

Feeling Inspired

Inspiration is the key to creativity. How can you incorporate this trend into your garden center to give those customers looking for that specific inspiration a little push in the right direction?

Inspiration: stimulation of the mind or emotions to a high level of feeling or activity. That is one of the many definitions of inspiration, however, in the garden center world it goes much deeper than that. Oftentimes, especially recently, you will see vendors selling items with poetic sayings, unique designs or creative combinations. I know what you think: "Do people really buy this stuff?" The answer is yes.

Since 9/11 and the beginning of the Iraq war, people have a tendency to feel a little scared at times and need some type of comfort. That is where the inspiration comes in. They want a saying that makes them feel good or a word that is powerful yet soothing. Let's face it, we don't live in a world that is all wine and roses, and consumers know that. However, there are ways to make them happy.


Yes, there is the aspect of being happy and healthy; sharing love with a significant other, friends and family; or having enough money to live a comfortable life. However, those are very general types of things, meaning they are what we all know and hold onto but sometimes that's not enough.

Inspiration comes on more of a personal level. Whether it is some kind of muse you are looking for (my writing muse tends to take a vacation at the worst times), a person that really makes you feel good about yourself or a hobby that takes you

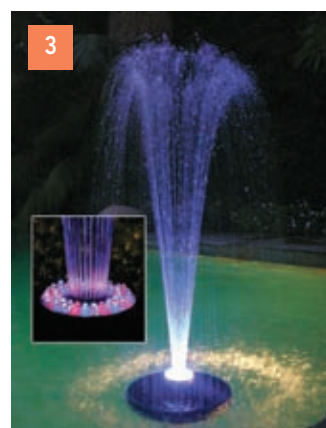
away from it all. Ah ha, your garden center is the best place for inspiration then, isn't it?

What could be more inspirational than a garden? You have all of the tools, and you know all of the vendors that carry the poetic sayings, reassuring words and comforting products. Now all you have to do is bring them together and you have the ability to inspire.

These days, consumers tend to require a little more inspiration. Whether it is after a week of sitting watching soccer game after soccer game or teaching a room full of kids ready for the school year to end, your customers need to be inspired, and you can make that happen.

Hold an event with creative gardening ideas, do giveaways with gifts that have sayings on them, create an inspiration area in your store for customers to see all of the wonderful things that can make their homes more inspired. There are plenty of ways to do it, and though it may sound a bit corny, take a look at that woman that has just walked into your store with three children under the age of five and see the look on her face. She needs some inspiration...and fast! Walk over, say hello and hand her a coupon for 20 percent off followed by an inspirational saying at the bottom and see how her expression changes. 

— Catherine Evans



1. Wall accent

Embrace The Day is one of the newest designs by sculptor George Carruth and can be used in the home or garden. It is hand cast in stone and available in a gift box. Carruth Studio. (800) 225-1178. **Write in 1468**

2. Adirondak chair

This furniture is constructed from yellow balau, a tropical hardwood that is harvested from sustainably managed forests. The backs of these chairs are cut out in designs and are available in eight different styles. The furniture is treated with natural teak oil. Bird Brain. (800) 289-4748. **Write in 1467**



3. Floating fountain

This fountain is designed to spray water into the air. This product includes outdoor transformer, spray head with 48 LED lights, pump, floating board and anchor. Alpine Corporation. (877) 710-0162. **Write in 1466**

4. 3D geos

The newest addition to the Geo collection, 3D Geos are available in four designs. Each design is coated with a color combination and intended to spin easily. More than 25 Geo designs and other kinetic art are available. Red Carpet Studios. (877) 985-0405. **Write in 1473**

5. Mosaic ball

Influenced by the disco ball, Forma Garden Party Mosaic Balls are available in 8-, 10- and 12-inch diameters. Each ball is handmade by taking differently shaped pieces of reflective glass and grouting them to a stainless steel sphere. Rome Industries, Inc. (800) 818-7603. **Write in 1474**

MARKET WATCH



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6. Birdhouse

The Salt Box Birdhouse is available in three colors: barn red, cream and yellow. It is hand-painted over cast resin and has a cleanout plug in the base for maintenance. Birdhouses are approximately 11 inches tall and 4 inches wide. Custom Décor, Inc. (800) 441-8818. **Write in 1469**

7. Outdoor lamps

The Shooting Stars outdoor lamps with Prism globes are available in tall (80 inches), medium (64 inches) and short (54 inches). These electric lamps have a plastic globe with molded grooves on the interior of the globe and a UV additive to prevent yellowing and brittleness. The texture on the inside of the globe is intended to create a swirling effect from the string of mini lights. The powder-coated iron base was developed to resist rust. The heavy base should allow the fixture to sway in the wind and withstand strong gusts. Starlight Lanterns. (850) 796-1126. **Write in 1475**

8. Fan pull

The Double Dragonfly fan pull is one of 26 designs available. It is intended for outdoor applications such as the porch, patio or gazebo but may be used indoors where humidity is not a problem. Finial Showcase. (800) 378-1212. **Write in 1470**

9. Plant stand

Made in the United States, this plant stand is designed to hold five terra cotta pots so the steel structure is invisible to the eye. The stand is 46 inches tall and has a powder-coated finish. Friendship's Garden, Inc. (800) 682-9272. **Write in 1471**

10. Lawn swing

This high-back lawn swing can be sold as a stand-alone product or with a 5-ft. tripod A-frame. The swing measures 5 ft. and 5 inches wide and features fasteners intended to be rust resistant. It is also available as a low-back style. The swing and frame are made from 100-percent cypress, which can be stained, painted or left to weather to a medium gray. Lapp's Lawn Furniture. (888) 768-7534. **Write in 1472**

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