

Moving Forward

As I write this in mid-October I'm just starting to put my garden to bed. While the tomatoes have long since peaked, I'm struggling to keep my admittedly very late-blooming zucchini and squash alive and producing fruit. (Transplant shock and weird summertime weather resulted in a later than usual harvest and I'm just not ready to call it quits.)



At the same time, my thoughts are on next year's plot and what new additions to include. Cucamelon? Tomatillos? Something that will actually deter squash bugs and beetles? What was your favorite vegetable to grow in 2020? Shoot me an email at tmcpherson@greatamericanpublish.com so that I can have a new favorite in 2021!

Speaking of new additions, this issue includes our annual roundup of recent award-winning varieties. We know it can be challenging to decide which new varieties to add to your benches when there are hundreds of thousands to choose from. Turn to page 16 to see the varieties that were found to have the greatest potential and most reliable performance.

Also in This Issue

It's no secret that COVID-19 has had a dramatic impact on the way we use our outdoor space. Customers want to improve their outdoor space to make it a comfortable and safe gathering spot for family and friends. On page 22, I chat with Tom Partipilo, outdoor living buyer at Lurvey Garden Center in Des Plaines, Illinois, on how to merchandise outdoor living products and what he sees for the category in 2021.

On that same theme, we've collaborated with sister publication Gift Shop magazine to produce the Garden & Outdoor Living Lookbook, beginning on page 32. The products in this special section will help your customers create an outdoor experience as comfortable and inviting as any indoor space.

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas ... at least in some IGCs. Based on your social media shares and newsletters, many of you have already begun to kick off the holiday season.

Of course, the holiday season will look decidedly different this year for garden centers.

"While COVID-19 changed how we merchandise and made us look at traffic patterns in ways we'd never imagined, but it also showed us just how life affirming a garden center delivery from an online purchase can be," writes Christina Salwitz in this month's Dirty Secrets column. Flip to page 12 for some tips and ideas IGCs can use to merchandise holiday items.

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