



# Garden retail trends report

July 11, 2014

Garden Centers of America (GCA) has a renewed vigor and is continuing to expand the services available to you. As part of this expansion, we have revamped the whole concept behind our monthly newsletter. It is the goal of GCA to provide you with the information and resources to help you grow your business. Garden Retail Trends Report is designed to keep you on top of what's hot in retailing, both within the industry and out.

## GCA Hot Tip! New 'Mobile Circular' App Lets You Track What Your Customers Are Shopping For

Mobile technology is bringing the printed store circular into the digital age, giving independent garden centers a new way to reach customers and track what they want to purchase. The technology - a digital flyer platform called Flipp - was developed by Wishabi, a tech company founded in 2007 by former Microsoft engineers. The app's "flip" feature allows shoppers to navigate through circulars. They can look for a specific item, "clip" the offer and move it to their shopping list. They can also save your store flyer and share it with friends on social media - word-of-mouth advertising via an app!



Another feature to flip for - the app allows retailers to target circulars toward specific consumer groups. You manage the program through a computer dashboard, which updates you with weekly reports and data that points to what your customers are looking for so you can tailor your promotions. Plus, you'll know exactly when your customers download the app, rather than running up costs on printing circulars, hoping people pick them up.

Flipp is available for download through Google Play, Amazon Appstore and iTunes.

## U.K. Research Tracks the Way People Shop Garden Centers: First Impressions Set the Tone



New research shows how people move through a garden center when they shop, giving IGC retailers fresh insights on how to increase spending in-store. The research, commissioned by the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA) in the U.K., took place in two garden centers - one, a large destination garden center, and the other, a small plant-focused store. Researchers tracked the eye movement of 36 shoppers with glasses to determine what does - and doesn't - engage their interest.

Starting with the first steps in the store, signs and displays make a significant impact on shoppers, piquing their interest and setting the tone for the rest of the shopping experience, the research shows. When shoppers aren't engaged at the entrance, confusion may result. HTA recommends asking yourself these key questions to make sure your customers are impressed from their first steps in your store:

- Do your entry areas have visual impact and draw shoppers into your store?
- Does the use of color and/or smell relax shoppers or provide inspiration?
- Is it clear where shoppers need to go for what they need?
- Do your displays reflect the season and common reasons for shopping your store?



## Garden Retailing Gets a Masculine Makeover

While men have traditionally been viewed as the lawn mower-pushing doers of dirty work in the garden, don't count them out when it comes to choosing the plants and decor for their home landscapes. "Manly colors and styles" in home and garden decor are showing up in more garden centers, reports the *Monterey Herald*. The reason, it says, is the role reversal of fortune, where 40 percent of women are the sole or primary income-earner for the household and the number of stay-at-home dads is on the rise. Another sign of the trend: the renaming of fairy gardening to "miniature gardening." Men's upped interest in gardening is also evident at gardenbloggers.com, which keeps a list of male bloggers that has spiked in number.

## Now Trending in Garden Retailing . . .

- There's no such thing as "bad word of mouth." Even when a customer complains on social media about your store - doing so in a tactful way - you can benefit from the exposure, according to a study in the *Journal of Consumer Research*. **A brand that receives a polite negative review is perceived as honest, cheerful and down-to-earth.**
- Millennial veggie gardeners have arrived! **From 2008 to 2013, the number of food gardeners 18 - 34 years old rose 63% to 13 million**, according to research from the National Gardening Association. **Their spending on food gardening during this same time jumped 89% to \$1.192 billion.**
- Retail hiring is up. **The retail industry gained 8,000 jobs in May and 237,000 year-over-year**, reports the National Retail Federation.



## Shoppers Like Private Labels, So Put Yours Out Front

More shoppers are turning to private-label brands, according to new research from Market Force Information. Its study of more than 6,200 consumers shows 98 percent of shoppers purchase private label food items or cleaning products at least some of the time - up from 96 percent in 2013. With shoppers reaching for store brands more often, your garden center's private label products should be put out front. The key, says Market Force, is in-store promotion - shoppers frequently reported trying a private label brand simply because they noticed it on the shelf. Another positive for store brand products is the breadth of their appeal: Nearly 60 percent of the respondents reported household incomes of more than \$50,000 per year, and the age of respondents ranged from 18 to over 65.

## Three Reasons to Get Pinning

Want to include Pinterest in your social marketing program, but not sure how? Take a cue from Social Media Examiner, which describes three ways independent retailers can use Pinterest to their marketing advantage:

1. **Increase your brand authority.** Position your store as the authority on gardening by creating several Pinterest boards that provide useful and educational information while promoting your products in fun ways. You don't have to create all the content yourself. Instead, draw from a carefully vetted combination of sources to ensure your boards have the most accurate and useful information available.
2. **Expand your reach.** Leverage the community on Pinterest. Use group boards, and collaborate with popular pinners who have a large following to expose your brand and content to more people. Using group boards, Better Homes and Gardens has grown its followers to more than 379,000!
3. **Drive traffic to your site.** To make this happen, Pinterest users have to first be attracted to your pins and then repin them to their boards. The most successful pins combine images with content to solve a problem, inspire, offer something desirable or appeal to interest in a hobby or activity - like gardening.

## Look for These Chelsea Trends to Make Their Way Stateside

Get stocked and ready for these hot trends from London's Chelsea Flower Show to make their way across the pond to your customers' shopping lists this coming season (from allaboutyou.com):

**Interplanting** - Using ground cover in between areas of hard landscaping, such as paving slabs, brick and shingle, helps soften the edges of the hard boundary lines. This works in large yards and small urban plots equally well.

**Blue irises** - All types of blue irises were everywhere at Chelsea, including Iris Robusta 'Gerald Darby.'

**2014 RHS Chelsea Plant of the Year** - Hydrangea Macrophylla 'Miss Saori' comes with a romantic story to tell. It was bred by a young Japanese plantsman who named it after his fiancée, now his wife.

**Wild flowers** - Wild flowers were in many of the show's gardens, giving a rustic feel that evokes a country landscape.

**Grasses** - Swathes of grasses add lightness, movement and sound to the garden.



## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR GCA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS



### Save Big at IGC Chicago and IGC East!

GCA Members save \$100 on each IGC Retail Conference Passport registration during the early bird registration period, and \$60 off each IGC Show Monday Garden Center Bus Tour registration!

Other benefits include:

- Two free drink tickets per company for use at the events' receptions and concerts
- Special reserved seating at the concerts - be sure to come early, seating is limited!
- GCA Member Networking Lunch (Chicago only)

Log in to get your GCA Discount Code before registering: [Click here.](#)

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