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 Van Zandt Properties
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Message from Van Zandt Properties:

GET TOP DOLLAR FOR YOUR HOME!

Now is the time to list your home! Although inventory is up from last year, the influx of Tesla employees moving to the area along with the lower (for now) interest rates are facilitating the continued need for housing in the Bastrop/Smithville areas. We continue to see multiple offers, sometimes within hours of a home going active on the MLS. This can prove to be frustrating for buyers, but very lucrative for sellers. Many offers will come with waived appraisals - meaning the buyer will make up the difference in the appraised value and the contract price with cash.

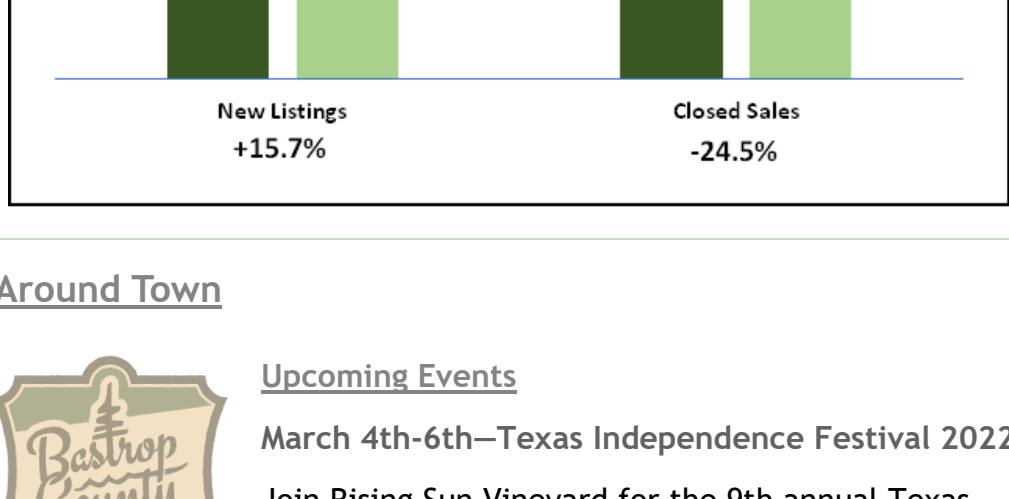
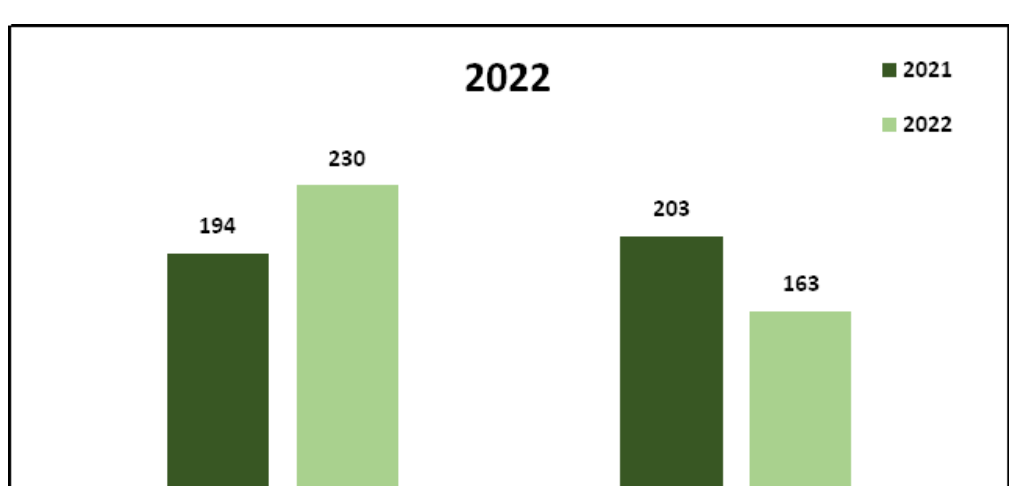
If you've thought about listing your home anytime in the near future - now would be the time to act!

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Bastrop Area Monthly Statistics

Below are the current home statistics for Bastrop County. The average home sale price for February was \$452,889, which is up 31.3% from the previous year. The average home sale price for 2022, so far, is \$434,907, which is up 28.8% from 2021.



Around Town



Upcoming Events

March 4th-6th—Texas Independence Festival 2022

Join Rising Sun Vineyard for the 9th annual Texas Independence Day Jam. Friday night, join us for Steve's famous red chili asado, campfires, and picking. We will have open mic Friday evening with Smokey. Bring your RV and stay for the weekend or camp with your tent on the hill then get up Saturday for a great lineup and Sunday for breakfast, Bloody Marys, and gospel music! As always, we'll have a picking circle and campfires to end the day. Saturday dinner pig roast and sides. *All food while it lasts. We'll have t-shirts for sale! You may purchase raffle tickets, donate, and tip your musicians, cooks, and staff with cash tip or Venmo. Bring cash - we don't have an ATM on site. For more information, [click here](#).

