

## CONSUMER TALK

"Consumer Talk" is a regular column appearing in each issue of Lawn & Garden Retailer that examines the issues facing today's garden center customers. Our panel of consumers will provide you with insight into their gardening and retail experiences to help you better understand today's customers' needs.

# Finding Inspiration

Many customers need to be inspired to create and keep thriving gardens. This month, we asked our panelists to share how they come up with ideas for their gardens.

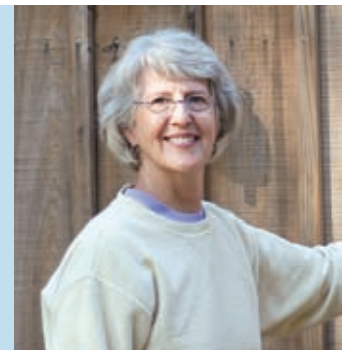
### Lori, 50 Fargo, N.D.

"Well, let's look at the garden. I see three types of tomatoes, sweet green peppers, three types of basil, flat parsley and eggplant. Needless to say, Italian cooking inspires my garden. Fresh basil and parsley taste alive when compared with dried herbs. I use tomatoes nearly every day and do appreciate the fresh produce every time I try to use an apple-hard grocery-store tomato."



### Claudia, 60 Gainesville, Fla.

"I enjoy driving around in established neighborhoods with mature trees. Most of the landscapes are common and uninteresting; however, occasionally there is an accent tree, shrub or small garden that rewards the trip. Every spring, I buy one or two gardening magazines. Also, I am a faithful reader of *Southern Living* magazine. I love the 'before and after' pictures found in magazines. A great landscape transforms the mundane to a welcoming invitation. Sometimes the independent nurseries will have a free booklet of useful tidbits. The independent nurseries often have displays of plant groupings that inspire me. Before we tackled the project of completely reworking our existing landscape, we purchased several books. Our subjects included decks to landscapes and everything in between."



### Theresa, 36 Phoenix, Ariz.

"I get my ideas for my garden from *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine. Those are just ideas and sketches on paper titled, 'What to do after my husband's promotion.' Now in reality, I go to Home Depot and ask what plants will survive at 110° F with minimal water. They guide me to that section; I look for the least expensive and fill the garden with them. We usually plant a lot more in the winter, and I tend to go for the edible plants. They are more fun for the kids. The price, the weather, watering and the kids are my biggest guide for ideas right now."



### Shannon, 38 Scarsdale, N.Y.

"I get my ideas for my garden from a couple of sources. As I walk through my town, I see what I like and try to find out how hard it is to grow these materials. I also talk to my local garden center and discuss what is beautiful, easy and won't be eaten by the local fauna. Finally, I am starting to try vegetables — ones that the whole family likes and can easily be grown."



## Questions To Consider

- Are there displays throughout your garden center to give customers ideas to try at home?
- Do you encourage your sales associates to offer suggestions to customers who are creating a garden for the first time, and are associates familiar with plants that grow well in your area?
- Do you stock gardening magazines, books and other literature for your shoppers?
- Does your garden center offer customers a range of choices when it comes to plant selection (color, price, weather resistance, etc.)?