

# *IGCs Share Merchandising Tips*

Inspiration can come from many places — here, three garden centers share where they find ideas for merchandising and tips for other IGCs.

By Teresa McPherson



## What do you plan to do in 2022 that's different from 2021?

**Jessie Jacobson, President and Owner:**

2021 is the year of the supply chain challenge. We plan to just roll with it as we move into 2022. Take product as it is available. Stock up on items we know we will have 100% sell through. Pay early to take advantage of discounts. Continue to build and strengthen relationships with our solid vendors. Buy what's available now from smaller vendors. Continue to source product from local vendors and work with our current local vendors to develop new product releases and assortments. Continue to search out antique and vintage items. Take it on the road — connect with "local" vendors that might not be local to us. Order large batches and jump in the truck planning garden and plant shop stops along the way, plus antiquing for found items and objects. What could be more fun?!

## What's your favorite merchandising technique?

**Jacobson:** All-time favorite technique is 80% cleaning, 20% talent. Always have a bucket with warm water and Simple Green, microfiber rags,

Swiffer duster, and a shop vac.

I have never been formally trained in merchandising, but these are some of the terms we use in store to merchandise:

**Crate and Barrel** — Line it up, like things together, easy to see, select and shop quickly.

**Color stories** — Always have neutral, seasonal and trend color stories.

Pretty always sells. Period. Amen.

If you don't have it, you can't sell it. It's not fun to shop if your shelves are empty and void of fresh, new product.

Just because you can, doesn't mean you should. Step away from those croaking frog door stops.

**Grab and go** — Feature seasonal items in a predictable place so customers can grab and go. Seasonal containers, giftable arrangements, hostess gifts, teacher gifts, etc.

Everyday items with seasonal touches. Make sure to have a balance or items that can be used and enjoyed all year long. Seasonal items tell the story of the season without being too themed or specific. Think Jack-O-Lantern planters (just don't do it), turkeys (maybe a few), Santas (only handsome ones, and never stuffed). You can tell a seasonal story without being so specific or just like the

store down the street. Not everyone recognizes or celebrates the same holidays, but everyone wants to have a beautiful home.

Decorate for the season, not just the day. Case in point for above.

Merchandising, product assortment and displays must support our mission: to enrich lives by creating plant inspired experiences as we connect everyone to beautiful spaces.

## Do you tie certain categories in with in-store events or sales?

### How?

**Jacobson:** We make sure to have product to sell that supports in-store events. Events are planned to support the sales of our mix of merchandise. Events have to serve one or all of three purposes: 1) Drive sales, 2) Educate customers about the products we sell, and 3) Build community.

## Tips for merchandising green goods?

**Jacobson:** Most of your green goods inventory can be lined up on benches as long as it's clean, spaced and easy to shop. Dedicate about 10-20% (I just made up that statistic) of your space to mixing fresh product with hardgoods or containers. Place plants in decorative containers lined with a plastic saucer so the container stays clean. Make sure your watering or merchandising team takes plants out of containers to water and care for them, replacing them in displays after they have time to drain. Use a tray, crate or large saucer to gather and present the plants you are presenting in bulk for the grab and go customer. Don't use plastic flats in cross merchandising.

## Where do you get inspiration for displays?

**Jacobson:** Instagram, fancy hotels, travel, plant shops. I look for the bones, not necessarily the product. Fixtures, architecture, flooring, tables, hutches, wall coverings, etc. Big, beautiful and timeless display pieces. Walls, lighting and fixtures will sell more product than pop-up displays, vendor displays and hardware store shelving.

