

A Drive Down Memory Lane

It's not every day you drive your car into a garden center. But if you're in Ann Arbor, Michigan, you can do just that at Downtown Home and Garden, a century-old retailer located in the heart of downtown. Growing up in town, I have admittedly not-so-fond memories of being a young girl and driving with my dad through the warehouse part of the garden center to pick up whatever materials he needed for home projects and waiting for what seemed like an eternity when he "just ran in for a few things."



Once I had a house of my own, though, I could understand spending hours in the greenhouse and attached housewares department shopping for plants and kitchen tools.

A trip back this past summer gave me the opportunity to revisit the store and once again admire not only the quality of merchandise in the store, but the way it's presented as well. Stepping through the flower-decorated doors felt like walking into a museum gift shop, with high-end and everyday items for the kitchen, home, pets and more.

My self-guided garden center tour also included stops at Turner's Garden Center a few miles down the road in Ann Arbor, Bordine's in Brighton (coincidentally with my aforementioned dad), and KBK Garden Center in Saline. Turn to page 28 for photos.

Also in This Issue

As we wind down 2021, it's time to plan for the next season. Beginning on page 16 is our annual list of award-winning varieties from various industry associations. These plants were tested in trial gardens and wowed judges with their color, size, adaptability, disease resistance, and tolerance to extreme weather.

Speaking of extreme weather, 2021 certainly provided some challenges to both home gardeners and IGCs. "Adapting to a Changing Climate" on page 32 provides some tips and ideas for garden centers that are dealing with climate challenges.

Gardeners overseas are increasingly looking for plants that can tolerate weather extremes as well. Peter van Rijssen of Plantipp and Concept Plants says the next generation wants to have a better footprint for the world and plants that are water wise and pollinator friendly. Turn to page 20 for a look at some of the varieties that are popular with European gardeners.

What varieties have been the best sellers in your garden center this year? I'd love to hear about it! Drop me a line at tmcpherson@greatamericanpublish.com.

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