

I don't know about you, but I just can't believe

how incredibly quickly time progresses. As we step into a brand new year of *Garden Chic*, I think back on all the ideas and concepts we covered in 2006. I then wonder where you've been led. How many of the ideas that we have presented have you embraced? We have heard from many of you who have taken the ideas and adapted and refined them into your own creations.

As you embark on this new year, a sea of opportunities beckons you. I challenge you to take a look at the past year of issues, muse on their themes, and find one or two ideas that appeal to you - then take the first step to implement them into your store.

Perhaps you'll choose to venture into one of the "Niches." Jump in with both feet! Have some fun with it, and involve your staff. Team spirit goes a long way when new ideas are introduced.

Or perhaps you'll choose this issue's theme. Organics are the name of the game. There is no doubt that consumers are increasingly flocking toward organic products, and organics are going mainstream. Even Wal-Mart has taken the plunge with organic food, clothing and books. There is a burgeoning interest among independents to answer the call.

It's interesting, organics is a topic I decided we needed to cover last summer. Since then, we've had a number of requests come in to our *Garden Chic* offices for help on this subject, knowing that our unique approach and quality will bring the results they are seeking. Our tagline, "the art of niche retailing," isn't just hype! *Garden Chic* delivers.

This issue answers that call and debuts with three in-depth articles covering all aspects of the subject. Our "Chic Niche" features The Natural Gardener in Austin, TX. With more

than 30 years' experience, John has the art of selling organics down to a science. He understands the challenges faced by the average gardener and addresses their concerns. He answers their questions and does it with flair and finesse, using display gardens to prove organic gardens do thrive.

We are also premiering our new series on organics written by Amy Stewart, who, among other things, writes for *Organic Gardening*. Amy will be focusing on a wide variety of independents who are successfully selling organics. Our first stop is Elizabeth Anna's. If you're thinking you just don't have the space to utilize the power of display gardens, you'll reconsider after learning Elizabeth's entire property consists of only 1 acre of land!

Our all-inclusive coverage continues with an interview with Sara Snow, host of Discovery Home Channel's *Living Fresh*. Having grown up organic, she sheds light on the organic lifestyle and the trend lines that affect this "new" lifestyle. Recognizing these trends will help you better address your customers' needs.

So what does all of this organic coverage

Approached properly, organics is definitely an area in which you can excel and really make a difference.

really amount to? Consumers are seeking a more natural way of life. The reasons are many: health issues, stress, environmental concerns. Whatever the reason, this is a huge niche that should become a part of your business. Our goal is to guide you through the process and provide you with as seamless a transition as possible.

Approached properly, organics is definitely an area in which you, the independent, can excel and really make a difference to your customers. Look at it. Consider it. Evolve it into your own creation!




Right-hand kitty
Meet Oscar, an SPCA rescue. Our feisty 17-pound, 8-year-old ragdoll loves people - and lots of time in the garden!

chic [sheek] *adjective*, -er, -est.

1. style and elegance, esp. in dress: Parisian clothes are so *chic*. 2. fresh; beautiful; progressive: *Garden Chic* is dedicated to raising the bar and helping independents bring the *chic* style to their stores.