

TOOL TIME

Spend the time to generate impulse buys from your customers.

By Mackenzie Gaffney

Once in a while you may purchase some hamburgers, go home and then realize you forgot the pack of hamburger buns. It can be much the same when your customer starts the season with a flat of impatiens and returns home, realizing they don't have anything but their hands to plant with.

At times, you may have thought: Everyone has tools, everyone knows how to use them, so why should time be spent on merchandising these items? Therefore, they are often overlooked and placed in the back of the

store near the clearance merchandise. It is important to keep in mind what product placement can do for sales.

People need gardening tools to successfully garden. Although they are not the most expensive item, hand tools can easily add up to a profitable sum if displayed in the most visually enhanced environment. Tools are an easy means of promoting the marketing technique of impulse buying. Encourage customers to explore your tool selection, ask them if they need help or suggestions in choosing a specific tool, share your knowledge — even if it is right before you grab their cash and the last item that goes into the bag.

Most companies specializing in tool manufacturing are more than willing to provide sessions on their products to help you better sell merchandise. That product knowledge is important; it not only provides you with the right information on the basics of tool functions but also strategies and suggestions on how to place the product in your store to gain the most profit.

Make tools just as appreciated by the customer as the Snickers bar they see when they stand in line at the grocery store. You will unconsciously captivate them the way the Snickers does by strategically placing it where the customer will be waiting to check out, as opposed to the candy aisle where most will purposely pass. Use the “last chance” buy, the “I might as well get it now, I'll need it later” mentality. It is your job to close the deal on what the customer is already debating. The key is to place products where they can easily be seen, thus making it easier to sell and harder to forget.

Color. Bosmere, Inc. has recently added color to the attributes of its hand tools and has brought much attention to its product. “The brightly colored handles stand out,” said Sue Rykens, vice president of marketing, Bosmere. “The colors stand out in the store, and the colors stand out in the garden, making it harder to lose them.”

Bosmere has made the change, realizing that color is bold; it is different from all the rest. Bosmere's collection includes yellow, green, blue, purple and red: a color for just about everyone. Color attracts customers; it gets attention when it is immersed into the pale beige wood



Hoe

The Circlehoe is ergonomically designed for weeding and cultivating close to plants with ease and minimal physical effort. The forged carbon steel blade, quality ash wooden handle and shape of the blade perform different functions that eliminate the opportunity to do damage to a plant's roots or structure. Hand- or long-handled sizes are available. Index Innovations Inc. (800) 735-4815. **Write in 1565**

Bench

Across the country, more than 50 independent garden centers have become sources for Smith & Hawken Heirloom Tools, Premium Teak furniture and landscape structures. Included in the line is this teak bench. Smith & Hawken. (800) 423-0118. **Write in 1570**



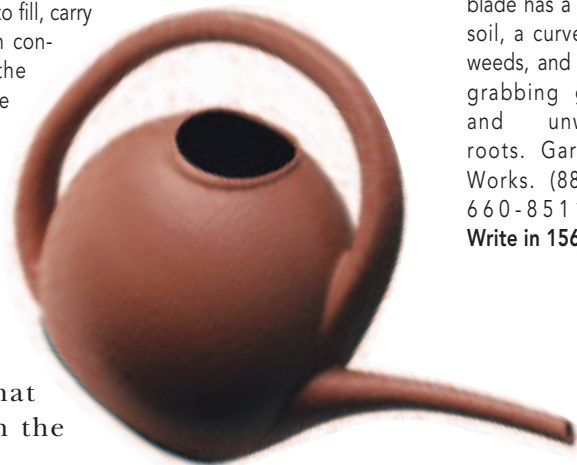
Long-handle tools

The new Viper line of long-handle tools uses a triangular shape design that fits naturally and comfortably within the user's hands. A soft, cushioned-over-molded grip provides additional comfort, and a special TPE stripe with knurling down the middle of the handle minimizes twisting. The tools are constructed of fiberglass material and have a scratch- and splinter-resistant surface. The new Viper line includes a round-point shovel, square-point shovel, garden spade, digging fork, bow rake, level head rake, cultivator, hoe and post hole digger. Ames True Temper. (800) 393-1846. **Write in 1560**



