

# 'TIS THE SEASON FOR IDEAS



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**W**e are back again for our second installment of *Lawn & Garden Retailer's* "Christmas Retailer." It was such a hit in February that we wanted to give you more info to help make your Christmas selling season more successful. I know at this point in the year you have almost everything purchased, but this is a good chance to learn about some additional trends and merchandising ideas so you will have the latest information when working on your displays. Hey, there may even be a few last-minute products you will find that you might want to order just in the nick of time.

Christmas is the second largest selling season for many garden centers in the United States. Every year I travel with a number of the owners and employees touring garden centers, and I hear how they want to make it even bigger and better than the previous year. Christmas takes a lot of planning and organizing. There are tons of tiny ornaments and knickknacks to keep track of, poinsettias to water and trees to decorate; yet garden centers do it every year, and customers love it.

Coming up with new ideas is not necessarily the easiest thing to do, especially when Christmas traditions are so established. How do garden centers manage to come up with new displays or events? One major thing I have been hearing is that many garden center retailers visit other retail outlets and use their ideas. Visiting Pottery Barn, Crate & Barrel and even large department stores really seems to help. They work with home décor year-round when many of these garden centers do so only seasonally or on a limited basis; therefore, these other stores know how to appeal to the décor customer, giving garden centers a chance to learn.

Another suggestion is to tour around and see what other garden centers in the country are doing. Garden Centers of America holds a holiday tour every year (for more information visit [www.gardencentersofamerica.org](http://www.gardencentersofamerica.org)) in November. The association picks a large city and spends three days touring garden centers to see their take on the holiday. Attendees leave with pages full of ideas.

Finally, read magazines, during the holidays; consumer and even trade magazines are packed full of ideas on how to implement new and fun things to do. You may have to get the magazines this Christmas and hold on to them until next year, but if it has some great ideas, what is a little more space in the filing cabinet? In this issue of "Christmas Retailer" we have a few display ideas of our own on page 36. "Inspire New Tradition" talks about implementing themed trees in the garden center. Also look for "Animated Figures: Moving with the Times" on page 40 for some ideas on adding animated figures to your décor.

We want "Christmas Retailer" to help you better your Christmas season. We all know that as soon as spring is over you may want to shut the doors and take a six-month sabbatical on the beach, but not everyone can do that. Christmas is a way to bring people back into your store after spring in order to show them you are much more diverse and can supply more than just bedding plants and perennials to them once a year. The more information we can provide to help you do that, the better; whether it is showing you new products or helping you get design ideas or bring in more customers, we are at your service, and don't hesitate to let me know what information you need to make your garden center a successful winter wonderland. ❄️

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