



# THE BEAUTY

## OF YOUR GARDEN CENTER BUILDING

Find out what to think about in terms of appearance when buying a new structure and learn how to get the most out of it.

**By Carrie Burns**

**S**ure, the right structure is important for growers, but have you ever considered the benefits of having the appropriate structure for your garden center? Certain structures can help your plants and flowers last longer, make your store more inviting to customers and provide you with better organization. There are many things to consider before choosing a structure for your garden center — right now, the trend and most important thing to consider is the look.

### **STRUCTURE APPEARANCE**

The initial impression the appearance of your garden center gives to a customer is vital. "Having good street appeal is as important as providing a comfortable shopping experience for your customers," says Brent Crombie, national sales/marketing manager at Poly-Tex. "We are seeing that even the smaller independent retailers are going with much larger, complete retail structures to compete with the mass merchants."

The front appearance of the structure needs to be attractive,



Bottom: Buck's Country Gardens, Doylestown, Pa., was built in 2000 by Nexus Greenhouse Systems. It is a Vail style with cupolas and vents, and there is a 2-inch metal span on the roof. Nexus Greenhouse Systems. (800) 228-9639. Write in 2021.

## FOCUS ON

# STRUCTURES

### Greenhouses

Jaderloon greenhouses are designed with strong welded truss supports on gutter houses; engi-

neered cross-connectors on freestanding frames provide for one of the strongest load ratings available. Choose from four styles - Appalachian, Piedmont, Classic (shown) and Freestanding. Jaderloon Co. (800) 258-7171.



### Exposed center

Allisonville Nursery in Fischer, Ind. have built a Nexus retail garden center. The trusses allow the insulated ceiling to be exposed to give a vaulted look and to accommodate the commercial HV/AC. Nexus can design a garden center to meet the local building codes. Nexus Greenhouse Systems. (800) 228-9639.



Write in 2079



### Garden center model

This 5,000-sq.-ft. model garden center is not only a product showcase, but a learning center for retailers. From signage and layout to themed events, the FNAGA Garden Center provides retailers with key tips and ideas. This year's theme is "It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas" and will concentrate on ways to expand on your holiday business. FNATS. (800) 375-3642. ▶

Write in 2014

### Top-down design

All of Structures Unlimited's retail greenhouses begin with a top-down, powerful design that integrates growing with retail, while still being cost-effective. Utilizing one center purlin, the semi-gothic arch shape offers maximum headroom for customers and employees - even close to the sides of the house. To ensure customer comfort as well as street appeal, the slightly peaked roof is attractive while reducing potential problems of condensate dripping. And the simple, strong design withstands high winds and adverse weather. Structures Unlimited. (800) 541-8129.



"because you only have a couple seconds to grab someone's attention," says Bill Stubbe, vice president of Erie Greenhouse Systems. "If you can do that, they'll drive by one day, they'll drive by the next day and the next day, and their curiosity will build to the point where they will stop in and look." You'll gain new customers.

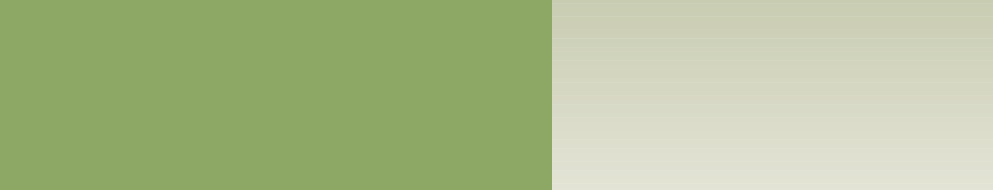
Traditional steel A-frames, glass venlo, poly roof, shade-covered, polycarbonate glazed, acrylic glazed, glass glazed, steel insulated panel glazed...with so many choices, how do you decide?

The most popular item seems to be glass, and retailers are recognizing this. According to Bill Vietas, divisional manager and vice president at Rough Brothers, taller structures made with glass are being used. Glass is the most attractive option, and it is also the most expensive. You don't have to design an entire structure made of glass, however. Stubbe recommends custom-building with a combination of coverings such as a glass front wall, which will allow the passers-by to see displays

and sale items, with double poly on the roof, and maybe even on the sides. "This is something to expand on and upgrade in the future to the more-expensive Lexan (polycarbonate) or glass all the way around," he says.

**Custom-Designed Structures.** Custom-designed structures such as the one mentioned above will allow you many options. "I have found that our customers are varying the roofline, using multiple coverings and erecting glass entryways so people can see their plants and be drawn into the garden center," says Lynn Hackett, director of marketing at Nexus Greenhouse Systems. Though your customized, dream structure may cost you, you'll get exactly what you ask for, which will translate to a better business in years to come. "Money you spend on your garden center, whether upgrading an existing facility or creating a new garden center, has an immediate and good return," says Hackett.

**Kits.** Kits work well for the retailer who doesn't have a lot of money to spend. They often include the structure itself, benching ▶



**Seasonal structure**

Agra Tech's Garden Showcase greenhouse is designed for selling bedding plants. It comes with graceful, stair-step benches for displaying colorful bedding plants, display rods for hanging baskets and plenty of room for showing off foliage plants. The Garden Showcase sets up and takes down easily for seasonal use. It is durable and requires no electricity to run. Agra Tech. (925) 432-3399.



**System of centers**

Stuppy's System 2000 garden centers are designed and tested by listening to retailers. With the System 2000, growers can choose a variety of interchangeable coverings, roof profiles and ventilation options to suit their needs while maintaining common column and truss spacing throughout.

Natural ventilation is available through wing applications, rigid roof, sidewall and endwall vents, and curtain systems. With common column and truss spacing, this system can be configured easily with walks, trolley systems, rolling benches, doors, fans and pad installations uniform throughout the range. Stuppy Greenhouse Manufacturing. (800) 733-5025. ▶

Write in 2015

systems, display systems and other items important for the appearance of your store. You can get everything you need in one shot.

**Seasonal Structures.** Though these structures aren't as attractive as permanent glass garden centers, they are a fairly inexpensive and convenient seasonal structure — one you can take down at the end of the season. "It gives the retailer the flexibility to expand their business seasonally without having to build an expensive, permanent greenhouse," Crombie says.

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

Crombie suggests visiting local building officials and confirming you can build a retail structure. "Ask them a lot of questions so that you have a good idea of local zones and codes. Knowing what you can and cannot build will narrow your focus in choosing a retail structure."

Vietas recommends considering the demographics of the desired area, parking, signage, ventilation, customer flow and display and benching items. Also, allow yourself sufficient time to complete the project. "Allow enough time from design to opening the store — one year should be typical," he says. 🌱

Carrie Burns is an associate editor for Lawn & Garden Retailer.



#### A-Frame

The foundation of many garden center designs, the A-Frame by Rough Brothers provides the simple style of a traditional greenhouse structure with the technology of a modern system. Glazing options include glass, polycarbonate, acrylic and insulated panel. Rough Brothers. (513) 242-0310.

Write in 2019



#### Shade structure

The W-Truss is a sturdy shade structure for your plants and customers. Increase customer comfort and reduce both the amount of water used and time spent keeping your live product in top-selling shape. It is custom-designed with 30-90 percent shade cloth cover. Poly-Tex Inc. (800) 852-3443.

#### Custom-designed facility

X.S. Smith can custom-design a facility to both grow and sell plant material, while meeting the requirements of any local building code. Create an ideal growing environment for any crop without compromising street appeal. X.S. Smith. (800) 631-2226.

Write in 2020