Watering can

The 1-quart watering can is a lightweight, durable gardening tool with a functional design. The can's offset opening, comfortable handle and long, drip-resistant spout make it easy to fill, carry and pour. The 11 x 6 3/4-inch container can be hung from the handle for easy storage. The can is available in classic garden colors: clay and evergreen. Akro-Mils Lawn & Garden Products. (800) 253-2467. **Write in 1558**



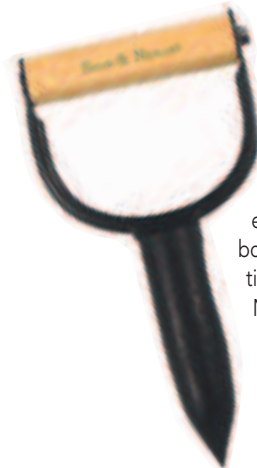
and dark green that sometimes overrun the garden center.

Tom Eckert, vice president of marketing, Emsco Group, understands the overwhelming feeling customers sometimes experience. "The selection is so large the customer is faced with 45 choices and doesn't know which one to choose, so they buy the brand name, which has nothing to do with quality."

Combo packs. Emsco, along with other companies, offers tools to its buyers in combo packs. Eckert said that based on the retailer's customers, Emsco tries to provide a POP approach that can be a stand-alone in an area. Each retailer is different and has the ability to place the display where they choose, but Eckert said the POP should be positioned where the buyer would consider the space to be "prominent real estate."

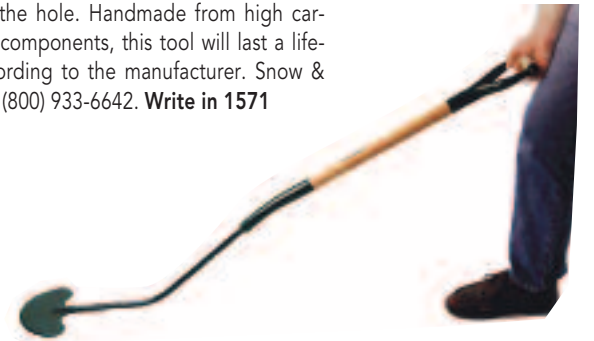
Display and packaging. Rykens said that before selling the multi-colored tools, Bosmere didn't have as much success with the uni-color red handled tools that were displayed in boxes. "We have been selling multi-colored tools individually displayed in ceramic pots at the check-out counters, and sales show that we have had great success with this," Rykens said. Rykens also said that this success is greater than the sales of the uni-color boxed tools.

Bringing tools to the front of the store and closer to the checkout counter reminds customers of the new trowel they need or hand dibble they want to replace. Smith & Hawken has a display that gives customers a selection of tools but also the information. Doug Lauer, general manager, trade and wholesale, Smith & Hawken, said rather than placing their tools



Hand dibble

This Hand Dibble is used to punch holes in the ground for planting seeds, small bulbs and seedlings. The forged steel point penetrates soil and can be rotated to enlarge the hole. Handmade from high carbon steel components, this tool will last a lifetime according to the manufacturer. Snow & Nealley. (800) 933-6642. **Write in 1571**



Sod lifter

This sod lifter is designed specifically to cut and lift sod. The whole tool measures 56 inches and has a 9-inch wide steel blade. The handle is made of resilient ash and is topped with a tough but comfortable D-grip. Lee Valley Tools Ltd. (800) 871-8158. **Write in 1567**

Portable greenhouse

The Umbrella Greenhouse provides gardeners a convenient way to protect plants from winter frost or to get a jumpstart on the growing season. The clear vinyl cover allows the sun to reach the plants. Two different models are available with a number of sizes. Glasgow Imports. (210) 829-0206. **Write in 1564** ▶



