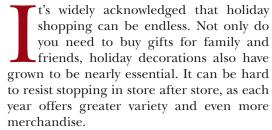
CHECKOUT

## TIME-OUT FOR EVERYONE



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

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