



# A Gem of a Market

The jewelry industry is hot right now. Should you test the waters of this fashion-driven market?

By Carrie Burns

*You already know that any time you can bring people into your store it means more money, but have you thought about using more than plants and fertilizer as bait? Many garden centers now carry home décor and gift items as a regular part of their offering. What about other items? What about products that are not usually considered garden products...things like pet supplies and gourmet food? These kinds of ancillary categories are proving profitable for garden centers around the country.*

*"Developing Markets," a monthly series that will appear in each issue of Lawn & Garden Retailer, will profile eight of these potential new markets, giving insight into the health of the market, relating how other garden centers have mastered the category and profiling some of the best new products in the category.*

**January: Pet Supplies**  
**February: Gourmet Food**  
**March: Tabletop**  
**April: Linens**  
**June: Stationery**  
**July: Personal Care**  
**August: Jewelry**  
**November: Collectables**

**T**he past few "Developing Markets" topics have been minimally present in our industry for a few years — gourmet foods, stationery, tabletop. This month's market is a little bit different; jewelry in a garden center? I know, it may sound a little crazy, but hear me out before you dismiss the idea.

If there is any industry that is succeeding right now, it is the jewelry industry. According to a Cost of Doing Business Survey performed by Jewelers of America (JA) and *Professional Jewelers* magazine, respondents reported an overall increase of 4.4 percent in sales in 2003. The chain stores recorded a growth of 10 percent; independent high-end and mid-range retailers jumped 6.7 and 4.1 percent respectively; and designer/artist/custom stores (which would likely be what you would be classified as) reported a 1.5-percent increase. "This marks the first time since 2000 that overall respondents enjoyed sales growth, and the first time since 1999 that respondents in all four survey categories reported growth," stated the survey. The survey also reported that the designer/artist/custom stores had the greatest growth in median profitability at 11.7 percent.

Is this something you should get into? Jewelry is fashion, and the fashion industry moves fast and is quite risky. You should know that carrying jewelry will require a keen



Fashion or costume jewelry may be the best product selection for a garden center, as seen here at Boxwoods Gardens & Gifts, Atlanta, Ga.

eye for coming trends and their acceptance within your community. Read on to find out just what I am talking about.

## PRODUCT

First thing's first. The world of jewelry is a large one, filled with fine jewelry and fashion jewelry — also known as costume jewelry. So, how do you decide what to carry? When carrying any new category, you always want to remember that you are a garden center, and, in this instance, not

a jewelry retailer. Think about what products your customers would feel comfortable buying from you. Diamonds, emeralds and sapphires would probably not be the best options, as many of the jewelers who carry these items are certified to do so.

Fashion or costume jewelry, however, is the biggest rage lately, and would probably be more successful at a garden center. Garden centers are known for carrying out-of-the-ordinary or non-commodity-type items; the same



### CUSTOMERS

Who will be your customers? Most of us would say women, which for the most part is right. We've all heard the saying, "Diamonds are a girl's best friend." There is some truth to that. Women love jewelry and are the primary bearers of jewelry. But don't forget whom these women are hoping to get jewelry from — men. So, you have to market to both women and men.

While women are usually the ones wearing jewelry, men are getting into it as well, with earrings, necklaces and bracelets. But look at your customer base — most are probably women, so carrying men's jewelry may not be successful. A suggestion

would be to carry a few unisex items. One of the hot trends you may be carrying is the rubber wristbands, which started as a money-raising effort for charities but has expanded to include everything from sports teams to local schools. Wristbands are becoming a fashion statement for men and women. This trend, however, could be disappearing soon, so it is up to you to know when to get out and look for the next trend.