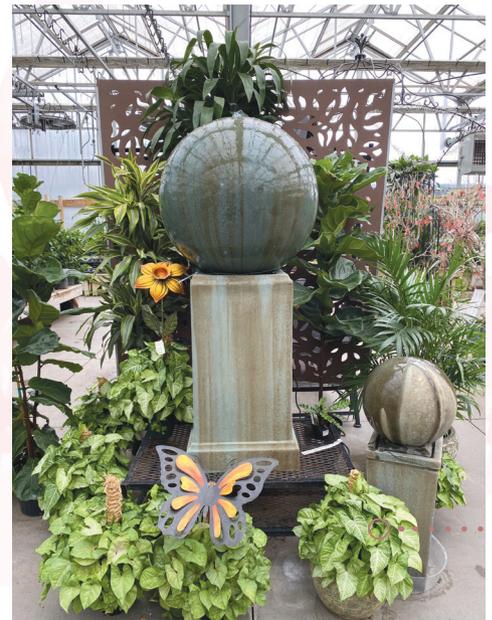


## Tonkadale Greenhouse

Photos courtesy of Tonkadale Greenhouse

# Wallace's Garden Center

Photos courtesy of Wallace's Garden Center



## What do you plan to do in 2022 that's different from 2021?

**Kate Terrell, General Manager:** Lots of things — raise prices, eliminate slow turning SKUs, change displays more often, and find ways to move people through our entire store (it's big — we sit on 10 ½ acres; the nursery lot is about 1 ½ acres, and the main greenhouse is 30,000 with additional production greenhouses. The actual store is probably another 20,000) and not just go to one area.

## Do you tie certain categories in with in-store events or sales? How?

**Terrell:** We are not currently doing in-store events. We do change endcaps to feature seasonally appropriate items. We have identified certain categories (houseplants, pottery and candles) that we always have full inventory and look good with new product coming in every four to six weeks (more for houseplants).

## Tips for merchandising green goods?

**Terrell:** We pretty much take the approach of having our green goods neat and organized with a few key displays. For our nursery, we worked with Proven Winners to build customer benching and customer signage to highlight pollinator plants, shade-loving plants, deer-resistant plants, etc. In our houseplant area, we have focused on more signage and creating inspiring groups of houseplants mixed with fountains, pottery and garden decor.

## Where do you get inspiration for displays?

**Terrell:** Lots of other garden centers (Tonkadale, Blumen Gardens, Pettiti, Chalet Nursery), but also places like Magnolia Farms in Waco and the unique downtown areas like Galena, Illinois, and Holland, Michigan.



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## What do you plan to do in 2022 that's different from 2021?

**Peter Mezitt, Owner:** More focus on native plants. Get ecommerce up and running well for us.

## What's your favorite merchandising technique?

**Mezitt:** Green goods need to be mixed with contrasting colors and textures to create displays that stand out more so customers can see eye-catching combinations

## Do you tie certain categories in with in-store events or sales? How?

**Mezitt:** Yes, in many different ways all the time.

## Tips for merchandising green goods?

**Mezitt:** See above. Also signage, mixing with decorative hard goods like benches, statuary, etc.

## Where do you get inspiration for displays?

### Other stores?

**Mezitt:** We look at all types of businesses to get ideas.

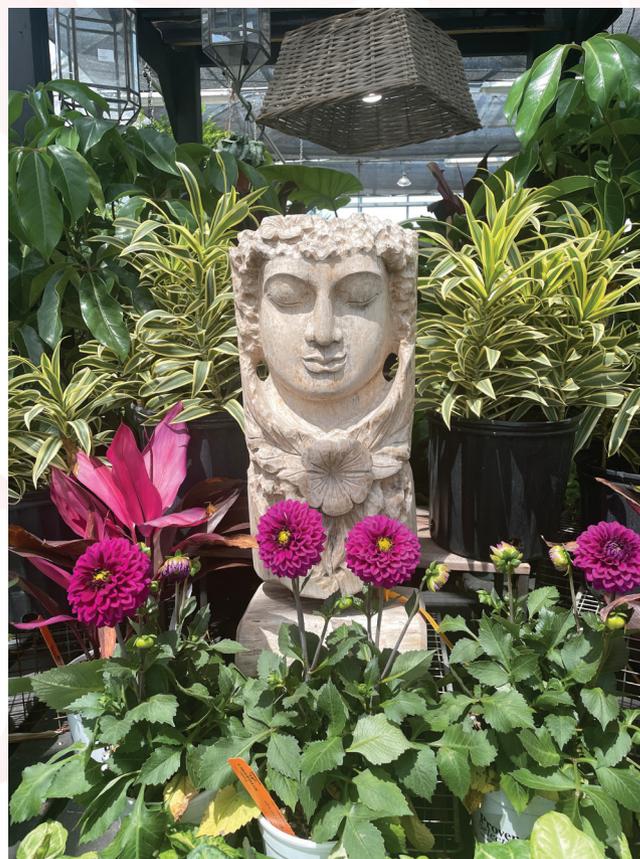


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