

garden centers of america **Garden retail trends report**

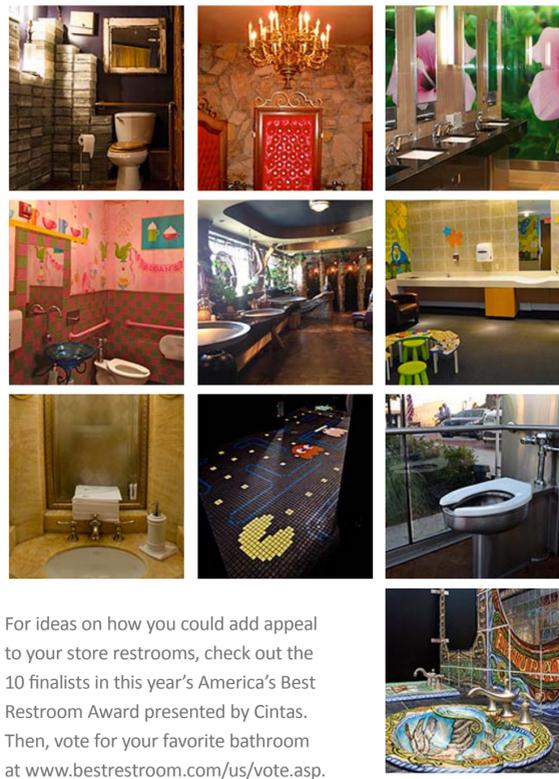
October 11, 2013

Welcome to GCA's New Monthly Newsletter

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.

These Restrooms Impress!

GCA's Best Garden Center Bathroom Awards have garden centers thinking of ways to spruce up their facilities to make them a more memorable part of the shopping experience. Customers are sending the message that clean, fun and creative bathrooms make a difference, and garden centers are sprucing up.



For ideas on how you could add appeal to your store restrooms, check out the 10 finalists in this year's America's Best Restroom Award presented by Cintas. Then, vote for your favorite bathroom at www.bestrestroom.com/us/vote.asp. Pictured here, from top left to bottom right:

- Viracocha - San Francisco, CA
- Alex Madonna Gold Rush Steak House - San Luis Obispo, CA
- Tampa International Airport - Tampa, FL
- Sloan's Ice Cream - West Palm Beach, FL
- Varsity Theater - Minneapolis, MN
- Westfield Garden State Plaza - Paramus, NJ
- Waldorf Astoria New York - New York, NY
- Ground Kontrol Classic Arcade - Portland, OR
- Public Glass Bathrooms on the Square - Sulphur Springs, TX
- John Michael Kohler Arts Center - Sheboygan, WI

Sweets Made On-Site Draw Gifters to Green's Nursery

Adding one-of-a-kind candies or cookies is a sweet offering that could help establish your store as a one-stop shop for gifts. It's working for Green's Nursery in Alice, TX, which recently started selling custom gourmet candy made on-site.



The garden center brought in gourmet candy maker Jennifer Rodriguez after renovating its break room into a kitchen to bring it up to code, reports

The Alice Echo-News Journal. Rodriguez makes her candy creations on-site each day, and takes custom orders for party treats. Her menu includes gourmet apples with several coating options, as well as chocolate-covered Oreos, strawberries, pretzels and bacon.



Make Your Garden Center a Discovery Zone for Trend-Seeking Millennial Men

Millennial men want products that are new and different, according to a new study from Complex Media. The study reveals that men within this young demographic, 18 to 34 years old, like to be the first to discover new things. And when they come across a "find," they are eager to tell others about it - word-of-mouth advertising for your garden center!

Get the attention of millennial men and help them become leading influencers of their social groups by offering rare, never-before-seen items that will make their living spaces stand out. Create a treasure trove of unusual merchandise at your garden center that this choosy group won't find at the boxes.

The study shows these young men shy away from trends once they've become widely accepted, with two out of three respondents saying mass media kills cool trends. Rather than looking to mass merchants to define their style, they're likely to travel off the beaten path to create their own identities. Speckling your displays with one-of-a-kind garden art from local artists is one way your garden center could appeal to this group.

Another reassuring point for IGC retailers seeking an end to price battles with the boxes: 81 percent of millennial men say they are willing to pay more for quality. And quality is what we do!

Now Trending in Garden Retailing . . .

- While some consumers complain that retailers are setting up Christmas displays earlier and earlier each year, the fact is, many are shopping long before Black Friday. Punchbowl.com reports that **40% of consumers begin their holiday shopping before Halloween**.
- North of the border, garden centers in Canada are preparing for a good 2014 season. **Statistics Canada reports a 1.6% increase in sales of lawn and garden products, equipment and plants this past year.**
- Gardening is tops with Brits over the age of 65. A recent Age UK poll of 1,200 in the age group revealed that **gardening is the most popular hobby, with 38% calling it the activity that gives them the most pleasure.** Are you inspiring this joy in your seasoned shoppers?

