



Garden Centers of America: Together We're Better!

GCA's Key Connections: Member Profile Christie Gescheider, Co-owner Moana Nursery, Reno, NV

'Grow Your Own' Outreach Gets Millennial Families Excited About Gardening



With more than 280 acres of growing operations in Oregon, three retail stores and a unique partnership with Dr. Earth products, Moana Nursery provides everything needed to make the residents of Northern Nevada successful gardeners, especially in the area of organic fruits and veggies.

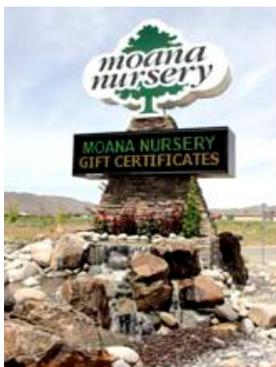
"Edibles are really huge for us, and we've been on the forefront in organics for years," says Christie Gescheider, who owns the garden center with her husband, Bruce. Now, they are using the demand for organic edibles to spread the word about gardening to young families.

They've found a meaningful way to promote "grow your own" organics to children through donations to community gardens and schools. We've partnered with Dr. Earth, which has a great line of organic products. We're one of the few retailers to carry every product the company has," Christie says. "We promote their products, and they help us out with donations of soil to these projects. We donate the seeds and garden plants.



"We've also been working with the Northern Nevada Food Bank, which shows other like-minded non-profit organizations how they can help their people build raised bed gardens out of repurposed pallets. We sent them all of the product to do two raised beds - Dr. Earth soil, vegetable seeds and plant starts."

To get young families of the Millennial generation into the craze, Moana also shares information about edible gardening on social media, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. "While we were on the GCA Summer Tour in San Francisco, we spoke with another GCA member about their social media strategies," Christie says. "Then, when we returned, we spoke to our ad agency about coming up with new ideas for Facebook, Twitter and



Instagram." Customers post pictures of their thriving edible gardens on Moana's Facebook page. "We've gotten photos of their harvests with a tagline that says, 'Thank you, Dr. Earth!'"



Moana also educates customers about organic edible gardening by hosting seminars and featuring information in its monthly newsletter. "We have some very passionate teammates who are involved in organic edible gardening at their own homes," Christie says. "When you can speak from firsthand experience, it makes a huge difference."

Keeping It Interesting

Since Moana grows its own, customers are assured the retailer's trees and shrubs will survive the local Nevada climate and growing conditions.

"We've got some great tree and shrub merchandising ideas from the GCA Summer Tour," Christie says. "In particular, we saw them made into a focal point - more of a specialty item. One of the best examples was at High Hand Nursery, in its Japanese maple section. Making them look special changes the perceived value."

Moana's retail stores, two in Reno and one in Sparks, sell a variety of hardgoods, green goods and garden supplies, and feature a Wild Birds Unlimited store-within-a-store. Multiple departments help ensure every need is satisfied: landscape and design, lawn maintenance, delivery and installation, holiday lighting, florist and retail.

"We're a pretty complicated business," jokes Christie at the extensiveness of Moana's offerings. "We've got a lot going on here. And that makes it interesting."

