



Explore Home Décor

More than one-half of an average American's day is spent at home, so it's no wonder consumers are interested in decorating their homes. Carrying items from indoor furniture to throw pillows can help satisfy your customer's needs for new décor.

By Meghan Boyer

From pet products to fashion accessories to books and much more, "Developing Markets," *Lawn & Garden Retailer's* monthly series for the past two years, has profiled a new retail market each month. Now that you've learned about all kinds of new products you can sell at your garden center, it's time for something new.

Look for *Lawn & Garden Retailer's* new monthly series, *Outside The Industry*, starting in the January 2007 issue. Each month, the series will examine a different large-scale retailer and break down its practices into ideas you can use at your garden center. And if you want to review any of the Developing Markets we introduced, you can find all of the articles in the archive at www.lgrmag.com.

Decorating a house has become more than simply hanging a few framed pictures on a wall and putting down an area rug; it is now a \$270 billion industry that includes kitchen items, housewares, furniture, home textiles, appliances and more. It's no wonder people are taking an interest in decorating their homes: They spend more time there than any other place.

A 2003 AH&H Research report found 50 percent of the average American's day is spent at home (less than one-third is spent at work or school). This is especially true in an age of travel concerns and high fuel costs. These days, many consumers are more interested in nesting, which includes updating their living spaces and incorporating unique and trendy home accents.

Take a look at your consumers' demographics. If you are serving a large number of homeowners, carrying home décor items might be a good idea for your garden center. Traditionally, home ownership increases spending on a person's living space. According to AH&H, home ownership is likely associated with higher long-term spending on all home items, which is not the case with renters. Purchases are at the highest for consumers soon after purchasing a home, but though purchasing slows, it still continues for years after.

Overall, houses are also becoming larger. This means people need more to fill them up: The U.S. Census Bureau reports the average total square feet of a single-family home in 1973 was 1,650; in 2002, it was 2,300.

Stock The Trends

Like most retail industries, home décor is ruled by trends, some of which stick around for only one season while others endure for many. Pamela Graves, editorial director of *Home Fashion & Furniture Trends* magazine, has noticed plenty of new trends in color, texture and motif for spring 2007 while traveling to shows and conferences related to the home décor industry. You can implement them in your garden center in a number of ways. Anything from stocking a few key accent pieces in popular colors to carrying entire rooms worth of trendy furniture and fabrics can satisfy your customers' needs for new décor.

When it comes to color, "Watch for neutrals, neutrals, neutrals! Browns, taupes, beiges and creams are ruling the spring 2007 season and are complemented by purples, reds and oranges," said Graves. Black

and white is a classic color combination that continues to be popular. "People love the classics and can dress this combination up with silvers and red," explained Graves.

Texture is currently dominating home décor textiles while beads, stones and feathers are on the way out. "Nubby fabrics and offerings with 'feel' are leaders now," explained Graves. In terms of motifs, geometric shapes, primarily circles, are popular, with furniture offerings even taking on circular designs. Floral designs (which would complement garden centers nicely!) are also a dominant trend. For those who like an exotic look, animal prints still play a role in home décor as well, said Graves.

Display Your Wares

From plants to stepping stones, garden centers are in the business of promoting outdoor décor; some addi-



Home décor is a broad category that includes kitchen items, housewares, furniture, home textiles, appliances and more.



Neutral hues such as browns, taupes, beiges and creams are popular home décor colors for spring 2007.

tional promotion on indoor décor should be a natural progression for most centers. In fact, many garden accents are appropriate for both indoor and outdoor use and can be cross merchandised as such. Try creating two displays (one geared for inside and one for out) using the same products to show customers the versatility of your décor merchandise.

Home décor displays are important selling tools: Set up displays as though you were really decorating an area of a house. For this, take your cues from large-scale home décor retailers such as Crate & Barrel and Pottery Barn. Each of them will create a display scene using décor items and stock the items used in the display nearby. That way, customers can see the items “in use,” get ideas for their own homes, and easily find and purchase what they want. This display tactic can work for all areas of the home: bathroom, kitchen, living room, bedroom and office. Imagine the impact a fully set dining table (complete with dinnerware, candle sticks, cloth napkins and more) would have as a focal display in your store.

Don't forget to bring the outdoors in, too, by incorporating live plants into your indoor décor displays. By doing so, you reinforce the idea that flowers and plants are appropriate ornamentation for all areas of the home — both indoors and out.

Do-It-Yourself Workshops

The popularity of home decorating TV shows such as Trading Spaces and

Decorating Cents is another indication of consumers' interest in revamping their homes — and it is also an indication they want to do a lot of the decorating themselves. While not everyone may want to reupholster their own furniture, there are quite a few who would like to learn more about some of what the home decorating shows do, and you can show them how at your garden center.

With topics such as making pillows, arranging interesting votive displays or creating wall ornamentation, do-it-yourself decorating workshops can position your garden center as the go-to store for both crafting and purchasing home décor. You can supply participants with a list of materials they'll need to bring for the seminar or, depending on the cost, have the materials available for them.

A fun idea is to show participants a clip of a project from one of the home decorating TV shows and then have them replicate the same project in the workshop. To drum up interest in the workshops, try displaying an example of the finished project in your store along with a sign-up sheet and description of the workshop. Because home décor is such a broad category, the possibilities for workshops and attracting participants are nearly limitless. ☘

Meghan Boyer is associate editor of Lawn & Garden Retailer. She can be reached at mboyer@sgcmail.com or (847) 391-1013.

Randy Martin, gift shop manager of Ahner's Garden & Gifts, St. Louis, Mo., talks about the home décor department at his store.