### DISPLAY

Atlantic Garden Center has the right idea when it comes to placement within the garden center. While some of the past "Developing Markets" may tie into gardening (i.e., gourmet food near the grills, tabletop near the outdoor furniture, etc.), it will be a stretch to tie in jewelry with other products. The best placement for a product such as this would be where everyone will see it. Most customers venturing into a garden center wouldn't even think to find jewelry, so you

should go for jewelry. Turquoise, shells and other fashion jewelry seem to be most popular with small specialty stores, such as garden centers. Beaded necklaces and bracelets are also big hits right now. And don't forget about pins and brooches. The vintage look, whether it be in necklaces or brooches, has made its way into the "trendy" stores as well.

As with any product you sell, you should always keep your customers' likes in mind when shopping for products. Atlantic Garden Center, Virginia Beach, Va., looked to its demographic to decide what kind of product to carry (see sidebar, right). Beach-themed jewelry sells great for Atlantic, since the garden center is located close to the beach, and its customers are beach-goers. Look to your area and what it is known for or what is the latest trend in the community at the time. Does the city hold a specific festival every year, such as a cherry festival or a popcorn festival? Search out jewelry that will be of interest to your customers.

Jewelry in the garden center can be successful; Atlantic Garden Center, Virginia Beach, Va., has done just that. I talked to Jane Crowell, co-owner of Atlantic, to find out how she handles jewelry in the garden center.

**How long have you been stocking jewelry?**

Let's just say, a year and a half.

**What made you decide to add jewelry?**

Because I love it. And because I found some really good prices, and I just felt confident that it would retail. But mainly because I love it, like every woman in the United States.

**How much space do you devote to it?**

I have just moved it onto a fixture. Oh boy, this is hard to describe. I took one of Bench Systems' octagonal or hexagonal benches and put another bench on top, so two layers; I have it all on that bench system by the register right now. I just moved it because I thought that it was a little bit slow, and I wanted to put it in a new spot. In my opinion, you need to keep it near the register, where people are just milling around and they're going to look, rather than deep in your gift shop.

**What kind of jewelry do you sell?**

Well, what I did the very best with is items that pertain to the beach — bracelets with flip flops, necklaces with flip flops, earrings and keychains, because that's big in my area. I also have some jewelry for the red hat ladies. And then I just have general jewelry (i.e., jewelry that has tennis balls on them, etc.).

A lot of these bracelets retail for \$8.99. We're not talking good stuff.

**What is your philosophy in choosing the products?**

Well, I guess the biggest philosophy is do I think it's going to sell. And, I've looked at my clientele.

**What products sell best?**

I do all kinds of jewelry, but if I had to tell you what my best selling would be, I would say jewelry that pertains to the beach. And then I have other beach jewelry that might have different beachy things on them, a beach chair, etc. You know, just stuff like that.

**What kind of margin do you get?**

Keystone. That means you get double your money at least. I would always get double. And that's what I get on all of it, without a doubt.

**Who is responsible for product selection and helping customers?**

Well, I am. I have another girl who works for me and then, of course, any employee, cashiers, everyone. I have one employee, though, in particular that works in the gift shop. But there's no one person in charge of jewelry.

**Does this category bring people into the store more often or when they wouldn't otherwise be there?**

I couldn't say that. I wouldn't know the answer to that question. I don't know [of any]. I wish I could tell you I did [have customers coming in to ask for the jewelry], but I don't.



Atlantic Garden Center looks to its community's interest when deciding what products to carry.

## DEVELOPING MARKETS

have to show it to them, even when they're not asking. The checkout area or gift department would be great places to display jewelry.

### RESEARCH

As with any category, research of the industry and its trends is critical to success. The fun part about this research is that you can do it by watching television: Watch the award shows, soap operas or any other recently filmed television show to see what is hot. For example, if you were selling jewelry right now, you should know that chandelier earrings are hot again, and you would know that just by keeping an eye on celebrities and such. Also just look around when you're at the mall or at a festival; it won't be hard to spot what is hot.

