



## Garden Centers of America: Together We're Better!

### GCA's Key Connections: Member Profile Jay Meadows, President Meadows Farms Nurseries, Chantilly, VA

#### Meadows Farms Builds a Name on 'Best Plants, Best Price'



out there.”

Since the company's start more than 50 years ago, Meadows Farms Nurseries' No. 1 focus has been to stand out. President Jay Meadows points to one key that helps them in this mission: “We're different from other garden centers in that we're price-conscious,” he says. Customers consistently find “the best plants and the best price” at the retailer's 22 locations in Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland, he says. In fact, the stores' low-price guarantee assures it.

“The bulk of our advertising dollars are spent on direct-mail flyers, where we list products with percentages off. It's about shouting ‘percent off,’” Jay says. “We've got confidence in the prices we're putting



To help further distinguish the Meadows Farms brand, Jay, son of founder Bill Meadows, keeps a close eye on what other garden centers are doing during the GCA Summer Tours. “It's a great opportunity to really talk to other garden center owners - to see what they're doing and benchmark it against what we're doing,” Jay says.

Another way Meadows Farms makes its name is in the efficiency of the shopping experience at its stores. “We provide good informational signage, where the customer can read about the product without having to track down a salesperson,” says Jay. Quick checkouts are also essential: “Customers must be able to get in and out fast.”

Through the years, Meadows Farms has built its reputation on friendly, polite employees and a great delivery service. “It's important that customers feel appreciated for spending their money with us,” Jay says. “We want them to know we appreciate them. We thank them at least four times when they're in our stores.”



## Upward Trend In Landscape Design

Starting from Bill's idea five decades ago to sell produce door-to-door, Meadows Farms has grown beyond its garden center roots. Today, the company's landscaping division accounts for one-third of its business; the garden center and nursery generate the remaining two-thirds. "More and more people want us to do the landscaping for them," says Jay, who predicts an upward trend for landscape services. The landscaping division is expected to show even more growth than the retail division this season, he says.

The garden center and nursery may be growing in number of retail and landscaping service sales, but Jay's mind is far from expanding with more stores. It's been four years since Meadows Farms opened a new location. Jay says, "I think focusing for the next five years on growth at the 22 locations we have now, with a little less aggressiveness on opening up new locations, will be the company's direction."

