

**“Sustainability,” “organic,” “eco-friendly,”**

“earth-friendly” and “global warming” are favorite catch phrases of today’s culture. The question is, how can independent garden center operators transform these catch phrases from mere words to the heart and soul of our businesses?

Global warming concerns have changed the way consumers perceive the world around them and their lifestyles. But we already know all this. Everyone is jumping on the bandwagon. But I don’t just want you to jump on the bandwagon and follow what everyone else is doing. Sure, you could probably get along just fine, but “getting along” in life is not what *Garden Chic* is all about.

We want to not only help guide you through the process of going green with the confidence to succeed, but to help take you to a level where you can excel!

Last year, we introduced you to garden centers that are excelling in selling natural solutions. Our “Organics” series has travelled the country with Amy Stewart, columnist for *Organic Gardening*.

This year, we are taking you *EcoChic!*

Not only will we keep you inspired with our specially selected IGC success stories, we will help you with the tools you need to realize your own success.

If you are already into organics, you know that education is the name of the game. Your customers are already sold on the idea of going organic, but they don’t know where to start. How do they deal with the gardening challenges they already face? How do they develop a good maintenance program to prevent further problems? What products should they use?

Our new series “Going Green,” on page 23 in this issue, will answer all of these questions and more. In each issue, Amy will focus on a specific topic, addressing all of these considerations to help you sell the category. Plus, you can go to our website, [www.BeGardenChic.com](http://www.BeGardenChic.com), and download the two-page layout of tips for customers to use as flyers in your store and as a training tool for your staff! With “Going Green,” you will have everything you need to take that first step, or step it up to the next level.

As consumers become more educated and sophisticated in earth-friendly living, they are looking for more than just an organic lifestyle. They want to know that the retailers they buy from are just as dedicated

**This year, we are taking you *EcoChic!***

to their cause as they are. Your customers want to know that you are doing your part to maintain a healthy environment.

To help you achieve a more environmentally sound business, we are also introducing “Eco-Garden Center” on page 19. This series will present innovative ways to be more green, including information on energy and water efficiency. With the cost of energy on the rise and water becoming an increasingly precious commodity, operating as efficiently as possible is not only a great way to “speak” to your customers, it will save you money. And who doesn’t want to bring down costs? Small investments and quick, easy adjustments really do add up.

So, join *Garden Chic* as, together, we become *EcoChic!*




a.k.a. ‘Football’ Charlie, who loves to be carried like a football, is a 14-year-old Humane Society rescue and a true momma’s boy. Severely stricken with diabetes and on death’s doorstep four years ago, our now-happy, healthy little “miracle kitty” is a testament to God’s healing power.

**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.