

easing frustration

We talk about Mother Nature a lot in this industry, and for good reason. Everything from a few seemingly harmless rainy weekends in a row to much more detrimental flooding can take a toll on business.

I headed to Colorado the week after Mother's Day to visit garden centers — you can see some of the highlights starting on page 40. Every, single retailer was ecstatic — using words like record-breaking and mind-blowing — about the holiday weekend.

Then, just a few days after shoppers had made their purchases, the snow started falling. Some parts of the state got 6 inches; other areas in the mountains had 3 feet.

I know, I know. Many of you probably have similar stories from this year or those in the past. The reason, however, I bring up the weather is because I was beyond impressed with how each staff handled the flurry of customers I witnessed come through the doors.

They sold a lot of frost blankets but were also on their phones showing the cardboard box/plastic bottle/extra pot contraptions they'd used in their own yards.

Customers didn't seem frustrated, and I think that's because staff were everywhere to help. Not to mention they were running around trying to keep their plants safe at the same time.

You'll find one of my favorite "rules of customer service" on page 70. Whether you've heard of it or not, this dynamic duo from Zingerman's — which started as a delicatessen in 1982 and now consists of 10 businesses — puts a simple spin on it.

journey to the sale

The end goal for every interaction is not the sale — even though we know that's important.

On page 32 in "Getting Customers Excited," Susan Mertz talks about the number of resources available to give customers confidence in gardening and in what you're selling.

Then in Christina Salwitz's column this month (page 36), she tackles a topic that I consider her a professional at: container gardening. She mentions new recipes, but her main focus is on providing the customer with "creative" and "out-of-the-box" thinking.

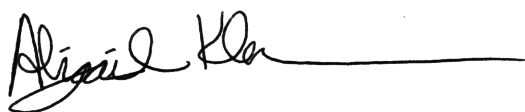
When I was talking with Bob Wasson from Wasson Nursery in Indiana after the grand opening of their newest location — see page 12 for more — he told me a story that drove home the point of the experience over the sale.

A man came in looking for a small piece they would never carry. Instead of just saying "sorry, good luck," Bob hopped on his phone, found it in stock at a store down the street and sent the customer away to make his \$1 purchase elsewhere but gaining a customer who promised to come back when he wanted what they do sell.

As a customer, I would've been ecstatic.

The same could be said about events, which in that same article you can read about approaching them as a use of marketing dollars. The sale is not always at the forefront, but people are in your store, so the likelihood of them making a purchase is higher.

In an ever-growing social world online, people are going to tell all their friends that your garden center is their favorite place to spend a Wednesday night, Sunday morning or whatever it might be.




Twitter: @lgrmag



Facebook: www.facebook.com/LGRmag

Abby Kleckler, managing editor
Phone: 616.520.2163 | E-mail: akleckler@greatamericanpublish.com



EDITORIAL

Tim Hodson
thodson@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2161
Editorial Director

Abby Kleckler
akleckler@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2163
Managing Editor

Jasmina Dolce
jdolce@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2162
Green Goods Editor

Ana Olvera
aolvera@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2171
Assistant Editor

Allison McKenzie
amckenzie@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2142
Multimedia Designer

Samantha Orsi
sorsi@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2148
Production Assistant

Kristina Howell
khowell@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2168
Creative Director

ADVERTISING

Bob Bellew
bbellew@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2164
Vice President, Group Publisher

Amanda McAdam Brown
amcadam@greatamericanpublish.com
708.560.4046
Integrated Media Consultant

Kim Sammartino
ksammartino@greatamericanpublish.com
630.901.4735
Integrated Media Consultant

Felix Schilling
felixschilling@sbcglobal.net
817.731.9352
Integrated Media Consultant

Kim Meyers
kmeyers@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2137
Classified Ads

STAFF

Melissa Gray
mgray@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2153
Group Marketing Director

Becky Stovall
bstovall@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2138
Audience Development

Courtney Coon
cculey@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2141
Custom Media Editor

Sally Ostman
sostman@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2136
Accounts/Billing

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Bob Wasson	Wasson Nursery
Crystal Cady	Sunflower Acres Farm & Garden
Kate Terrell	Wallace's Garden Center
Jonn Karsseboom	The Garden Corner
Pamela Baker	Baker's Acres Greenhouse
Lisa LeFevre	Distinctive Gardens
Jennifer Schamber	Greenscape Gardens
Stan Pohmer	Pohmer Consulting Group
Christina Salwitz	The Personal Garden Coach

CORPORATE

Kimberly Baker
kbaker@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2135
COO

Matt McCallum
mmccallum@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2133
CEO



Winner of 2010, 2012 and 2014 Silver EDDIE awards for Best Full Issue