Seven Things to Do Now for a More Profitable Holiday Season

U.S. holiday sales are expected to increase 4 to 4.5 percent this year compared to last, according to a report from Deloitte. How will your store capitalize on the demand? The National Retail Federation's "Retail's BIG Blog" posted these seven tips for small retailers to maximize holiday sales, from American Express OPEN's Katie Washington, Director of Shop Small.



- 1. Create a stellar holiday marketing plan.** Tackle a variety of marketing platforms, including print and online advertising, holiday store signage, direct mail, e-mail marketing and social media. Grassroots efforts, such as networking at your local chamber of commerce or posting on local "mom blogs," are inexpensive ways to target customers in your community.
- 2. Plan special holiday events.** Store events give your customers a reason to shop your garden center. One event to consider this holiday season: Small Business Saturday, a nationwide initiative the day after Black Friday that encourages consumers to celebrate and support local independent businesses like yours.
- 3. Offer holiday deals and discounts.** Give your customers a reason to come to your garden center by running special product promotions throughout the holiday season. Offering a sacrificial "loss leader" to lure customers into your store is a tactic that typically leads to customers buying more.
- 4. Hire ahead of the holiday rush.** If you need to beef up your team for the holiday season, start the hiring process now. You will need to train them in customer service and product information, and give them tips on handling large sales volumes to get them ready for the holidays.
- 5. Make sure you have enough inventory.** Conduct a holiday inventory assessment to ensure you've ordered enough across your product categories to last through the holiday season. Make sure your offerings include a mix of specialty items that will separate your garden center from the boxes.
- 6. Use your store windows.** During the holidays, your store windows should capture what your garden center is about and draw customers in. Make sure your windows create visual impact, are well-lit and have strong signage, and that you use vertical and horizontal space to tell your merchandising story.
- 7. Promote holiday gift cards and gift certificates.** Research shows that holiday gift card giving is on the rise. Make sure your store is top of mind with customers who want to purchase a gift card by promoting them in all of your marketing efforts. Another idea: offer a small gift card to shoppers who spend a certain amount.

Indoor Plants Are 'In' Again

Indoor plants are seeing a renewed interest among consumers, as urban dwellers and suburban homeowners alike look for touches

of nature to brighten their interior spaces. Watch for your customers to ask about these five indoor plants, recently highlighted on *Better Homes & Gardens'* "Everyday Gardeners" blog:



Maidenhair Fern - This fern's airy, delicate texture adds a magical touch to any room or store display.



Philodendron "Orange Prince" - The tropical foliage on this plant spices things up with splashes of orange and cayenne color.



Pachira Aquatica - Encourage your customers' optimism with this "money tree," a symbol of good luck and prosperity.



Aphelandra - The dark leaves and white stripes on this "zebra plant" provide a stunning contrast to its vivid bracts.



Bromeliad - Bromeliads are exotic showstoppers.

Post-Recession Women Want Solid Reasons to Shop with You

Don't count on brand loyalty from post-recession women shoppers - you must resell your garden center to current customers and show prospective customers the value of your offerings, according to research from Bonnie Ulman and Sal Kibler for their book, *Hustle: Marketing to Women in the Post-Recession World*.



They surveyed more than 1,000 women to gain insights into what it will take to build successful post-recession marketing strategies, and found women who had to sacrifice and hustle to get through the recession are going to make you hustle even harder to get their attention now. They're still looking for the best deals and want to receive a good value for their money. Brand loyalty has been replaced with "brand surveillance," they say, where decisions are made based on referrals, deals and quality. At your garden center's Facebook page, give them detailed information about the products you sell - and solid reasons to shop with you.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR GCA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS



IGC Show Launches East Coast Edition, IGC East & IGC Chicago Set For Summer 2014

Even more benefits are on the horizon for GCA members!

The IGC Show will take place in two locations in 2014. IGC Chicago will convene, as usual, at Navy Pier on August 19-21, 2014. IGC East will make its debut August 5-7, 2014 at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center complex in National Harbor, Maryland, located on the Potomac River, just minutes from Washington, D.C., providing easy access to GCA members. Both IGC Shows will offer all the features and benefits the industry has come to expect: thousands of new products, free inspiring keynotes and headliner concerts, plus scores of spot-on conference sessions and networking opportunities at the GCA member lunch, as well as all of the GCA member discounts you enjoy in Chicago.

Watch for more details soon at www.IGCshow.com.