

# spotted unexpectedly

People can purchase plants seemingly anywhere nowadays. I've come to expect them at farmers markets and even at the smallest of grocery stores near the register. Two places, however, recently caught my attention.

The first place that had me scratching my head a bit was Dave & Busters, a restaurant and arcade. You could trade in 1,000 tickets won through the games for a small basil or oregano plant.

These plants were right next to candy, footballs, glasses and dozens of other novelty items. I tried to find out if the herbs were a popular trade-in, but all I got out of the woman at the register was that she sold two in the past week.

The second place made much more sense to me. I was in Temecula, California, for a wedding — home to more than 40 wineries. We pulled up to one in particular, and I noticed immediately how immaculately landscaped it was and how the flower boxes around the patio were stunning.

I then noticed a cart full of plants through the tasting room, and sure enough, the nursery that had done all the containers for the restaurant was selling them.

I didn't expect to see plants for sale at either of these locations, but I loved that they were targeting the consumer that may never walk into a garden center — or at least not until they're introduced to growing something.

## eat, drink and garden

Getting people to see gardening as part of their lifestyle is key. On the Garden Centers of

America Tour in June, I thought Anderson's did an incredible job with this.

We were at Anderson's newest location — with Sage Kitchen, a full-service restaurant and bar — in Virginia Beach, Virginia, on a Wednesday evening.

After our reception ended, we looked around and there were dozens of people from the community outside on the patio listening to live music, enjoying a meal and watching their kids run around on one of the cutest swing sets I've seen (inset).

I talked to one couple who said this was their first time out here, but they'd heard incredible things from friends and just had to check it out.

I asked if they were gardeners, and the wife said,

"No, but I did see a couple plants I may get on my way out." They also flagged me down as the whole group was about to leave to tell me that they were going to come back.

They didn't come to shop, but they were spending money and had such a great time they wanted to make this garden center part of their lives.

We'll have more on Anderson's and all of the stops from the GCA Summer Tour in an upcoming issue of Lawn & Garden Retailer, but in the meantime, you can see some highlights on social media and at [www.lgrmag.com/inspirationbook](http://www.lgrmag.com/inspirationbook).

Speaking of inspiration, don't miss the six finalists for the 2017 Merchandiser of the Year competition on page 10!

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