

# IT'S THE TIME OF THE SEASON

Once again, ANLA and GCA put on great summer tours this year. Learn more about the tours, and check out the trend-filled picture gallery.

By Catherine Evans

Summertime in this industry is one of my favorite times of year because it is garden center tour time. This year, the American Nursery and Landscape Association (ANLA) and Garden Centers of America (GCA) once again put on some great tours. I spent eight days touring garden centers in the Seattle, Wash. area with ANLA and the Minneapolis/St. Paul area with GCA during the last two weeks of June.

It was very interesting to tour garden centers in such different regions. Both areas were full of great materials, great stores and great people. The trips were extremely educational and provided excellent networking opportunities.

All of the locations we visited were so gracious to have us (the tours had three and four buses each) with so many people walking in on a busy day. I would like to take the time to thank both association staffs and volunteers — you did a great job. I also would like to thank all of the sponsors — without you, these tours wouldn't be possible. I hope to see you all next year; it is a great time that no one should miss.

However, since they were tours I figured it was easier to talk about the trips with photos instead of giving you a play by play of each stop. So enjoy the photo gallery of trends and neat things to learn from. Contact ANLA ([www.anla.org](http://www.anla.org)) and GCA ([www.gardencentersofamerica.org](http://www.gardencentersofamerica.org)) for more information. 🌿

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**Left, top to bottom:** If you wanted signage, 101 Market, Ostego, Minn., had it. There was no way customers were not going to be able to find the pottery department; Monrovia Growers showcased one of its new store-within-a-store areas at Linder's Garden Center, St. Paul, Minn. The store had a nice clean look with a lot of customer appeal; As usual, unique displays were in full bloom at all of the garden centers. This one from Sargent's Garden Centers, Rochester, Minn., has great bright colors and interesting props used along with the plants. **Right, top to bottom:** Watson's Greenhouse & Nursery, Puyallup, Wash., was really on the ball when it came to the lovely garden gnome craze. There were gnomes everywhere I went during those eight days. People were just buying them up, tour attendees included. I guess Travelocity brought back an old classic that is jumping off the

shelves; Reference books are not easy to find when it comes to looking for certain plants immediately. Going to the library is easy, but there is not a gardening expert right there to verify what the consumer is looking for. A lot of the locations on these tours had reading rooms with plant reference materials like the one here at Wells Medina Nursery, Bellevue, Wash., that enabled customers to look up information with employees right there to help; Adding the artistic touch, like Windmill Gardens, Sumner, Wash., is one thing, but giving that natural feel is another. These leaves were all over the place and the best part is that they are hand made and painted. They were so beautiful and fit in really well with the rest of the garden center décor. The leaves were detailed and made by local artists as well as some of the garden centers themselves.