



**Right-hand kitty**

Meet Oscar, our 2003 SPCA rescue, a feisty 18-pound, 11-year-old ragdoll. He is a real "people person" who absolutely loves to have anyone in the house - and lots of time in the garden!

# OET with Cheryl Morey Inspired

## Spring Inspiration

AHHH, SPRING. A wonderful time of the year, indeed. Snow is melting, trees are starting to green up, flowers are blooming and customers are itching to get out and plant! Hopefully, you've made some of those changes you have been meaning to make. You know what I mean, the sprucing up of your store that you *said* you were going to do last season.

Hmmm. Still haven't gotten to it yet? You aren't blaming the economy, are you? No reason to when you consider the success of this issue's StoreStyle garden center. Since their opening in 1997, IGC innovator Down

your blooming plants to make an intriguing, eye-catching display.

You have another source of inspiration just around the corner, so to speak. Before you know it, August will be here, and you know what that means - the Independent Garden Center Show returns to Navy Pier, Chicago!

As you and your staff go through this spring selling season, it is a good time to keep an eye on what trends your customers are buying into. What colors are catching their attention? What concerns do they have when it comes to addressing their gardening needs? Take notes. Have team

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to Earth in Wisconsin has nearly doubled their retail sales each year - and expect to quadruple them in 2010, after their second store in Eau Claire, WI, opens this April.

Perhaps you just need a little inspiration from spring itself. Take colors, for example - they are bright, new and fresh. What can you do with color? The first thing that comes to mind is paint. It's quick and cheap. Freshen up your store with a splash of color. Build an inexpensive wall on wheels that you can rotate around your store; change the colors to suit the various seasons, or tie it in to a special you are running. Get your pots off those boring stacks and coordinate their color with some of

meetings. Bring this newfound knowledge with you to Chicago, and you will be prepared to learn new ways to address customer concerns and find those all-important new products that will draw your customers' attention, and money, into your store. Find inspiration from outside the industry through our educational sessions. Plan to spend time networking to discover what other IGCs have found successful. The more information you gather coming into the IGC Show, the more assured you will be in your buying decisions. Make plans now to attend, and get inspired!

