

DELIGHTFUL DIFFIENBACHIA



Bridget White, Editorial Director
(847) 391-1004
bwhite@sgcmail.com

Yesterday morning, I stopped by my local garden center/florist to pick up some flowers for my desk and a new foliage plant for my apartment. I left with three beautiful sunflowers, a 5-inch diffienbachia and two 2-inch saxifraga. It was a great shopping trip, mostly because I like going to garden centers. Before I got home, though, it also ended up being a real educational experience for me about how people respond to plants.

Allow me to explain. I took my little box of plants home from the office but made four stops on the way. While I visited with friends, ate dinner, etc., I kept my plants with me (I take mass transportation to work so there was no car to leave them in). At each place, at least one person — eyes alight, big smile on their face — commented about my plants. “What great plants.” “What kind of plant is that?” “Where did you get those plants?” They just kept going on and on. I couldn’t help being amused by so many inquiries about a common diffienbachia. After all, those of us in floriculture spend our days, our lives, surrounded by beautiful, exciting plants — traveling the country or the world looking for the latest and greatest; this was just a standard foliage plant in my eyes.

I was happy to be able to expose consumers at two bars, a restaurant and a convenience store to the wonders of our industry, but through it all, I just kept thinking, “Can it really be the case that all these people have never seen a diffienbachia before? Can they really be so excited about one little foliage plant?”

EXPOSURE

Let me stop for a minute and assure you that I’m not making any of this up. The story above is not writer’s prerogative; I haven’t embellished a single word. People were really fascinated by those three foliage plants, and mostly the diffienbachia. How? Why?

Is it the idea of owning a living thing? The lure of the unfamiliar? Lack of sophistication (after all, I had bought two varieties whose parent lines are older than I am)? Whatever the reason, it was a great lesson for me. Intellectually, I know that our industry has very little penetration with the American consumer — a quick drive around nine out of 10 neighborhoods will tell you most homeowners are not avid gardeners — but being so immersed in the industry, I think we forget the implications of this simple fact.

I walked away from this experience with a whole new attitude about marketing the industry. It’s not about having a whole lot of something or about stocking the most exotic plants or about stocking the widest number of species. It’s not even about developing intricate displays to impress consumers with our product.

All of these things are great, and I’m sure there is a certain customer that needs the newest variety or elaborate displays. But what I learned from my little field trip is that more than anything people just need to be exposed to plants. 🌱

Bridget C. White

Coming in September...

Retail Buyer’s Guide:

A listing of vendor companies, their contact information and the products they carry.

Visual Product Directory:

An extended product section with pictures and descriptions of this year’s best new products.

EDITORIAL

Editorial Office:	(847) 391-1004
Bridget White	Editorial Director bwhite@sgcmail.com
Carrie Burns	Associate Editor cburns@sgcmail.com
Catherine Evans	Associate Editor cevans@sgcmail.com
Mackenzie Gaffney	Associate Editor mgaffney@sgcmail.com
Kelley Murphy	Associate Editor kmurphy@sgcmail.com

ADVERTISING

Sales Office:	(817) 731-9352
Felix Schilling	Account Manager (817) 731-9352 felixschilling@sbcglobal.net
Tami Morrell	Integrated Accounts Manager tmorrell@sgcmail.com
Doug O’Garden	Integrated Accounts Manager dogarden@sgcmail.com

STAFF

Tim Campbell	Group Publisher tcampbell@sgcmail.com
Judith H. Schmueser	Director of Production Operations jschmueser@sgcmail.com
Scott Figi	Production Manager sfigi@sgcmail.com
Linda L. Lambdin, C.C.P.	Director of Circulation llambdin@sgcmail.com
Erica Rivera	Advertising Coordinator erivera@sgcmail.com
Jody Cardinal	Director of Corporate Communications jcardinal@sgcmail.com
Judy Ann Paul	Sales & Marketing Associate jpaul@sgcmail.com
Donna Aly	Classified Advertising daly@sgcmail.com
Joy Stirling Images	Photo Library Barb Versalle, (231) 894-1774 info@joystirling.com

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Dale Bachman	Bachman’s Floral Home & Garden
Stan Pohmer	Pohmer Consulting Group
Judy Sharpton	Growing Places Marketing
Steve Vanderwoude	Spring Meadow Nursery
Jack Williams	Ecke Ranch
Mitch Whitten	Birding Business

CORPORATE

Karla A. Gillette	Chair/CEO
Sheldon Schultz	Vice Chairman/COO
Edward Gillette	President
Halbert S. Gillette	Chairman Emeritus (1922-2003)

Lawn & Garden Retailer accepts no responsibility or liability for the validity of information supplied by contributors, vendors, advertisers or advertising agencies.

Subscription Information

Lawn & Garden Retailer magazine (ISSN 1540-9023) is published eight times a year in January, February, March, April, June, July, August and September by



Scranton Gillette Communications, Inc.,
380 E. Northwest Highway, Suite 200,
Des Plaines, IL 60016-2282.
Telephone: (847) 391-1000 Fax: (847) 390-0408.

Subscription rates in the U.S. are \$30 per year (Canada and Mexico are \$50 and all other countries are \$60 payable in U.S. currency). Periodical postage paid at Des Plaines, IL 60018 and at additional mailing offices. Reproduction of contents is forbidden. Copyright 2004.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Circulation Department, *Lawn & Garden Retailer*, 380 E. Northwest Highway, Suite 200, Des Plaines, IL 60016-2282. PRINTED IN USA.