March 4th—4th Annual Fat Friday Crawfish Boil

Come enjoy authentic Cajun-style boiled crawfish by the pound, Cajun side dishes, Cajun desserts and lots of fun at Your Mom's in historic downtown Smithville, Texas! Meet the locals in a relaxed, fun atmosphere. Laissez les bon temps rouler in 2022! For more information, [click here](#).

March 5th-April 24th—Sherwood Forest Faire

Get ready for the 13th annual Sherwood Forest Faire, a medieval themed festival running for eight weeks in the rebuilt spaces in the woods near McDade, Texas. The event includes over 150 shows daily and 170 artisans. Enjoy the famed jousting contests, entertainment including musicians, magicians, jugglers, Legendary Heroes and much more. Join the pub crawl in 2022. Come dressed in theme (medieval or Fae) to soak in the atmosphere and compete in the costume contest with judges roaming around the faire to find the winners. Twelve more acres for campers have been added in 2022. Become versed in addressing royalty as you might get lucky and see Robin Hood, Maid Marion, Prince John and the Sheriff of Nottingham! For more information or to purchase tickets, [click here](#).

March 5th—4th Annual Home & Garden Show

Community Gardens, just west of Bastrop, Texas, will host their 4th annual Home and Garden Show on March 5-6 in 2022 with dozens of vendor booths, plant specials, food, drink, music and more. Kick off Spring with the show! For more information or to purchase tickets, [click here](#).

March 12th—Smithville Spring Break Color Run 2022

Come kick off the start of Spring Break with Smithville, Texas and Kona Ice for the first Spring Break Color Run with 5k and 1 mile routes. Participants will have access to tattoo and powder stations throughout the run through this historic town! Participants must register by Feb. 28, 2022 to be guaranteed a shirt (or goodie bag if that option was selected). After deadline, shirts are available while supplies last. To register, [click here](#).

March 12th—17th Annual Bastrop Empty Bowl

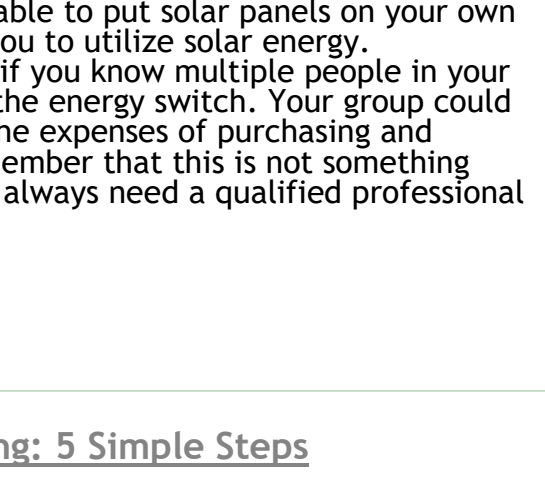
Eat soup, take home a ceramic soup bowl, hand-decorated and designed by Bastrop ISD students and fund a great cause. You also get to vote on your fan favorite! The Bastrop Empty Bowl raises critically needed funds to meet the need, provides attendees an opportunity to sample soups, stew, and chilies prepared by some of Bastrop's best chefs in a "battle of the ladles" for bragging rights. Celebrity judges will tag "bests" in each category. For more information and to purchase tickets, [click here](#).

March 19th—2022 Bastrop County Bridal Extravaganza

Explore the wedding resources available in Bastrop County, Texas for your destination wedding at this free bridal event with fun activities for everyone. Expect vendors, keynote speakers, fashion show, games, prizes and \$1000s in prizes at the Bastrop Convention Center. For more information, [click here](#).

Adding Solar Panels to a Home

The number of solar installations nationwide are predicted to quadruple by 2030. More people and businesses are contemplating making the switch to solar energy use. Are you thinking of going solar? Here are a few things you should consider before installation.



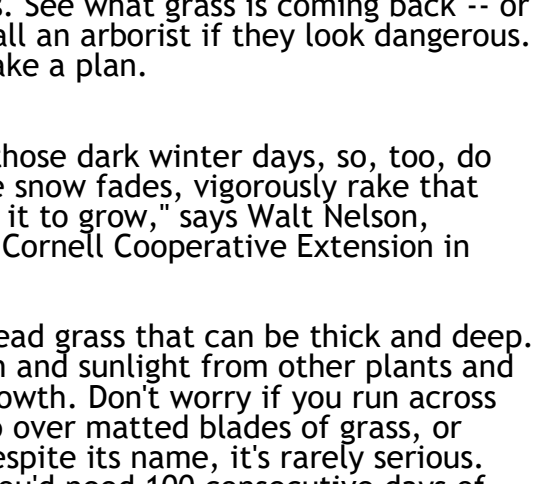
- Solar panels will work in all climates—just make sure that your roof is not too shaded
- by trees.
- Adding a solar energy system to your home will likely increase its value.
- Consider the age of your roof. Will it need to be replaced anytime soon?
- The cost associated with installing solar energy is going down.
- Solar panels reduce the amount of carbon and other pollutants your home produces.

