



Garden Centers of America: Together We're Better!

GCA's Key Connections: Member Profile Theresa Riley, Co-owner/Manager Rockledge Gardens, Rockledge, FL

Rockledge Gardens: Never Stuck On 'The Same Old Thing'



GCA member and second-generation IGC retailer Theresa Riley is expanding on the dream her father realized more than a half-century ago with new product and merchandising strategies at Rockledge Gardens in Rockledge, FL. The family-owned-and-operated business, which started in 1960 with bulb farmer Harry Witte, is Brevard County's largest and most complete garden center.

Theresa credits the GCA Summer Tours for the inspiration to stock fresh new products and show them in new, creative ways. "We're always looking for new items and merchandising ideas. You can get stuck with the same old thing if you don't go see what other garden centers are bringing in," she says.

"Now, we're telling stories with plants by mixing colors and pottery for more of a showpiece instead of a straight-line display."

Connecting with other garden center operators during the tours is important, Theresa says: "Spending time on the bus with people from all over the country and hearing how they handle different aspects of the business is so helpful."

All of the advice, tips and strategies from Theresa's connections with other GCA members have paid off. Thanks in part to the ideas picked up along the way, Rockledge Gardens is now a destination for its seasonal and color-themed display gardens. The gardens change regularly and are designed so customers can easily replicate them at home.

"The best compliment we get is when people want to shop out of our displays because they love the way they look," Theresa says. "That means we've done our job right - we've merchandised it properly."

Spreading the Gardening Bug

Whether for advanced gardeners or those planting their first seed, Rockledge Gardens offers seminars and hands-on workshops to fine-tune customers'



gardening skills and share the latest design trends. “We want to be a place where customers feel comfortable and happy,” Theresa says. “We want them to discover the fun of gardening.”

She empowers her customers with monthly gardening education in-store, as well as online with expert gardening tips, “how-to” videos, FAQs from customers and specialized plant care information.

For kids, children’s workshops at the store teach the importance of gardening at an early age. “We have a Little Bugs Club once a month where we do an educational session and then kids bring something home,” says Theresa.

Rockledge Gardens works to ensure customers of all ages have a great experience at the store so they keep coming back. Theresa says, “We build personal relationships with our customers to make them feel like a part of our garden center family.”