

Easy Peasy

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I like a store that puts customers first. Whether it's comfort, ease of navigating the store, grouping plants for maximum success or some other way to make customers feel appreciated, stores that strive to please customers come out on top. This month, we're highlighting ideas found on the Garden Centers of America Summer Tour in Detroit that make customers happy. And, just like I tell my kids, they're easy-peasy lemon-squeezy to replicate.



What's That Plant?

Shed your hort hat for a minute. Imagine being a customer and seeing a gorgeous plant in a display garden—without a label. (What is that? I want it!) Make it easy, like Ray Wiegand's (pictured) and Bordine's of Rochester Hills does, and label the plants in your display garden so customers can make a beeline for the retail display and snatch it up.

One-Stop Shopping

Leaf bags. They're a simple long paper bag, but during the spring they often sell out quickly on beautiful weekends. Don't ask me how I know (three stores later). English Gardens in Royal Oak had a big display of them. While they aren't expensive items, they're an example of carrying all the products needed to make your customer a successful weekend warrior.

Within Arm's Reach

I'll share what may be an embarrassing secret: I rarely ever take the first product off the shelf. I usually reach back for the second or third in line. I don't have a good reason. But it's why I love how the shrubs are set up at Ray Wiegand's. These little graveled segments make it easy to walk in and access every shrub and tree.



Staying Hydrated

Anyone who's been in a greenhouse in the middle of June or July knows the cardinal rule: drink fluids! But customers are used to having all kinds of drinks available at all times—think Starbucks in Target and Barnes & Noble, or pop machines, well, virtually everywhere. Deneweth's Garden Center in Macomb satisfies customer thirst with machines at the register (pictured) and complimentary coffee in the back. Ray Wiegand's Nursery & Garden Center, also in Macomb, had a coffee cart that takes center stage near the entrance most days. And English Gardens in Clinton Township pulled out this simple yet effective water cart (pictured) for customers and employees.

Color Your World

Color blocking displays has grown in popularity, and Deneweth's really did a great job of grouping plants by color for an easy-to-shop, powerful and pretty display. There were displays for each major color, as well as groupings for butterfly-attracting plants and more themes.



Convenient Carts

I'm not sure I love the placement of these carts, but I do love the idea of having carts spaced throughout the garden center rather than just at the front of the store. Don't punish customers for becoming inspired with your beautiful displays and wanting to buy more than their basket or red wagon can hold. Let 'em switch up and fill a big cart!

Double The Fun

I had to include this little gem I found at English Gardens. I just thought it was a great way to help introduce edibles-loving customers to produce like grapes (pictured) or blueberries, which can be a tougher "row to hoe." It includes two plants, instructions on planting and a recipe. Once again, it's all about giving the consumer confidence in their garden.

Product Testing

Sometimes it isn't easy to see how a product works just by looking at it. If it's a higher-end item, that could spell disaster. At Garden Works in Sylvan Lake, which trades in unique, high-end items, the key to this ceramic watering pot was a tester display. The ooohs were audible when a member of the retail tour tested it out.



ABC, 123

The signage program at Bordine's in Rochester Hills makes selecting perennials a piece of cake for customers. One sign explains the A, B, Cs of bloom time, and another explains the 1, 2, 3s of height and where a plant should live in the garden. Those letters and numbers can be found on plant signs in the bottom left corner, making customers more confident in their purchases. **GP**