

BIG DEPARTMENTS, MINIATURE INVENTORY

Talk of miniature or fairy gardening as a trend started a handful of years ago in the industry, but for many of your customers, it's still a new concept. The inventory is unique, but these four garden centers have found successful ways of creating miniature gardening departments that are both functional as well as inspirational.

By Abby Kleckler

BEHNKE NURSERIES

Beltsville, Maryland

Behnke Nurseries has its miniature gardening nook close to the entrance of the garden center. One-of-a-kind, yet very basic, shelving units are the perfect size for the various figurines. They make it easy for customers to see what's inside while still keeping the small products organized.

The display garden in the center of the department is eye-catching to anyone walking past and can easily be altered to give it a new look. Signage on the table reminds people these are fragile items that should stay on the table.



DUTCH MILL GREENHOUSE

Marysville, Ohio

The Fairy Village at Dutch Mill Greenhouse has become a popular attraction for customers since it was first created at the end of the 2014 season. The village is constructed of logs from a local tree that was removed. It started out as just a place to set the items out, but over time the logs/tree stumps became covered with moss, houses added and fairies moved in. This is a centerpiece in the store and attracts shoppers whether they are fairy gardeners or not.

The village features a few different scenes including a farm, a campfire and a gnome house. Dutch Mill Greenhouse likes to add some seasonal items as well. In these images it's set for summer with a party tent, American flag and lounge chair for fairy sun bathing. The plant material is temporarily added here and there but is removed for watering and care.

Surrounding the village is the rest of the Fairy Garden items; Dutch Mill Greenhouse's most popular item this season has been the mermaid and beach theme gardens.



VILLAGE GREEN

Rockford, Illinois

Village Green has something for every miniature gardening lover. Inspiration is key in their designs with unique “planters” including a tire swing, old grill, picnic basket, window box or tabletop.

Customers are encouraged to shop from the displays, but there are also well-labeled baskets full of items.

Also on display are grab-and-go options in more traditional containers priced at various price points that could make for the perfect gift item. Signage is descriptive throughout the department to encourage even the newest of miniature gardeners.



OAKLAND INSIDE & OUT

New Albany, Ohio

Oakland Inside & Out has a lot of fun in its 120-square-foot Fairy Garden Fun area. This year, gift manager Kriss Rogers, decided to leave the commodity approach behind and create mini vignettes on small round tables that replaced the larger bins and tables that housed its miniature garden department.

The layout is inviting to shop and is located in front of a secondary entrance from the garden center. Rogers says the customers usually greet them with a “wow” when they enter the department. Rogers has seen that the trend in miniature gardening is anything but tiny and the really unique thing about it is that it appeals to all age groups from young children up to and including their grandparents. Once they get started it becomes an activity they can do together.

Customers will always stop in to see what’s new, and Oakland Inside & Out updates the displays seasonally and displays tiny tropicals and succulents as well as all the extras like moss and decorative stones and gravel in the department to encourage add-on sales. **LGR**



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