

The Home Edition

Graylin Woods sees great increase in interest from local buyers and sellers

Volume 12, Issue 6

November/December 2004

The Community of Graylin Woods is seeing an amazing increase of interest from local buyers and sellers. With 10 of the 44 community homes sold in the past 4 years, Graylin Woods is quickly becoming one of the most popular neighborhoods in James City County. These homes sold in the past few years have seen an average increase of 21 percent in price since their previous sale. According to

these averages, a house that was purchased for \$239,000 in 2000 would now be worth \$289,190, an astonishing increase of \$50,190 in just four years. According to a current market analysis, property sold in Graylin Woods in the past 12 months has a total value of more than 2.8 million dollars, the average sale



The community of Graylin Woods.

price per home calculated to be \$281,600. With such a favorable market for sellers, it is obvious why many residents have decided to cash in on their favorable investments and list their home for sale.

Simple ways to improve the value of your home

At the mention of home improvement, your thoughts may turn to saw horses, contractors, cost overruns and a thick layer of dust covering every square inch of your house.

According to Ed Hatch, president of the Residential Sales Council, making modest, but visually effective improvements can benefit homeowners while they occupy the residence and later when they decide to sell, reports the Minneapolis-St. Paul Star Tribune.

These projects may increase the value of the home or shorten the time it stays on the market.

* Hire a cleaning crew. Enlist a professional cleaning crew for a top-to-bottom cleaning can reveal that certain items, like the family room carpet, do not have to be replaced.

* Replace wall and floor coverings. Homes take on a whole new look if peeled paint, wallpaper and stained floor coverings are replaced. Choose neutral shades; color can be added with fabric, paintings and other accessories.

*Resurface kitchen cabinets. If the kitchen and bathroom cabinets are in good condition, it is considerably less expensive to

resurface than to replace them outright.

*Landscape and exteriors. Repair cracked driveways and install new door handles and address numbers. These will make your house look more attractive from the outside.

* Invest in new windows. Although the cost is significant, there are two reasons to consider installing new windows: They average 69 percent return on investment, and energy efficient triple-paned glass windows can lower monthly utility bills by 20 percent to 40 percent.

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Celebrating the Holidays in Colonial Williamsburg

Williamsburg's Christmas begins the second week in December with the annual "Grand Illumination," an evening of fireworks, music, and feasting that attracts thousands of visitors.

If you'd rather not mix it up with such a huge crowd, plan your visit around these special events.

* **Illumination of the Palace Green:** Blazes are kindled in cressets, the colonial forerunners of street lights. Fifers and drummers, with musketeers and carolers in attendance, lead you along a narrated tour around the Palace Green,

which is ringed by the old capital's most prestigious residences.

* **Assembly at the Capitol:** You may learn the minuet or other old-time dance as you attend a make-believe assembly in the Capitol building.

* **Holiday Season Ball at the Palace:** Servants show you around the Governor's Palace, treating you like a guest at a ball. You watch the dancing, but can't join in.

* **Capitol Evening:** Illuminated with candles and cressets, the Capitol comes to life with re-enactments in the court and

the Hall of the House of Burgesses. The Virginia Resolution for Independence was adopted there on May 5, 1776, leading to the Declaration of Independence.

* **Baron's Feast and/or Groaning Board:** Big banquets unfold with Christmas cheer and colonial entertainment.

* **Candlelight organ concerts:** Concerts are held in the Bruton Parish Episcopal Church, which has been in continuous service since 1715.

For more information on holiday activities visit: www.colonialwilliamsburg.com



"Over watering is the easiest way to kill your plants"



Winterize your tender potted plants

Now that cooler weather is here and you've dragged those heavy potted plants inside for the winter, you need to keep them alive! Indoor conditions present new challenges including drier air and lower light levels. Plants don't need as much water and fertilizer as they did outside since there is less active growth.

Typically the tender plants we keep in pots include flowering plants such as Plumerias (Frangipani), Citrus, Breyntia (Snowbush), orchids, Begonias, bromeliads, and Hibiscus, along with foliage plants such as Ficus, palms and succulents like Aloe and Sansivieria.

While plants need less water and fertilizer in winter, they may need supplemental light and humidity. Place plants near a south-facing window, if possible. A shop light or combination of fluorescent and incandescent bulbs will also help supplement light in dim rooms.

Over watering is the easiest way to kill your plants. Check the soil, at least an inch down, and if it comes out dry, add

water. Plumerias may not need any water in winter. When you water, allow the pots to drain and don't let the pots sit in water. Add gravel to the pot saucer and stand the pot on it. Water in the saucer may increase the humidity around the plant. You can also mist with a hand sprayer (the threat of a water spray will also keep your pets from nibbling foliage). Or periodically place plants back outside when it is cloudy and wet for exposure to shade and rain.

