

TINY GARDENS CREATE BIG RETAIL OPPORTUNITY

Stick with a simple recipe to elevate your tiny garden program.

By Siena Randall and Jennie Cottam

Wouldn't it be nice if life were as seemingly easy as it is in a whimsical fairy garden? Peaceful, breathtaking, enjoyable, relaxing, soothing, perfect. These are all thoughts that come to mind as we gaze into these little tiny environments. It's where we want to be, physically, mentally and emotionally.

Tiny gardens are a growing trend, literally and figuratively, because they are a visual reminder of what we experience in a real-life garden, and we can take them with us.

While there is a lot to love about the whimsical beauty and magic of fairy gardens, a tiny garden is a limitless concept of creating amazing tiny living spaces in a variety of themes and styles.

Think of them as tiny landscape designs. They're a model or vision of a space where you would see yourself spending time. The possible themes you can create are endless: a coastal desert escape, a tropical paradise, a modern geometric garden, an English cottage garden, an arid Mediterranean environment, and on and on.

The vessel that holds your tiny landscape is another point of interest. You could really let your imagination go wild thinking outside the pot.

So the question now becomes: How can retailers use tiny gardens to create selling opportunities?

FIVE CRAFT KEY ELEMENTS

Here are five key characteristics of tiny gardens to keep in mind when considering whether to offer tiny gardens in your store.

1. Appeal to All Ages

Venture beyond the fairy garden and create tiny, sophisticated spaces in a variety of themes. Casting a wider net will appeal to a broader range of ages and increase your potential in this category.

2. Go Indoors or Out

As a retailer, you know that offering products for both indoor and outdoor use is a way to maximize choices for your customers, and it extends your selling seasons. By selecting tiny plants appropriate for indoor use, you can expand your tiny garden line.

3. Decorate the Home

Consider merchandising tiny gardens in multiple areas or departments of your store. In addition to being sold as plants, they can be positioned as items for decorating the home. Why not design seasonally themed tiny gardens so your customer needs one for each season?

4. Make a Lasting Gift

Who wouldn't love to receive a tiny oasis on a special occasion? With a little extra effort, tiny gardens can become a customizable gift option for your shoppers.

5. Perfect for DIY:

Offer short workshops for your customers and teach them how to make their own tiny gardens. Post DIY photos or quick videos on your website that demonstrate how to achieve a specific theme or style in a tiny garden setting. Consumers love it when they can achieve success even if it is with something small and simple.

HAVE A PLAN

Each of the above five characteristics could spin off into its own tiny garden program. In this ever-changing retail market, consumers seek products that fit their lifestyles, relate to an experience and add value to their environment, so have a good plan in place for what your tiny gardens will look like, how you will promote them, who your tiny gardens will attract, when they will be available and how often the product line or offering changes.

Rather than arbitrarily bringing in tiny gardens and placing them on an end-cap or

shelf, tease your customers with a "coming soon" announcement. Invite your best customers to an exclusive preview event and pair tiny garden planting with wine tasting. Encourage them to pre-order, and let them know ahead of time when you'll have something new. Get creative with packaging ideas, and use creative merchandising methods. Start a Tiny Garden Club, or cater to the seasons to keep your customers coming back for more.

Your program will only be as good as your plan. And, well your plants.

PICK THE PLANTS

Yes, let's not forget the plants! Obviously, many of us are in this because of the plants. The way we see it is tiny gardens aren't just another way of selling plants but another way of crafting really cool products with plants. Since they're the heart and soul of the tiny garden, you'll want to carefully choose a diverse selection of plants.

The good news is you can rely on innovative nurseries like EuroAmerican Propagators for the research and testing they've done to find the best plants for planting in tiny gardens.

They've compiled a list of varieties ranging from foliage, grasses and succulents to annual color and perennials. Many are slower growing, have appropriately sized flowers and foliage, and are easy to care for.

With an extensive array of plants to choose from, you'll be able to infuse your tiny gardens with a plethora of shapes, textures, heights and colors.

Include plants that will act as ground covers, look like miniature trees and shrubs, provide vertical elements, mimic movement and, of course, flower with color.

Regardless of what tiny garden products or programs you decide to sell, be creative, think outside the pot, and put your heart and soul into it. By sticking with that simple recipe, you're sure to be successful. Stay calm and tiny garden on. **L&GR**



(Images provided by EuroAmerican Propagators)

tiny varieties

Aeonium Crassula

TipTop *arborescens*
Princess Pine *muscosa pseudolycopodiodes*
Hobbit *ovata*
Baby Jade *ovata arborescens*

Dianthus

Witch Doctor *hybrid*
Love Doctor *hybrid*

Echeveria

Blue Atoll *hybrid*
Black Prince *imbricata*
Topsy Turvy *runyonii*

Fenestraria

Baby Toes *aurantiaca*

Festuca

Elijah Blue *glauca*

Fuchsia

Autumnale *hybrid*

Lamium

Ghost *maculatum*

Lotus

Amazon Sunset *hybrid*
Flashbulb *hybrid*

Lysimachia

Superstition *congestiflora*

Nassella

Mexican Feather Grass *tenuissima*

Nematanthus

Oxalis

Sagina

Sedum

Sempervivum Sutera

Thymus Trifolium

Shady Ladies Mae *hybrid*
Shady Ladies Marlene *hybrid*
Shady Ladies Heidi *hybrid*
Zinfandel *vulcanicola*
Irish Moss *subulata*
Scotch Moss *subulata aurea*
Fine Gold Leaf *hybrid*
Variegatum *kamtschaticum*
Variegatum *lineare*
Ogon *makinoi*
Pink Jelly Beans *rubroinctum*
Dragon's Blood *spurium*
Tricolor *spurium*
hybrid
Gold n Pearls *hybrid*
Marzipan *hybrid*
Elfin *serpyllum*
Dark Dancer *repens*

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