How long have you been stocking home décor items?

Since 2000.

What made you decide to add home décor items?

I think the owners thought we could have a good market. In combination with the plants and the garden accessories, this would be a good mix not only to supplement our income in the winter months but also to give us a totally different kind of a look — a total shopping experience.

How much space do you devote to it?

We have about 4,000 sq.ft.

What kind of home décor do you sell?

We sell everything from upscale lamps and furniture to everyday home accessories. You name it.

What is your philosophy in choosing the products?

[Carry] a good mix of everything.

What products sell best?

For our particular area, lamps and accent furniture pieces sell the best.

What kind of margin do you get?

It depends on the item.

Who is responsible for product selection and helping customers?

I'd say 80 percent of it is Pat Ahner and myself doing the buying.

Does this category bring people into the store more often or when they wouldn't otherwise be there?

Yes, it's the cornerstone of the store. Plants are our main business, but as time has gone on, we have developed word-of-mouth advertising. We're getting decorators and do-it-yourself decorators coming in. The word is out. ☘



The home décor section at Ahner's Garden & Gifts includes everything from upscale lamps and furniture to everyday home accessories.

Resources

Associations

American Home Furnishings Alliance
www.ahfa.us

Gift and Home Trade Association
www.unitedsalesassociation.org

Trade shows

International Home & Housewares Show
March 11-13, 2007
Chicago, Ill.

Magazines

Trendir
www.trendir.com

Home Accents Today
www.homeaccentstoday.com

Furniture Style
www.furniturestyle.com

Accessory Merchandising
http://accessorymerchandising.alphazeta.com

Gifts & Decorative Accessories
www.giftsanddec.com

Home Fashion & Furniture Trends
www.hfft.com

Web sites

Housewares.org
www.housewares.org

1. Canisters

The Bienvenue collection features curved lines, bright colors and mixed, small patterns. Bienvenue canisters are available in three sizes: Small is 9 inches tall, medium measures 9½ inches tall and large is 11 inches tall. Demdaco. (888) 336-3226. **Write in 1444**



2. Patina baskets

Three sizes of rectangular patina baskets are available: 14x19, 11x14 and 15x21 inches. Plastic inserts are available for some sizes. Other patina shapes and sizes are also available. Front of the House, Inc. (305) 757-7940. **Write in 1442**

3. Bench

The Champagne Flora Bench features a tufted cloth seat and embossed metal legs. It measures 17 inches tall, 23 inches long and 11 inches deep. Infusion, a presentation of THT Designs. (877) 735-5848. **Write in 1437**



4. Runner rug

This runner measures 8 ft. long and 30 inches wide. Rectangular hook rugs and throw pillows are also available in the Summer Circles design. Chandler 4 Corners. (800) 239-5137. **Write in 1443**

5. Porcelain accessories

The Verde collection offers more than a dozen pieces, from oversized vases to planters to bookends. Pieces in the collection are made from porcelain. Sizes vary by piece. Andrea by Sadek. (212) 679-8121. **Write in 1440**



6. Wood-frame mirror

The Tahitian mirror has beveled glass and a handcrafted wood frame covered in a cognac-stained bamboo and ratan. The mirror measures 28 x 32 x 2 inches. HomArt. (949) 366-6240. **Write in 1436**



7. Patterned dinnerware

Part of the Design Collection, this dinnerware features Marimekko patterns. The design is called Ruusupuu by Marimekko; platter, dinner plate, salad plate, individual bowl, condiment bowl, mini bowl and three sizes of tumblers are available in the pattern. Zak U.S. (800) 331-1089. **Write in 1441** ▶

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DEVELOPING MARKETS

8. Glass vases

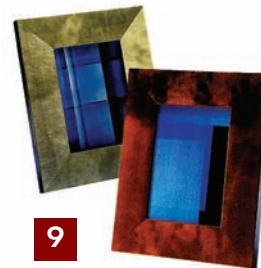
These 2-tone milk vases are handmade with a multi-step process. Cabana, Cabana Bubble and Cabana Hourglass (shown) vase designs are available. Cabana Hourglass vases are available in short, medium and large; shapes and sizes vary slightly from piece to piece. Design Ideas. (800) 426-6394. **Write in 1439**

8



9. Wood frames

The brushed series of solid-wood frames is handcrafted in Italy. Frames are available in silver or copper. Available sizes include 4x6, 5x7 and 8x10 inches. Lazy Susan USA Inc. (212) 685-0181. **Write in 1438**



9

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A. Total No. copies (Net Press Run)	25,392	22,040
B. Legitimate paid and/or requested distribution		
1. Individual paid/requested mail subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541	23,135	20,915
2. Copies requested by employers for distribution to employees by name or position stated on PS Form 3541	-none-	-none-
3. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales and other paid or requested distribution outside USPS	-none-	-none-
4. Requested copies distributed by other mail classes through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail)	1	1
C. Total paid and/or requested circulation (Sum of 15b1 through 15b4)	23,136	20,916
D. Nonrequested Distribution		
1. Nonrequested copies stated on PS Form 3541	886	482
2. Nonrequested copies distributed through the USPS by other classes of mail	-none-	-none-
3. Nonrequested copies distributed outside the mail	850	300
E. Total nonrequested distribution	1,736	782
F. Total distribution (sum of 15d + 15e)	24,872	21,698
G. Copies not distributed	520	342
H. Total (sum of 15g + 15h)	25,392	22,040
I. Percent paid and/or requested circulation (15c/15f x 100)	93.0%	96.4%
16. Publication of Statement of Ownership is required and will be printed in the November 2006 issue of this publication.		
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