Bringing plants indoors creates a new stressful environment, which is the ideal condition for pests to attack. Patrol your plants for the following: Aphids are 1/16" long, green, brown, black, orange or peach-colored sucking pests; some have wings. They are seen on new tip growth under the leaves or on succulent stems. Milkweed plants are often covered with aphids, if you want to see what these bugs look like. Mealybugs are white, fuzzy, 1/16-1/8" long, and slow-moving. They hide in leaf axils and crevices and on the undersides of leaves. Scale are stationary, round, hard-

shelled and 1/8" long pests that are often brown and shiny. They can be found on stems. Young ones move and may be green so they blend in and are difficult to see. Red Spider Mites are tiny, orange-red pests on tips of plant growth and on the tops of leaves. They make a fine web over leaves and stems. Spider mites can be a real problem on palms, Hibiscus, and elephant ears.

To rid your plants of these pesky pests monitor them closely. New leaves may appear odd, yellow, mottled, or dimpled. Pinch or prune tips and physically remove the pests. Take the pot outdoors and blast them with a strong spray from your hose to knock the bugs off. Using a spray bottle with a mix of one part mineral oil and 10 parts water, shake well and spray the creatures to suffocate them. Don't use oils if the temperature is over 90 degrees. Instead, mix a few drops of dish soap with water in a sprayer and squirt the undersides of leaves. This works best on aphids.

Source: Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens

Homes recently listed and sold in your area



3405 AVERY CIRCLE

Brandon Woods

SOLD

Asking Price **\$379,900**

Est Fin Sq Ft 2700

Year Built 2000

BR 4 Full BA 2 Half BA 1



4123 SILVERWOOD DRIVE

Springhill

FOR SALE

Asking Price **\$269,900**

Est Fin Sq Ft 2110

Year Built 2002

BR 3 Full BA 2 Half BA 1



4808 BRISTOL CIRCLE

Westray Downs

PENDING

Asking Price **\$239,900**

Est Fin Sq Ft 1500

Year Built 1990

BR 3 Full BA 2 Half BA 0



4020 DRIFTWOOD WAY

Springhill

PENDING

Asking Price **\$227,500**

Est Fin Sq Ft 1525

Year Built 1996

BR 3 Full BA 2 Half BA 1

Do-It-Yourself Tips: Painting Paneling

Materials:

Ladder
 Safety goggles
 Mask
 Electric sander
 Medium-grit sandpaper
 Painter's tape
 Paint rollers
 Paintbrushes
 Primer
 Paint: eggshell finish

Steps:

1. Using an electric sander with medium-grit sandpaper, sand the wood paneling to scuff the finish (figure A) so the paint will adhere better to the surface. It will be

dusty, so wear a mask and safety goggles. Then clean up thoroughly to remove all traces of dust

2. Tape off room with painter's tape, making sure to tape all window trim and areas you don't want painted.
3. Prime the paneling with a primer such as KILZ, applying it with a roller; don't worry about making it pretty -

- this coat won't show. The primer will help the paint stick to the walls. Once it has dried (which will be fairly quickly, about an hour), the walls are ready to be painted; the lighter-color walls will give the dark paneling a fresh new look.

For more easy tips on home remodeling please visit:

www.diy.net.com



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*“What lies behind us
and what lies before us
are small matters
compared to what lies
within us.”*
--Ralph Waldo Emerson“

From Elaine's Desk....



Q: Dear Elaine,

I am looking to purchase my first new home, but I feel overwhelmed because it is very hard to save up for such a large down payment. What should I do?

-Angela

York County, Virginia

A: Dear Angela,

The most important thing is choosing the right lender and getting pre-approved before you start your search. I use and recommend a mortgage broker. A mortgage broker is not an hourly employee and works on commission only. Therefore, they work very hard to find the right loan to fit your needs. A mortgage broker also works with a multitude of lenders. The broker I use works with 75 lenders, including some of the major players in the mortgage market. After you choose your lender, then interview several realtors to find a realtor you feel comfortable with and that you feel is motivated to help in the search for your new home. If you have any more questions, please feel free to contact me at the office. Happy house hunting,

Elaine

Each issue (every two months) Elaine will answer your questions on real estate related topics. If Elaine chooses your question to appear in *The Home Edition*, you will receive a \$50 gift certificate to the restaurant of your choice. Please send questions to either:

voncannonrealestate@cox.net

or

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From Nana's Kitchen:

Sweet Potato Coconut Pie

2 cups mashed cooked sweet potatoes
2 eggs
3/4 cup sugar
3/4 cup milk
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter or margarine
1/4 teaspoon allspice
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 cup flaked coconut
1 unbaked (9-inch) pie crust

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
- Beat the sweet potatoes, eggs, sugar, milk, butter or margarine, allspice and nutmeg in a large bowl at low speed until well blended. Stir in the coconut.
- Spoon into pie crust.
- Bake for 35 to 45 minutes or until the crust is brown and knife inserted in the center or the pie comes out clean
- Makes 8 servings



Recipe taken from *Celebrate Virginia* cookbook. The recipe comes from the family of Shirley Wells or the Chancellor Wythe Chapter of the DAR