



Garden Centers of America: Together We're Better!

GCA's Key Connections: Member Profile

Jon Kolozvary, Owner

The Greensmith Landscaping Co. Garden Center & Gift Shop, Hinckley, OH

The Greensmith's Continuous Growth & Unparalleled Excellence in Garden Retail



Serving the Northeast Ohio market, The Greensmith Landscaping Co. Garden Center & Gift Shop's mission is to grow with the community in Hinckley, OH, according to Owner Jon Kolozvary, pictured with his wife and business partner, Kristyn. "We want to make the community's gardens better through color and plantings, and we want to help our customers. We strive to create an atmosphere that is unique year-round."

The Greensmith, which was established as a landscaping company in 1994 then grew to include a retail garden center and gift shop by 2002, knows how to make the shopping experience extra special for each and every customer.

"We learn their names and the different activities they enjoy – they're just like family. We ask them about their personal lives to establish that relationship," Jon says. "We try to do more one-on-one with every customer, letting them know we're here to help if they have questions."

He knows the little things, like greeting every customer and helping them out to the car with their purchases, go a long way to create a unique shopping experience and a welcoming atmosphere. "We have customers that will come back two to three times in one day, and we joke with them that they're a VIP shopper," Jon says. "It keeps them excited to come in."



The Greensmith's operation consists of four buildings on the property. By the road, the two-story gift shop carries a mix of unique gifts from local artists and around the country, including some purchased from vendors at the IGC Show. Customers love the locally sourced gifts, as they prove to be the gift shop's bestsellers.

Located at the center of the property, the garden center stocks unusual varieties of perennials – another big seller for the retailer, annuals, trees, shrubs, hanging baskets, garden decor, supplies and more. Shoppers are drawn to The Greensmith for their custom container gardens year after year, when they bring their containers in for refreshed plantings that will make their friends and neighbors jealous.



Attached to the garden center via a covered walkway, the pottery barn teems with pottery and statuary. The last building, located to the right of the gift shop, houses birding and pet supplies; birding is a huge market in the community so this building is stocked with all types of bird seed, birdbaths and any bird accessories.

Since The Greensmith is located in a smaller area, the need to turn over inventory on a frequent basis is very high – that way the product mix stays fresh for customers and the IGC doesn't experience a loss.

"We do have smaller amounts of product, but we schedule more frequent deliveries, so it always looks good on our tables," Jon says. "We hear people say on a regular basis, 'You have the best-looking plant material we've seen.'"

Now, just because they have the best plant material and mix of gifts doesn't mean the retailer's prices are higher than most – in fact, it's quite the opposite.

"We educate our customers, especially Millennials, that our prices are competitive with the big box stores," Jon says. "We joined different buying groups to be able to purchase at a

bigger volume so that we can keep our prices the same as or better than the boxes. Also, we tell customers that we have unusual products they can't buy at a box store.”

Jon met some locally owned garden centers through his membership in Garden Centers of America (GCA), and decided to form a buying group, allowing him to make larger purchases that he wouldn't normally have been able to make.

The networking opportunities in GCA have opened up discussions between Jon and other independent garden center owners, covering topics such as what products have and have not worked, hiring reliable employees and other specific situations garden retailers face.



For connecting with other IGC retailers and finding the latest and greatest in product, Jon attends one of the largest trade shows in the industry, the IGC Show in Chicago every August.

“We focus on the IGC Show as our main trade show, and we take the Store Tour on Monday to get refreshed and see new ideas,” Jon says. “We love to see what other stores are doing every year, and when we go back to our store on Thursday, it feels like we're starting our season all over again.”

The Future is Bright



Jon's entrepreneurial spirit started at a young age – while he was in middle school, he started a snow-blowing business, then combined efforts with a friend to mow lawns in the summer and remove snow in the winter. By the time college rolled around, he knew he loved working outdoors and wanted to do something with his hands.

That's when a friend suggested he attend the Agricultural Technical Institute, a branch of Ohio State University, where he received hands-on training for landscape construction and design.

Using his technical training and his passion for the outdoors, Jon started a landscaping business. After his operation outgrew his original location, he decided to look for a property

he could grow in to. All the while, the thought of opening a retail garden center sat at the back of his mind.

Jon purchased the property in Hinckley for his landscaping business in 1998 from a former garden center. People would regularly stop in to browse the gift shop that was open at the edge of the road without knowing the old garden center was no longer there. By 2002, he made the decision to start offering plants and supplies for retail sales.

Since then, The Greensmith has evolved, encompassing the properties to the north and south, and growing with the community around it. Jon has his eyes set to the future and how he can continuously improve his operation for years to come.

This past winter, Jon added three new large steel shade units to house the store's tropicals, annuals and hydrangeas.



“Every year, we continue to expand the garden center and add more square footage for customers to shop,” he says. “We continue to advertise and pick up new customers that have never been here before. Every day, we have about a dozen new people stop in, and we inform them what we have throughout the seasons.”