

TIME-OUT FOR EVERYONE



It's widely acknowledged that holiday shopping can be endless. Not only do you need to buy gifts for family and friends, holiday decorations also have grown to be nearly essential. It can be hard to resist stopping in store after store, as each year offers greater variety and even more merchandise.

It's also hard to resist spending hours looking at all the details. Displays that are tasteful and interesting not only succeed in selling products, they also provide customers with ideas for decorating their own homes. A mixture of products, natural and artificial, can give a room a more interesting feel and creates a dynamic holiday display. Customers will want to imitate the ideas they see in the store and will be more inclined to purchase merchandise to make a closer similarity.

And we've probably all witnessed it — the bored husband or boyfriend, dragged along on the holiday shopping expedition. Already finished with his purchases and ready to leave, but not wanting to risk negative consequences for breaking off the trip early or, even worse...leaving alone — he drags along behind the avid shopper, trying not to look too disinterested.

Garden centers generally cater to female shoppers, as about 80 percent of their customers are women. This is especially true at Christmas, when the female shopper is more likely to be the one decorating the

home. It takes a great deal of time to decorate a living space and to make it unique for your own tastes. Of course, collecting the items to be used in this decoration takes as much or more time as actually assembling the decorations when finally at home.

Pesche's Flowers in Des Plaines, Ill., offers a unique solution for this dilemma. The store features an oversized, comfortable couch during the holiday season just for this forgotten group. On the couch is a sign, "Time-Out for Husbands," acknowledging the husband or boyfriend's plight during this busy time. He is offered a comfortable place to rest and relax, while his partner completes her shopping. The atmosphere is pleasant; instead of being pushed away in a corner, the couch is in an area of the store with merchandise, letting those sitting on the couch appreciate the holiday decorations without the stress and boredom that they may generally associate with shopping.

This idea can be applied to any garden center. Providing a comfortable place to sit, relax, and people-watch is never a bad idea. Customers will spend more time in the store, appreciating the atmosphere created by the holiday decorations and attention will be attracted to merchandise. Spouses will be less likely to hurry through if they are not as concerned about boring their partner. The holidays should be a time for comfort and enjoyment and this can help to add some to everyone's shopping experience. 🌸

— *Christa Reynolds*

From home to **home** and heart to **heart**,
from one place to another. The **warmth** and **joy**
of **Christmas** brings us closer to each other.

—*Emily Matthews*