



**Van Wilgen's Garden Center,
North Branford, CT
www.vanwilgens.com**

This year will see additions to Van Wilgen's website, including a virtual tour of the 12-acre operation, accessed through a pull-down menu under "About Us." The garden center revamped the website last year, giving it an entirely new look. Visitors like the new format, which features lots of photos, including ones highlighting Van Wilgen's-grown plants. Getting information online is a collaborate effort of the entire team, says Marketing Director Patrice Defilippo. "I coordinate it, but it's really up to the horticultural specialists ... they are the people choosing the products," she says. Marketing materials, print ads and employees tout the retailer's web presence. It's working: traffic reports show a high volume of visitors, mostly to the Weekly Ads page.



**Valley View Farms,
Cockeysville/Hunt Valley, MD
www.valleyviewfarms.com**

Valley View Farms uses their website as an extension of the store, inviting customers to visit the garden center in person. They tried their hand at online sales this past Christmas, offering exclusive products not found at the discounters, but they don't plan on doing it again next year. "We did OK and had a lot of inquiries, but it's not really us," says Creative Director Lauren Kitch. "We thought we'd try it because we're in the day and age where everybody wants to buy things online, but really we are a brick-and-mortar store." Instead, they use the website to show who they are and the variety of things they offer. The website introduces visitors to key managers, some who have been with the company for 30 years.