Weeder

Handy Weeder works well in close confines and has the length and maneuverability to remove weeds that normally would be out of reach. Its multifunctional blade has a strong tip for cultivating firm soil, a curved blade for slicing surface weeds, and teeth for grabbing grasses and unwanted roots. Garden Works. (888) 660-8511. **Write in 1563**



on a shelf with other brand tools, Smith & Hawken provides a display that also tells the Smith & Hawken story. "When a customer is interested in one of our products they can look at the display and see the entire collection and the accessories that go with it," Lauer said. This is the display where customers can get the tools they need, and they will also see the gloves, hat and pants they can wear while using the tools. Every item has a hang tag that speaks to the features and benefits of the product.

Alan Randall, manager of operations at Barnel USA, said that Barnel uses the complementary products idea and multiple uses for items. Using a bucket at the check-out counter not only displays the bucket but also serves another purpose by containing small hand tools, utilizing counter space in the most aesthetically pleasing way.

Your display does not have to be large in scale. The point is to make the effort to position tools as a priority when it comes to product placement; whether it is large, like Smith & Hawken's, or small, as Emsco's 24 x 24 x 30-inch display. These displays are not only for convenience and placement but they provide another selling point. Alan Randall, Barnel USA, said, "We use the strategy of complementary products, which sell one another." Using this idea, your display is now a two for one; one display, two pulses.

Mackenzie Gaffney is associate editor for Lawn & Garden Retailer. She can be reached by phone at (847) 391-1013 or E-mail at mgaffney@sgcmail.com.

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Ad #

Write in 801

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Saw

The Folding Saw-Auto Lock Type has a cutting length of 7 inches. Its hand grip is covered by rubber cushion to prevent slipping, and the special curve of the handle reduces effort required for cutting. The notched end of the handle prevents accidental dropping of the saw when loosely held. Kanzawa Seiko Co., Ltd. 81-794-82-0387. **Write in 1566**



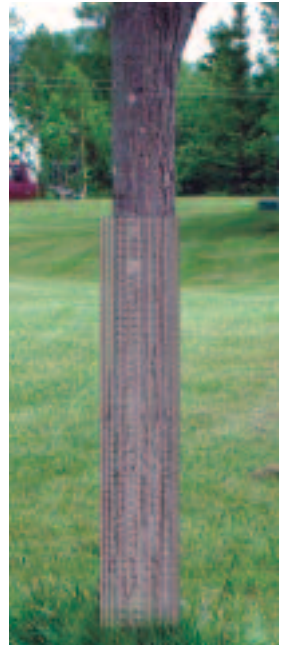
Bulb planter

This Hand Bulb Planter has a notched edge, inch markings and an 8 3/4-inch overall length. UnionTools. (888) 808-6657. **Write in 1573**



Tree protector

Protec-Trunk is made to protect trees against string trimmers, mowers, small rodents and deer. Protectors are sold in packs of three units that can be clipped on top of each other and joined end to end to reach any desired height or diameter. This tree protector is easy to install, adjustable and reusable. DSD International Inc. (877) 532-5252. **Write in 1561**



Tool transportation

The Garden Rover is compact, mobile and keeps tools and project sites organized. It includes a handy lift plate for transporting heavy supplies along with a convenient bag frame for use when weeding, raking or harvesting. It is easy to roll into the garage or shed to store an entire set of tools in less than 2 sq.ft. Vertex International, Inc. (877) 283-7839. **Write in 1574**



Adjustable tools

Walden Gardens ErgoTools is a set of three garden tools with a push button on the side of the handle that allows the tool to adjust to six different positions. The flared handle reduces the amount of pressure needed to grip the tool and allows the handle to adjust for proper hand posture. This set provides two uses for each tool: The trowel doubles as a v-hoe; the cultivator can become a garden fork; and the transplanter can adjust to a bulb planter. Whitehall Products. (800) 728-5449. **Write in 1575**

