



VIVA

Las Vegas

This year's National Hardware Show and Lawn, Garden & Outdoor Living segment ups the ante with an emphasis on merchandising and more educational opportunities than ever before.

By Paige Worthy



In today's high-stakes economy, taking even a few days outside your garden center for trade shows or industry bus tours — or, God forbid, vacation? — might seem like a gamble you can scarcely afford. After all, it's money out of your pocket on top of the fear you might miss a valuable sale or be unable to be present as a leader should a crisis arise at your store.

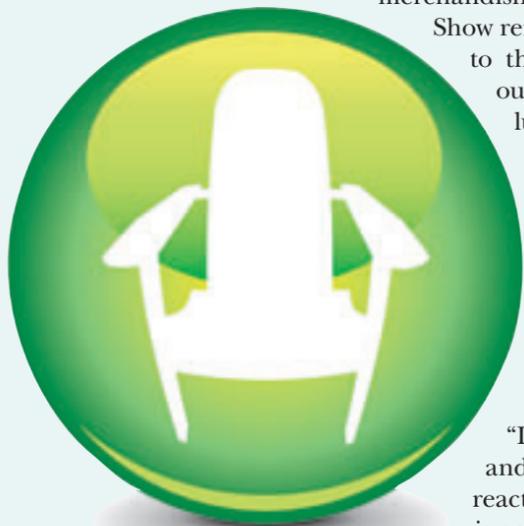
But all corny Vegas clichés aside, attending this year's National Hardware Show, May 5 to 7 at the Las Vegas Convention Center, is practically a sure bet. Part buying bonanza and part educational opportunity, this year's show will offer attendees many new or improved features over years past. The name's even changed to reflect consumer trends: Once Lawn & Garden World, it's now the Lawn, Garden and Outdoor Living segment. "The basis is chemicals and fertilizers, but it goes beyond that to accessories and things that go along with making the outdoor experience," says Ed Several, group vice president for the National Hardware Show.

With nearly 1,000 exhibitors just in the lawn and garden segment ("a show within a show," organizers call it) and opportunities to learn about trends in merchandising, the 2009 National Hardware

Show reinforces the organizers' commitment to the industry, Several says. "This isn't our show; it's *our* show," he says. "We're lucky enough to be able to organize this show, but this is an event that's being built, rebuilt and shaped by the industry to meet its needs."

The overall aim is not to sell product or see how many people can fit into a large event space; it's about helping attendees look forward and stay on the cutting edge of both products and business practices.

"It's great when you can identify trends and be able to act upon them instead of react to them," Several says. "And our goal is not to run a show, not to put on an event — it's to help the industry grow."



Education

Throughout the show, experts on various topics will take the stage in the Lawn, Garden & Outdoor Living area to share their views on coming trends, including color and materials. "Fashion and performance are both important," says Group Vice President Ed Several. "It's easier to sell when you're on trend."

There also will be vignettes on the show floor to highlight cross merchandising opportunities for new and popular ideas in the marketplace, including the "staycation" concept — Char-Broil will anchor this area — and "save energy, save money," which explores going green with an eye to conserving a bit of green as well. Additional information on programming at the National Hardware Show will appear in future issues of our e-newsletter, the *Retail Report*.

So this year, if you can get away for a few days, play your cards right and hop a flight to Vegas. It's a great investment in your business; given the knowledge you'll gain for your operation back home, what happens in Vegas will *not* stay in Vegas. Success is surely in the cards for you — just watch out for those slot machines!

Lawn & Garden Retailer is the official publication sponsor of the National Hardware Show's Lawn, Garden and Outdoor Living segment. For more information, visit www.nationalhardwareshow.com.

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