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# Look Before You Leap

## Northern Michigan Land Deals Need Checking

Don't let your vacation homesite become a local battleground. Check with local authorities before investing in northern Michigan land, a Michigan land specialist, advises Willard Bosserman, county extension director for Roscommon and Crawford counties.

"Most developers are honest and above board," he states, "but even the most honest individuals sometimes forget to tell prospective buyers about potential problems."

Bosserman says that some people have purchased options to buy land and were given quietism deeds. Later they found to their dismay that they did not own the property.

"Similarly, some persons have built \$30,000 homes on property which they later found out was not theirs," he notes.

"Demand an abstract and have it checked by your attorney. This is the only way you can be sure of a clear title to the property you paid for."

THE PRIVACY promised by a private road entices some prospective property owners, but a private road is not maintained by the County Road Commission, points out the extension director.

In a subdivision, it is up to the owner to contract for snow removal and to keep the private roads passable. Find out if the roads in "your" development are public or private.

Zoning is new to many northern Michigan areas. Several townships and counties are only now beginning the process of passing zoning ordinances. Bosserman advises prospective buyers to check with local authorities about zoning and building codes.

"Some individuals have purchased a lot with the idea of locating their mobile home on it, and later were confronted by a zoning official who told them they could not do so," Bosserman points out.

"Over zealous salesmen may promise lake or river access which turns out to be a state park already over-crowded. Or, the sales person may mean a road end access, which is a dubious means of satisfying the gleam in the purchaser's eye."

"Check with the local health department about locating a well and septic tank. They must be 50 feet apart. On some lots, it is almost impossible to obtain the necessary distance between the two."

Bosserman recommends a Cooperative Extension bulletin, number E-676, "Vacation Homesites." This publication can be obtained from the local Cooperative Extension Service office or by writing to the Bulletin Office, Michigan State University, P. O. Box 231, East Lansing, Mich. 48823.

## Addition Gives Family A Little Elbow Room

From the time he built his first crude shelter, man has found himself in homes a little too snug to contain his family comfortably, much less accommodate extra living and leisure activities.

In these days of tightened budgets, a five- to 10 thousand dollar item for a new room is beyond the reach of most families, so a remodeling concept that stretches rooms at modest cost is welcome news.

The \$600, do-it-yourself cost estimate for a versatile 6x8-foot addition known as the "elbow room" is possible because it uses existing electrical and heating joints, and needs no plumbing.

The easiest, most economical positioning for an "elbow room" is at an existing window or door, at least four feet wide. This means less wall area to remove and reduces header construction.

FIRST STEP is to decide how the room is to be used. Built on as a bunk room for children, it takes beds out of the way, leaving most of the bedroom space for play or studying.

Or the room can be a dressing area, freeing extra space in the master bedroom. Some persons may prefer a greenhouse off the family room, a sewing or crafts center, or a television-stereo entertainment area.

If the room is to be used as an art studio, for music practice, or for cluttered activities, bifold louvered wood doors may be added.

Built next to a family room, it adds versatility for entertaining.

Detailed plans and an eight-page color booklet of Elbow Room ideas are available for \$400 to \$600. A kitchenette adaptation costs more, because of appliances, plumbing and wiring.

THE ROOM is built on a slab or footings, finished to complement the house exterior, and has a shed or gable roof. Interior is western board paneling and various window treatments are possible. The elbow room was designed to conform to model codes.

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### Pool Builder Prefers Wood

One Northeastern manufacturer of ground swimming pools has built over 700 pools of pressure-treated wood with vinyl covering, plus pools of steel or concrete in the last seven years.

The builder prefers the wood pools and offers a 20-year warranty, based on knowledge the walls won't react with the vinyl and that there is no settling and cracking problem.

The wood pools also offer design flexibility, and shop fabrication reduces site construction time and labor costs.



"ELBOW ROOM" added to children's room provides area for bunk beds, free space for play, studying. Do-it-yourselfer can add 6x8 foot sewing center, home office-den, or greenhouse for under \$600. Booklet, plans are available for 25 cents in coin from Western Wood Products Assn., Dept. 545-6P, Yeon Bldg., Portland, Or. 97204.

## Plants Require Light

EAST LANSING Light is the key to successful indoor gardens, says William H. Carlson, Michigan State University horticulturist.

With the development of high-intensity fluorescent lamps, many of the problems faced by indoor gardeners have been solved, says Carlson. "Now plants that barely lived indoors can be grown quite easily."

According to Carlson, indoor plants have two basic lighting requirements: (1) day length - the amount of time the lights are on during each 24 hour period, and (2) light intensity.

For best results, plants used in indoor gardens should be illuminated for 12 to 16 hours daily. An electrical timer is the best answer for accurately controlling the length of time the lights are on. The timer can be set to turn the lights on and off at any time. For 16 hours of light, you can set it to turn on at 6 a.m. and off at 10 p.m.

Light intensity is measured in foot-candles (the light of one candle falling on a surface one foot away from the candle), and it is an important factor in selecting plants for an indoor garden, says Carlson.

"Select plants according to the amount of light you are prepared to supply," says Carlson. Plant type must also be considered when planning lighting. Foliage plants must be lighted from the top only. Flowering plants must be lighted from both on top and behind.

CARLSON OFFERS the following partial list of plants, and their light requirements, that are adapted to indoor gardens:

LOW LIGHT - to 500 foot-candles - snake plant (Sansevieria), Chinese evergreen (Alphonse), iron plant (Aspidistra), and dumb cane (Dieffenbachia).

MEDIUM LIGHT - 500 to 1,000 foot-candles - grape ivy (Cissus), rubber plant (Ficus), begonia metallica and Begonia rex and anthurium hybrids.

HIGH LIGHT - Above 1,000 foot-candles - African violets (Saintpaulia species), geranium (Pelargonium species), ivy (Hedera), marigold (Tagetes species) and cascade type petunia hybrids.

"As a general rule," says Carlson, "the higher the light requirement, the greater the number of lamps needed to keep the plants growing well."

He notes that the normal life of fluorescent lamp is about one year when it is operated 14 hours a day, and that lamps should be replaced as soon as the light output falls below the minimum needed for the garden.

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