.



We're also pleased to introduce Alexandra Pavlova Chow from *RealLandscape*, a residential and commercial landscape Design and Consulting Company based out of Etobicoke, with clients across GTA and surrounding areas.

The primary focus of *RealLandscape* is to give each residence a fresh boost in curb appeal, and to create a welcoming entry to every home. With that in mind, *RealLandscape* then takes the design vision into the back yard and enhances the entire property as one. To take it one step further, *RealLandscape* offers to consult or fully facilitate a greening strategy to the interior of such property, thus creating a seamless visual character inside and out.

RealLandscape also works with Real Estate Agents to prepare properties for sale. Often overlooked in the staging process, the exterior of a property is the first thing prospective buyers see. This is the true opportunity to make a striking first impression.

Super Service Professional Directory

Our clients are consistently asking for referrals for trades and services. Many businesses promise high quality service and advice but then fail to deliver! When we take on new clients in our real estate practice, we promise them a high level of service. Please give us any feedback, positive or negative (we need to be certain they are consistently providing service), when you use any of these services and make sure to tell them Irene and Philip sent you!

Cleaners

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We're always interested in hearing your success stories from experiences you've had with service and trades people. Please let us know if you think someone you've worked with in the past would be a good addition to this directory.