

Cabin Fever

Just because summer vacation is ending, you can still provide your customers with many memories of the past season by carrying the right products.

By Catherine Evans

As summer comes to a close and the kids head back to school, families are reflecting on the fun times they had over the summer. Family vacations, camp, picnics, etc. are still on everyone's mind as the best times of the year.

One thing many families do in the summer is go to a summer home or the lake house. That is where the rustic nature feel comes into play. A lot of consumers want to hold onto that summer feeling of having fun with the kids at the lake, camp fires at night and roasting marshmallows. Kids who spent the summer at camp are feeling the same way; it was so much fun that they just don't want to leave the memory behind.

While I was touring garden centers this summer, one major trend I saw was the rustic nature theme. Cabin-themed merchandise, rustic-colored (browns, greens, yellows, etc.) items being sold as well and people were buying them in droves. It is like the consumers wanted to take that cabin vacation and bring a piece of it home to remind them of their good times.

There are birdbaths, rugs, statues, décor and so much more that consumers are craving. Garden centers have been jumping on the bandwagon and riding it all the way to the cash registers.

Yes, there always has been the hunting, fishing and log cabin trend but this is a major expansion on that. It is something families can sit around the dinner table and reminisce about or tell friends about when they come over for an end of summer shindig.

It is sad to see a good time end, but then you can start focusing your customers on keeping the tradition with the rustic merchandise in your store which just may lead them into the fall mums and décor and then maybe even in the holiday merchandise when it comes out.

When it comes to trends and what is new in retail, there is a world of new opportunities you can play off of. Just use a little creativity, read all sorts of magazines and books, watch all of the trend shows and see what the designers are working on. Go on instinct and creativity and you will be right on top of the trend every time. ☺

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1. Fiberglass fountain

This hand sculpted fiberglass fountain may also act as a birdbath. It measures 24 x 24 x 35 inches and includes a pump. Alpine Corporation. (360) 426-4562. **Write in 1444**

2. Moose head décor

This life-size moose head is a sampling of the many grapevine sculptures available. This moose design comes in three sizes. Carleen and Company. (877) 459-0404. **Write in 1446**

3. Candle

This soy-based kitchen candle is intended to be a natural way to eliminate odors from cooking at home. Fresh Wave. (800) 662-6367. **Write in 1449**

4. Chair cushions

These custom-made cushions have marine grade hardware that attaches to chairs. They are available in forest green and royal blue. The Bear Chair Company. (800) 421-1406. **Write in 1445**

5. Decorative sculpture

Hidden Beauty is one of the newest designs by Ohio sculptor George Carruth. It can be used as a decorative piece for the home or garden. Hand cast in stone, it is offered with a lifetime guarantee. Made in the United States, it is available gift boxed. Carruth Studios. (800) 225-1178. **Write in 1447**



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MARKET WATCH

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6. Adirondack chair

The Acacia Adirondack Chair measures 27 inches wide, 37 inches high and 34 inches deep. Made of Acacia, this medium-density hardwood is intended to renew quickly in a range of soils and variable climatic conditions. All hardware is anodized for weather resistance. Whittier Wood Products. (800) 653-3336. **Write in 1453**

7. Iron planter

This fluted urn features a yellow rust color. It measures 21¼ inches in diameter and stands 22¾ inches tall. Ceramo Company, Inc. (573) 243-3138. **Write in 1448**

8. Clay pots

High fired at 2,300° F, these clay pots are hand made in Vietnam. They are manufactured to withstand all outdoor and indoor conditions. Pots may be used as water fountains, planters, decorative items and more. Tinh Khoi Pottery. (512) 961-3650. **Write in 1452**

9. Bronze statue

More than 1,000 handcrafted statues are available. A large selection of sea life, wildlife and monumental bronze statuary is available in heights ranging from 12 inches to 13 ft. Kingston Wholesale. (800) 560-5585. **Write in 1450**

10. Garden sandals

The "uni" garden sandal model is made from lightweight rubber. It features an exclusive "Step In Strap," intended to be flexible but fixed in place. This sandal is available in unisex styles. Sloggers. (877) 750-4437. **Write in 1451**