

History in Black and White

Many independent garden centers have a rich family history that many of your customers may know little about. Why not show them?

By Pete Mihalek

Time is on your side. Actually, history is on your side. As an independent, family-run business, you have an inherent advantage.

With stories of great grandparents selling flowers out of the back of a pickup truck to old photos of the original storefront and greenhouses — you have enough nostalgia up your sleeve to make any customer proud to call your garden center their own.

So what are you doing to display this rich family history of yours? Consider dusting off the old photo albums and picking out a few select prints that help tell the story of your business.

Finding Your Proof

In 2010, St. Paul-based Linder's Garden Center celebrated 100 years "of quality and tradition." This storied family business didn't celebrate on one given day that year, but chose to spread out the anniversary celebration over the entire year.

Linder's Lill Linder said an anniversary budget was in place and she took on the task of bringing her family's history to the forefront and share it with their loyal customers.

"I rounded up a number of old photos and scanned them," Linder says. "I looked for some of the oldest pictures I could find that showed what the area looked like before Linder's was even built. Then from there, we wanted to make sure my dad was in it, and grandpa, just to represent the generations."

Linder supplied the scanned photos to a local sign and banner shop, which in turn transformed small black and white photos into striking, poster-sized memories throughout the property (bottom right).

In addition to archiving purposes, scanning old photos of this type is a great idea for preservation and can also save a few dollars in the enlargement process.

"We've gotten plenty of feedback from it," she says. "We've seen that our customers like to see that family pride. They liked knowing how long

the family and the business have been around and in the area."

While the resized photos from this 100-year-old garden center came in a variety of sizes, Linder says most of the large banners (canvas-wrapped and vinyl/weather-resistant) were approximately \$100 to \$200, but can vary in cost greatly depending on size, material and protection.

"We felt the cost was justified because we can continue to use these through the years to show our history." **LGR**



Sky Nursery, Seattle, WA



Garland Nursery, Corvallis, OR



Linder's Garden Center, St. Paul, MN