

The Final Days of the Harvest

Helpful Tips of the Month!

October 2016

This has been a very strange fall thus far. As I was flying over Chicagoland after a brief vacation last week, I was amazed at how green all the trees still are. At home, I still have a few tomatoes and peppers ripening in the garden. And the herbs? The parsley and oregano are healthy, thriving bushes! If you're like me and enjoy eating fresh produce as far into fall and winter as possible, as well as not wasting anything you've grown, this issue of Helpful Tips is for you! Included are several tips to make the most of what you may still have from your gardens, as well as my Second Annual Favorite Soup Recipe share (after all...it really is fall and soup season has begun!).

Thank you again for your continued support of my business! Please enjoy this issue of Helpful Tips!

NEW FEATURE! THE NEIGHBORHOOD PICK 3!

In continuation of my last survey – what do you like about your town – here is **Forest Park** resident Justin's favorite three things about his hometown:

- *Madison Street shops & restaurants*
- *Good parks & recreation department*
- *MusicFest, classic car night, casket races, and other annual festivals and community events*

If you're looking for a vibrant community, check out Forest Park! There's always something happening!

STATISTICS CORNER

The Hits Just Keep Coming!

The Baird & Warner Oak Park-River Forest office continues to have its best year in office history. In our core market – Oak Park, River Forest, & Forest Park – we list 1 in 5 homes that come on the market. And when they sell? We sell for a higher percentage of the list price (avg. 95.9%) than any of our competitors. Do you know someone in one these towns who is thinking of selling? I think it's pretty clear who you can refer them to!

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Make the Most of Your Harvest!

With the long summer we've had, it's quite possible you are still reaping the benefits of either your own vegetable and herb gardens or your local farmers market. If you're looking for some guidance on what to do with the last of this season's produce, take a look at some of these suggestions.

- **Cherry Tomatoes:** Need a break from putting tomatoes in everything you eat? Pop the last of these sweet gems in a freezer bag and toss them in the freezer. The skins will get too tough to eat plain once thawed, but toss them in soups and stews and you're good to go!
- **Zucchini:** My cousin lives on a farm and she said she purees her leftover zucchini and bags it by the cup so she can use it in breads and muffins during the winter. I prefer shredded zukes in my bread (plus then it can be tossed in quiches and pastas, too) so she said just to shred it, bag it, and freeze it. I now have 8 cups (so far) ready to go this winter. One website I read afterwards said you should do a quick blanch of the veggie before freezing so I'll have to let you know how it worked with not doing this step!
- **Spinach:** Granted this is more of a spring growing vegetable, but it also can grow in the fall with the cooler temps, so should you have some on hand at the end of the season, and more than you need right now; rinse, de-stem, and steam blanch the spinach for 2 minutes, plunge in ice water, air dry and place in freezer bags. HGTV.com recommends using a straw to suck out the remaining air (or a vacuum sealer) from the bag to avoid freezer burn. Pop them in the freezer and then pop them out for a stir-fry, casserole, soup, pasta, or dip.
- **Herbs:** I've learned there are 3 ways to preserve your herbs: air dry, oven dry, and fresh frozen. For herbs with a lower moisture content such as oregano, rosemary, or dill, it's best to tie them up in bundles with string and hang them upside down in a dry place and let them air dry. Moisture rich herbs like basil, chives, and parsley, can be placed on a cookie sheet in an open oven set to 180 degrees. It takes about 2-4 hours to dry them and will crumble easily when ready. For both air and oven dried herbs, crumble them up, store in air tight containers, and label them. Alternatively, for moisture rich herbs, you can spread the leaves out flat on the cookie sheet and put in your freezer until frozen, then bag and label.

For more ideas on how to freeze or preserve other veggies, check out HGTV.com. I was really impressed with all of their ideas. Happy Eating Throughout this Fall and Winter!

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Soup Season Has Arrived!

Last year's soup recipe share was such a hit, I think it will be an annual ritual for Helpful Tips! Soup is my favorite food so why not share it with some of my favorite clients, friends, and support network?! Courtesy of *400 Soups*, by Anne Sheasby, with a few tweaks from me, here is this year's Soup Share!

Cauliflower-White Bean Soup (vegan & gluten free!)

Ingredients:

1 Tbsp olive oil
1 large garlic clove, crushed
1 medium onion, roughly chopped
2 tsp fennel seeds
1 large cauliflower, cut into small florets
2 14oz cans cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
5 cups of your favorite vegetable broth/stock
Salt, pepper, paprika
Chopped fresh parsley

In a deep pot, heat olive oil over medium heat and sauté garlic, onion, and fennel seeds for 5 minutes or until softened. Add the cauliflower, half to 2/3 of the cannellini beans (depends on how thick you like your soup), and the vegetable stock, increase heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for about 10 minutes until cauliflower is tender. Remove from heat, blend until smooth in a blender or with a hand blender. Return to pot, stir in the remaining beans, season with salt, pepper, and paprika. Sprinkle with chopped fresh parsley for garnish.

This recipe serves 4-6 people, it can be frozen for later, and is best served with a crusty loaf of French bread and a bottle of sauvignon blanc! ENJOY!!!

PAYING IT FORWARD is DOUBLING!!!

My business thrives on the support of wonderful people like you who appreciate the service I provide and, in turn, refer their friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors, to me for their real estate needs. From now until the end of 2016, Paying it Forward is getting a little sweeter...

For every buyer or seller referral you send my way, once we close, I will make a \$200 donation in your name to the organization of your choice!



NEW LISTING!
**414 Wisconsin, Unit C
Oak Park
\$375,000**

Outstanding 3BR, 2.5ba townhome is walking distance of downtown! The main living level is right inside your front door and all 3 bedrooms are on the same floor! So unique!

SOLD LISTINGS!

- 1350 Braeburn, Flossmoor (pictured at right)
 - 1111 Holley Ct., #115, Oak Park (under contract in 13 days!)
 - 106 S. Ridgeland, #406, Oak Park (under contract before it came on the market!)
- Additional listings currently under contract: 1018 Augusta, Oak Park & 1357 Highridge, Westchester!



Riviera Maya Bound!

Earlier this year, Baird & Warner held a listing and sales contest to earn a trip to the Riviera Maya in Mexico. I was fortunate enough to not only earn the trip for myself, but to also take a guest. My mom was the most wonderful companion to join me on this amazing getaway this past week! Thank you to all of my clients who helped me achieve this goal!



Market Watch

Dan Matas, Key Mortgage Services, 708-471-5612

30 year fixed: 3.5% 15 year fixed: 2.75%
FHA 30yr fixed: 3.375% 30 year Jumbo: 3.75%

REALLY BIG News of the Month! The Community Reinvestment Home Loan Program offers qualified buyers the opportunity to get up to \$8000 in down payment assistance and virtually NO closing costs! This program is for certain geographic areas, but has no income or purchase price limits. For more details, give Dan a call!