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## RESOURCES

### Magazines

*JCK*

[www.jckgroup.com](http://www.jckgroup.com)

*Modern Jeweler*

[www.modernjeweler.com](http://www.modernjeweler.com)

*National Jeweler*

[www.nationaljeweler.com](http://www.nationaljeweler.com)

### Associations

International Fashion Jewelry and Accessory Group  
[www.ifjag.com](http://www.ifjag.com)

Jewelers of America

[www.jewelers.org](http://www.jewelers.org)

### Trade Shows

Aug. 13-18, 2005

New York International Gift Fair  
New York, N.Y.  
(800) 272-SHOW

Aug. 28-29, 2005

West Coast Jewelry Show  
Los Angeles, Calif.  
[www.californiajewelers.org](http://www.californiajewelers.org)

Sept. 7-11, 2005

International Fashion Jewelry & Accessory Show  
Warwick, R.I.  
[www.ifjag.com](http://www.ifjag.com)

Nov. 19-22, 2005

Mid-South Jewelry & Accessories Fair  
Memphis, Tenn.  
[www.gift2jewelry.com](http://www.gift2jewelry.com)



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### 1. Mitten clips

Mitts Clips consist of a stylish 7-inch beaded chain, designed to secure mittens to the cuffs of coats. Mitten-shaped pewter charms adorn nickel-finished clasps, linking the beaded chain to each mitten. Beads are hand-strung to create one-of-a-kind designs. Annabelle Noel Designs. (866) 886-9901. **Write in 1521**

### 2. Wildlife jewelry

This sterling silver jewelry is inspired by the culture and wildlife of Bali, Indonesia. Many pieces are available, including earrings, bracelets, pins and more. Sue B. Designs. (888) 832-2037. **Write in 1523**

### 3. Gardener jewelry

These 14 Carrot Designs feature clever, garden-themed sayings and colorful hand-painted floral motifs. Pieces are available as pins, earrings, necklaces and barrettes. Several retail display units are also available. Asli Arts. (800) 950-2754. **Write in 1527**

### 4. Pet jewelry

Swarovski crystals, faux turquoise, jeweled hearts and silver conchos embellish these Italian leather collars. Handcrafted in Germany, these custom-designed collars are available in a

## DEVELOPING MARKETS



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variety of styles: City Girl Black, Sun, Sand and Buried Treasure, At Home in Denim and Diamonds, Western Adventure, City Girl Pink, Highland Suitor, Raspberry Fields Forever and Mini-Starlight. Collars range in size and are available with matching leashes. Lulu Jane. (800) 321-3085. **Write in 1522**

### 5. Beads

Goddess Beads are colorful big gems tied with leather that measures 35 inches long, but they can be tied short or worn long. Dogeared Jewels & Gifts. (310) 528-6919. **Write in 1528**

### 6. Pin

The "Bead-It" Ladies are custom created by request. The whimsical faces are hand-made from Fimo, and their bodies are a unique combination of glass, crystal and/or pewter beads. Many themes are also available, such as gardening and sports. LL Beads. (770) 443-6484. **Write in 1526**

### 7. Charms

Chick Charms are designed for the girls. Twenty-four charms are available, including girl-power themes, such as Boy Crazy, Bomb Shell, Daddy's Little Girl and Heartbreaker. Metal Morphosis Inc. (404) 607-8307. **Write in 1524**

### 8. Bracelet

The Humanity Bracelet is crafted of traditional pewter chosen for its classic heritage and finished with a layer of silver, then hand polished and brushed for a rich matte finish. It bears 14 enduring virtues, one virtue on each side. It is also available in sterling silver, two-tone and 14K gold. LHH&F Inc. (212) 758-2324. **Write in 1525**

### 9. Earrings

This violet-themed earring set is just one of the 14 new pieces introduced in the Spring 2005 collection. The line fuses two traditional craft forms, porcelain and silver, some of which are also embellished with handset Australian crystals. Rhodium-plated and sculptured necklaces, earrings and pins have also been added. Franz Collection. (847) 364-6540. **Write in 1520**

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