

WORD on the STREET

By Carrie Burns

We've asked around, put our ear to the ground and checked our crystal ball to bring you a small glimpse into the future of garden accents.



Oh, the ongoing problem of garden accents: What do I buy, how big should I make my order, what will customers want, how many do I purchase? You know what I'm talking about — the unforeseeable demand of gazing globes, wind chimes, wind socks and statuary.

You ordered too many wind socks and not enough gazing globes or too many flags and not enough lanterns. So, now you're out of what's hot and have too many of what's not. If someone had only predicted the future and told you what to buy more of, you wouldn't be in this predicament.

We're here to help. The following are a few things we've heard through the grapevine about accents.

DECORATIVE GLASS

We talk constantly about moving the indoors out. Of all consumer gardening trends, this seems to be the biggest, and with the incorporation of decorative glass into garden accents, the transfer seems to be complete.

What once stood as the divider between indoors and out is now one of the hottest trends in garden accents. Whether in gazing globes, bird feeders or sun catchers, these days you can see glass all over the garden. "There's so much beautiful ornamental glass being blown and produced out there right now; its intrinsic value is inherent and will never go away," says Mike Bodo, vice president of sales at Echo Valley. "The possibilities right now are really limitless. It's a medium that a lot of independent retailers are turning towards just because of the proliferation of many of the other items, especially in the mass merchants."

LARGE ACCENTS

Forget being conservative, large pieces are pushing their way through the door. Trellises, large statuary and over-sized art are just some of the impressive items being used to anchor gardens. "What we find is that larger pieces become focal points around

Glazing globe. You can help your customers add romance to any garden setting with a reflecting gazing globe. Baker's Lawn Ornaments' globes are available in a variety of styles and finishes, including 6-, 10- and 12-inch, and 12-inch swirl and pin optic. The complete line includes 22 styles and colors. All products high quality and made in the United States. Baker's Lawn Ornaments. (814) 445-7028 (**Write in 1475**); **Bench.** New for 2003, the Rosebud Bench with its classical style, reminiscent of a Victorian garden settee, adds to an extensive line of cast aluminum garden seating and accessories from Garden Art. Bench features maintenance free, solid welded construction from Mexican foundries. Garden Art Inc. (860) 829-0707 (**Write in 1483**).

which people can design their gardens,” said Charles Salembier, president of Virginia Metalcrafters. Even in small gardens, consumers are beginning to understand the necessity of incorporating at least one accent of substantial size.

And while larger pieces require more capital investment, they can also provide important merchandising opportunities. Bodo explains, “With focal points, larger scale design pieces, consumers can build their garden. [Large pieces] are also great because they give the retailer a relatively easy way to create a display,” says Bodo. “If you can show a consumer how a piece will work for them and that it will look good in their garden, they tend to follow your advice and make the purchase.”

OUTDOOR FURNITURE

Outdoor furniture as a garden accent? You bet, but not the typical tables and chairs you see on every corner. Consumers have started looking for more decorative furniture pieces that incorporate mosaics, rare woods, decorative metalwork and personalized additions.

“People will look for one-of-a-kind benches instead of mass-produced seating, more like intimate cozy things as part of the garden décor,” says Achla Madan, designer/co-owner of Achla Designs.

OUTDOOR LIGHTING

Outdoor lighting has come to mean much more for a garden than simply light. In today’s gardens, light provides heat, defines spaces, highlights accents, becomes an accent and generally facilitates the outdoor experience. Incorporating every material from glass to metal to ceramics, the lighting fixtures for you to carry — candles, lanterns, strings of lights — have truly become garden accents.

Sharon Skiperis, marketing manager at Meyers Imports, describes how one of the company’s new products serves as an example of this trend. Meyers’ Fire-Gel Burners create a large flame approximately 3 inches across, giving off light and heat. “As people are not wanting to use electric lights outside, with the voltage issue, we have seen an increase in sales in the fire gel. And that’s what’s providing the light outside and the heat,” said Skiperis.

IN SUMMARY

Putting in orders for garden accents has been and will always be risky. Even with the best forecasting, there is no guarantee that the anticipated trends will work in your garden center. Before adding any new item to your inventory, be sure to judge it against past sales, your store’s image and the item’s potential. We hope these tips will help in your next round of purchases. 🌱

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Resin Figurine

This patriotic cast resin figurine of a boy holding the American flag can be used indoors or outdoors as a perfect garden adornment. The finish is a painted patina and the piece measures 18 x 32 x 13 inches. SpecCast. (800) 844-8067. **Write in 1494**

Birdhouse

Beach House Birdhouse is a two-story contemporary home with two separate cavities. It is constructed of kiln-dried pine and exterior grade plyboard. This house will attract common cavity dwellers.

The wraparound porch is perfect for keeping fledglings secure. The Beach House Pedestal will provide secure footing and presentation. Home Bazaar. (800) 544-7242. **Write in 1496**



Kinetic sculptures

Rockin’ in the Garden sculptures have a rocking base as well as individual moving parts. Sculptures are available in frog, cat or cowboy in both tabletop and large sized versions. Figi. (619) 262-8811. **Write in 1482**



Two-piece container

New for 2003, this container consists of two self-contained flower pot halves with plant holes. With formed outer lips on the sides of the container, this piece will help retain soil and water. The weather-resistant foam urethane container can easily be attached or moved whenever desired. Pieces can be boxed and shipped directly to individual customers or boxed and wrapped for larger orders. Taylor Decoratex. (815) 623-7322. **Write in 1495** ♦