If, for whatever reason, you are unable to put solar panels on your own home, there are other options for you to utilize solar energy. Community Solar may be an option if you know multiple people in your area who are interested in making the energy switch. Your group could buy into a shared system to cover the expenses of purchasing and installing a shared solar panel. Remember that this is not something you'll want to do yourself—you will always need a qualified professional to install solar technologies.

Preparing Your Lawn for Spring: 5 Simple Steps

By: Stacey Freed

Get out your rake to perk up your grass after its long winter sleep. Here's how to prepare your lawn for spring.



Jumpstart your lawn resuscitation as soon as the ground defrosts, and you'll avoid a muddy disaster zone later — not to mention ignite your neighbors' envy.

Here's how to prepare your lawn for spring:

#1 Assess the Mess

"As soon as you can stand being outdoors for an extended period of time, see what hand you've been dealt by Mother Nature," says Missy Henriksen, vice president of public affairs for the National Association of Landscape Professionals.

Case your property for thrown branches, dead leaves, and other debris. Clear it away so you're able to do a general inspection of your soil, lawn, trees, shrubs, and garden structures. See what grass is coming back -- or not. Get rid of broken tree limbs; call an arborist if they look dangerous. Now's the time to take stock and make a plan.

#2 Rake and Wake Your Grass

Just as you like to hunker down on those dark winter days, so, too, do your grass and trees. "As soon as the snow fades, vigorously rake that grass to wake it up and begin to get it to grow," says Walt Nelson, horticulture program leader for the Cornell Cooperative Extension in Monroe County, N.Y.

Rake out areas of thatch -- dried, dead grass that can be thick and deep. If you don't, thatch will keep oxygen and sunlight from other plants and grass. Check for fungus and mold growth. Don't worry if you run across "snow mold" -- a pinkish or gray web over matted blades of grass, or possibly just a slimy brown mess. Despite its name, it's rarely serious. Gently rake it out and it will dry. "You'd need 100 consecutive days of snow for snow mold to kill the grass," says Tony Koski, extension turf specialist at Colorado State University in Ft. Collins.

The grass may be a bit brown, but that doesn't mean it's dead. There are two types of grasses. "Cool season grasses green up in early spring. Warm season grasses green up really slowly in spring," Koski says.

#3 Weed Out Weeds

Finding a lot of crabgrass there? It's decision time. Will you avenge the scourge? If your crabgrass is out of control or you're just hell-bent on getting rid of it, here's what you need to know: Preventing crabgrass is all about timing. You want to nix the nasties before they start germinating. You need to use a preemergent crabgrass control before the soil temperature hits about 55 degrees and the crabgrass begins growing.

"But most people aren't walking around with thermometers to measure their soil's temperature," Koski says. "Blooming forsythia is a good indicator you should put out your crabgrass preventer. That will be a different time in Michigan than in Virginia."

You can choose a toxic or an organic preemergent such as corn gluten meal, but understand that with the organic, Nelson says, it will take two to three years of applications to be effective.

Oh, and if you're eager to get seeding, note that you can't put out grass seed until at least eight weeks have passed since you applied crabgrass control.

#4 Trim the Trees (and Shrubs!)

Move on to trees and shrubs as the world defrosts, but the garden is not yet growing. "Trim out the dead, and it's off to the races on another growing season," Nelson says. "You can do the shrubs on your own, but if you're concerned about trees, hire a professional."

The important thing about trimming is to "be careful about trimming growth," Henriksen says. "You want new growth to get healthy enough to sustain itself in case of a second cold snap." For flowering shrubs, wait until flowers bloom so you don't cut off limbs that will be producing flowers or fruit.

#5 Don't Forget the Mower and What-Nots

Winter is hard on other garden elements. Henriksen recommends making sure your irrigation system works properly, and checking to see if there's damage to any outdoor lighting. Fix broken or damaged patio furniture and any wooden structures. Even clean off and refresh your deck once it's warm enough that power-washing won't create a deck ice rink.

Don't forget to tune up the lawn mower and string trimmer. Clean, sharpen, and oil your pruning shears so they'll be ready when the temperatures start to rise.

Prepping the yard won't be just a single weekend event, but if you get the heavy lifting out of the way early, it won't be long before you're leaving your socks and boots behind, and feeling the warm, soft grass between your toes.

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