

# Working Together

I love the synergy that I see at so many garden centers. I've written in the past about how collaborative the green industry is, and it's especially true when it comes to supporting other small businesses. Whether it's the food truck stationed in the parking lot at a special event or on a busy spring Saturday, or the locally sourced gift items stocked on the shelves inside the boutique, or the message board covered with fliers about local businesses, garden center people love to support their communities.



I had the pleasure this month of asking two such garden centers — Bob Berbee, owner of Leo Berbee Bulb Co./ Dutch Mill Greenhouse in Marysville, Ohio; and Jake Scott, garden center manager at Piedmont Feed & Garden Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina — about their work with other local businesses and why it's so important to them. They both cited the desire to build connections with other local businesses.

"When you shop in a small business, you might meet the owner or see their children working. You get to know people. This is not something you would experience in a big box store," Berbee says. "We live in the same community as our store, so we walk the walk — we go to other local businesses and we show up to community events. That is the support that people will remember."

Turn to page 14 to read the story.

And while we're on the topic of supporting each other, we are highlighting Hicks Nurseries' 32nd annual Flower & Garden Show, which took place this spring. Eleni Roselli, director of marketing, says the show was inspired by a peer group that had several members who hosted a garden expo each spring, with local vendors and other businesses set up for a weekend gardening event.

"Seeing their success, we decided to give it a try to get customers into the store pre-season and stimulate sales," she says. "We invited our vendors in to speak directly to our customers and showcase new products. We featured small gardens that accompanied those booths.

Built from scratch each year in a 20,000-square-foot greenhouse, the event includes over 3,000 plants and 200 different varieties. She says about 35,800 people attended this year.

Find more details and photos of this and past year's shows beginning on page 12.

How is your garden center supporting other local businesses? I'd love to hear about it! Drop me a line at [tmcperson@greatamericanpublish.com](mailto:tmcperson@greatamericanpublish.com).

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