

THE IGC SHOW PREVIEW

It's circled on your calendar. Now learn why The 2012 Independent Garden Center Show is a must-attend.

Editor's note: The IGC Show is produced by IGC Retailer and Garden Chic. Lawn & Garden Retailer is not affiliated with the IGC Show.

According to many, summertime in Chicago is rivaled by few. The busy city is buzzing with activity. A day of window shopping the Magnificent Mile, paying a visit to a world-class museum and then sinking your teeth into a slice of deep dish pizza is nothing more than the tip of the iceberg.

And what about possibly the most important Windy City attraction for you this summer?

After a busy spring season, your team needs a good recharge. Luckily, the 2012 Independent Garden Center (IGC) Show — which returns to Chicago's Navy Pier from August 21 to 23 — is quickly approaching.

With new products, countless educational opportunities, innovative on site buying and brand-expanding keynote speakers, this year's show promises to get you primed for 2013.

Hot Mic

As homegrown vegetables and herbs remain popular with today's consumers, the IGC Show's

Spotlight Keynote couldn't be more relevant. Celebrity Chef Rick Bayless will celebrate consumer demand for edible gardening during his keynote. Bayless is the chef and restaurateur of award-winning Chicago restaurants, host of his own PBS television series and the author of a number of best-selling cookbooks.

Don't miss as he explains the opportunities available to IGCs from the grow-your-own movement. He'll touch on how Gen X and Gen Y are led to their garden through their kitchen, and how patio tomato enthusiasts are landscape gardeners in the making.

Additional thought-provoking keynotes include: Corey Bordine, "It Really Isn't That Hard, or Is It? Animals Get It — You Need To"; Joe "Gardener" Lamp'l, "Gardeners Want to Go Green — Show Them How"; and Joseph Pine, "The Experience Economy: What You Need to Know to Profit."

In the Zone

Featuring 100-plus exhibitors with creative and innovative offerings, the New Vendor Zone is located in the peak-visibility area connecting navy Pier's main trade show floor to the Grand Ballroom.

"These are the ground-breaking offerings that will distinguish independent garden centers from the boxes down the street," says Jeff Morey, IGC Show co-founder.

"When you walk the New Vendor Zone, you'll not only find brand new products, you'll experience the 'wow' factor of new ways to display them," adds Cheryl Morey, IGC Show co-founder.

Go Home Smarter

Bolstered by more than 40 retail visionaries, this year's event features a full 53 hours of the high-quality education focused on proven profit strategies led by eight track leaders: Rick Segel, "Winning the New Consumer"; Russell Brumfield, "Using Scent to Sell & Compel"; John Connel and Kevin Waters, "IGC Trend Spotting"; Kyle Lacy, "IGC Retailing in a Digital World"; Robert Hendrickson, "Your Store 10 Years from Now"; Judy Sharpton (with P. Allen Smith), "Our 'Buy Local' Advantage"; and Tom Shay, "Manage to Make More Money."

This year's IGC University conference will highlight seven new tracks, with six sessions in each track. Morey says, attendees participating in the new IGC University sessions "will take a wealth of successful strategies back to their store."

Turning It Up to Eleven

Who said you can't mix business with fun? The IGC Show Classic Rock Concert Series welcomes Dennis DeYoung, a founder of the legendary rock band Styx, to the Grand Ballroom Stage.

"Dennis DeYoung: The Music of Styx" will showcase the band's greatest hits spanning the '70s, '80s and '90s, performed live by DeYoung and his six-piece rock band. **LGR**

The Early Bird
In response to buyer demand for more time to shop the event's 1,000-plus vendor booths, the first day of the IGC Show will open at 12 p.m., (Tuesday, August 21) — two hours earlier than last year — and remain open until 6 p.m.

Chicago Style Advice
For additional information on the IGC Show, vendors, speakers and entertainment, visit www.igcshow.com. And if you're coming from out of town and would like a little Windy City advice — whether for dining or entertainment — feel free to get in touch with anyone on the *Lawn & Garden Retailer* staff ... we're local!