



# Maintaining a Sparkling Display

Keeping your containers, statuary and fountains clean is a major part of giving your garden center that extra shine.

By Catherine Evans

**W**hen you walk into any retail store, whether you know it or not, you are affected by the atmosphere; and for most people a clean atmosphere makes them more comfortable, encouraging customers to shop longer and harder. The same goes for your garden center.

Store space and merchandising styles certainly vary from retailer to retailer, and not all containers, statuary and fountain display suggestions are applicable to all stores. Some dealers display the above items en masse, while others use carefully crafted vignettes. Regardless of presentation, if fountains are on display, at least some of them need to be running to attract the consumer's interest, and damp concrete/stone is an invitation for dirt and algae.



Keeping your statuary and fountains clean need not be a major expenditure of time and effort, but it does need to be a priority. A focus on frequent, regular maintenance will keep fountain displays sparkling. Henri Studio's was nice enough to work with us on this article, sharing a lot of the recommendations given to their garden center customers about keeping containers, statuary and fountains clean.

We all know that it is hard to keep a garden center free of dirt and grime, especially in the spring when there is so much going on. It is also very time consuming to check and clean every container, statue and fountain to make sure it is gleaming. However, just because it is a busy time of year or the task is time consuming doesn't mean that cleaning product and displays are not vitally important. Just imagine going into a clothing store and looking through the latest spring fashions and seeing dirt, lint or anything else on the clothes that is not supposed to be there. Are you going to pick up that garment and buy it looking like that? I didn't think so. It is the same principle with keeping your items clean. People want to buy something that looks nice, that they can imagine in their yards, not something dirty and dingy.

## INSIDE DISPLAYS

Although inside displays may not be possible in all or even most cases, a few fountains situated in high-traffic areas throughout the store can have a nice impact. The sight and soothing sound of flowing water lends an air of tranquility to the environment, and the plants, rocks, flowers and other material used in the display can be cross merchandised with additional product offerings. Above all, these working display "scenes" romance the image, sparking the consumers' imagination and helping them to readily visualize the containers, statuary and fountains in their homes.

Inside displays are the easiest to maintain, since wind, weather and debris are not a factor. An occasional dusting should be enough to keep statuary free of dirt. The real maintenance issue with interior displays is wet and dirty floors from fountain over-spray combined with dirt tracked in on people's shoes. The best way to reduce maintenance, as well as potential falls, with interior fountains is to surround them with a non-slip surface that does not show dirt, such as gravel or cobblestones.



### Pottery

This terra cotta is hand turned or shaped by artisans who have been practicing their craft for generations. The pottery then undergoes an aging process in greenhouses, resulting in the appealing look of old English pottery, and the moss is real. When the plant is watered, the terra cotta wicks moisture to the moss, and it continues to grow, forming a green surface over the entire pot. Campo de Fiori. (413) 528-9180. **Write in 1480**

### OUTDOOR DISPLAYS

The reality, though, is that most containers, statuary and fountains are displayed outdoors, where the retailer has ample space. In this case, wind and sun will accelerate evaporation of the running water, and fountains may be prone to collecting some dirt and debris over time.

However, the advantage of outdoor displays is that they can be quickly revived. As needed, take the following steps to ensure that your products stay clean and enticing to your customers:

- Using a garden hose, simply rinse out the bowl, clearing any debris, and replenish the water supply. Use a soft brush to scrub out any stubborn dirt.
- If a fountain has stopped working, check the pump for clogs. If necessary, remove the filter screen and manually spin the impeller to restart the pump. Damaged or broken pumps or impellers are easily replaceable.
- If white calcium stains or lime deposits have formed from hard water, using a fountain or statuary cleaner is a very simple and effective way to remove them. Simply apply the cleaner to the stained area, allow it to work, brush lightly and rinse away. The same is true of algae stains.
- If a finished product becomes faded over time, a light coat of a sealer spray can do wonders to revive the depth and detail of the original finish. After cleaning and draining the product, simply apply a light coat of sealer to the surface, using gloss or matte finish spray, depending on the original finish of the fountain.

We all know running a garden center is not the easiest thing in the world to do. It would be a much better universe if we could all just sit back, sell plants and call it a day, but unfortunately it does not work that way. Garden center maintenance is one of the more difficult and unfun parts of the job, but in order to keep sales high, cleanliness is a huge factor. Sure, it is a garden center, and there is going to be dirt, but consumers know where it is supposed to be and where it is not supposed to be. 🌱

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### Cement art

Artisans have painstakingly recreated old world masterpieces by hand, crafting a finished product that is closer to art than architectural accent. Add a touch of timeless old world elegance and charm to the outdoor living environment with the Estate Package, pictured here. The Village Stoneman. (312) 543-7097. **Write in 1490**



### Planter

The original Chippendale Planter is constructed from durable, solid pine, and each planter is smoothly sanded and hand assembled. Painted styles feature three coats of exterior grade paint, but the planters are also available in natural-unfinished. All planters come with a one-year guarantee. DMC Products. (866) 362-8700. **Write in 1483**



### Statuary

Lions, dragons and gargoyles are just small samples of the new fountain and statuary products available. All of the handcrafted pieces are created by artists in England. There is no mass production. Architectural and custom work is available upon request, and you can choose from a variety of finishes. Rococo Gardens. (704) 332-8374. **Write in 1488**



### Planter

These red planters are one from the newest line produced in the AW Studio. There is a variety of colors and textures suitable for indoors and out. AW Pottery. (770) 220-2900. **Write in 1478**





### Planter

The Mediterranean Planter, as with all others in the Island Planters line, is manufactured through a specialized rotational process using only virgin resin to ensure strength and purity while resembling authentic clay pottery without any of the weight or durability issues. Island Planters. (305) 468-8644. **Write in 1485**



### Hanging baskets

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### Planter

As part of the British Baskets & Bracketry Collection, this large planter will complement annuals and climbers for an attractive deck or patio. The Hookery. (800) 248-4002. **Write in 1489**



### Finial

This English finial measures 16 x 27 x 16 inches and has an acid-washed copper finish. Kansas City Art Statuary. (888) 261-3929. **Write in 1486**



### Pot

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### Hanging planters

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### Planters

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### Pottery

This collection of pottery is imported directly from Thailand, Vietnam and China. Shown are a few of the many styles, textures and colors that are available, which includes a unique selection of glazed and rustic pots, jars and planters. Asian Ceramics. (626) 449-6800. **Write in 1477**



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