

# Simple Container Gardening

This continuing trend can work even better if we help consumers put it all together.



By Catherine Evans

By now, every one of us knows that container gardening is the current big hit amongst consumers. We have been slowly learning that customers have less and less time on their hands and want the quick and easy way to make their homes beautiful (see my Market Watch topic in the February 2004 issue of *Lawn & Garden Retailer* for time saving products). How can you help them by choosing the right plants, pots, soils, etc. that will work the best for their homes? How can you satisfy the curiosity of the people that have just watched “P. Allen Smith’s Garden Home” and want to do what he did in that episode, but have no clue what they are doing.

Here is that word we all love to hear: display, display, display! Set up a potting bench with some plants, pots, soil, gloves, etc. Make it look like a potting bench the customer would like to see in the backyard — this is what will

attract your customers. It not only draws their attention but also gives them the feeling that creating a container garden is easier than it looks. All they have to do is purchase the right materials.

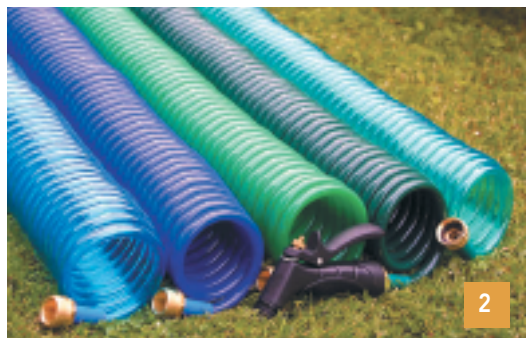
And this is where effective displays and store organization come into play. Yes, the display is extremely important, but it is not useful if the shopper can’t find the merchandise “advertised” in the display. Customers tend to get a little cranky when they see something they want in a display and can’t find it in the store. Having a bench with a variety of good container plants (shade, sun, drought tolerant, matching colors, etc.), having the soil in a stack close by and placing an array of containers of various sizes and colors on one side of the potting table are just some ways to be a better host and help your customers get what they are looking for. Offer care sheets, instructions, on how to container gar-

den, copy and credit the P. Allen Smith’s directions from a recent episode or create a guide for plants that will go well together in a container. These are all ways to ensure that your customer is getting the good and accurate information they need to implement a successful container garden.

There are so many things that can be done to help your customers learn more about the industry that we all love. Teaching them to purchase the correct materials and how to use them will not only benefit them but you as well. It will increase sales, create happy customers and reduce headaches from the people complaining about their container garden not working. You know the ones — people who made an impatiens and begonias mixed container and want to know why it won’t thrive. The more you can do to make a yard a beautiful accent to a home, the better it is for everyone involved. 🌱



1



2



4



3



5

## 1. Ceramic pots

These European glazed and unglazed pots have smooth finishes in a distinctive variety of colors and sizes. With a direct-sell from the manufacturer itself, there are more savings for you. AAPI Corp./Mediterranean Ceramics. (323) 216-9910. **Write in 1515**

## 2. Coiled hose

Plastair is the original manufacturer of the SpringHose, which features a lifetime warranty. Self-coiling hoses are offered in a wide array of colors. Plastair. (800) 961-9146. **Write in 1523**

## 3. Potting bench

This functional potting bench has a 36½-inch-high bench top that offers plenty of workspace and a built-in plastic tub that allows for tidy transplanting. There is plenty of storage space on the two shelves for pots, garden tools and supplies. The bench measures 47½ inches wide x 21½ inches deep x 51½ inches high and can also turn into a serving table for entertaining. It is made of eucalyptus and features anodized steel hardware. Whittier Wood Products. (541) 687-0213. **Write in 1529**

## 4. Weigela

‘Midnight Wine’ is a new purple leafed weigela that forms a low 8- to 10-inch mound. Mix it with perennials, or plant it in mass as a ground cover. Spring Meadow Nursery. (800) 633-8859. **Write in 1526**

## 5. Gloves

This Ultra-Mud Glove has a liquid-proof design for cool, wet gardening. The unbleached, 100-percent-cotton glove is coated with latex rubber on the palm and back. The fingers are pre-curved and tapered for maximum flexibility and comfort, and the rough rubber surface gives the wearer superior grip. Machine washable and available in four colors and sizes. Little’s Good Gloves. (888) 967-5548. **Write in 1520** Ⓐ