



**Allisonville Nursery, Fishers, IN**

About 25,000 people are on the list for Allisonville Nursery's newsletter, which mails two to three times during the year. Designed with a seasonal theme, each issue includes an article by the owner, gardening tips, new plant varieties and more. Inside, customers will also find coupons, which they appear to appreciate most, according to Cheryl Troyer, Head of Finances. "It's interesting, we find people will use the percentage-off coupons for large-ticket items like fountains for \$1,000 or more," she says. "But people will also redeem them for 50 cents off one item. It's all over the board." Since 1999, when it first printed as basic black ink on colored paper, the newsletter has come a long way. Now, four full-color pages feature high-end graphics and stock photos.



**Johnson's Garden Center, Wichita, KS**

During the 17 years Johnson's Garden Center has published "Garden Talk," it has built an audience of more than 23,000 readers. From birds to organics, an overview of outdoor living is covered in each of the four to five full-color issues mailed annually. Members of the staff write most of the pieces, and have built a loyal fan base for the publication and the garden center. "I've run into customers who religiously save every issue we ever did," says Carolyn Utter, Marketing Director. "[The writers] kind of have a following in the stores. People will come in and talk to them about the products or information they put in the newsletter." Utter limits the coupons and special offers included in the publication, believing they date the content.



**Plant Detectives, Chester, NJ**

Producing its “4 Seasons Newsletter” is an expense for Plant Detectives, but President Art Laster believes it’s worth the investment since it helps distinguish his independent garden center from the big boxes. “Our [newsletter] says, ‘Here we are. We know what we’re talking about. We’re here to help you. We want to help you. Come in and see us,’” Laster says. Approximately 1,000 customers receive the newsletter, which focuses on educating gardeners. “The intention was never really to be a selling tool for the business,” Laster explains. “It was to be informative and educate our customer base in the hope that they would then say, ‘Wow, these people really know what they are talking about.’” Currently, the garden center mails one newsletter annually.



**Evergreen Nursery, San Leandro, CA**

Evergreen Nursery once mailed a newsletter to a list of about 10,000 customers every quarter, but the response didn’t justify the expense. Now, instead of incurring the costs associated with producing and mailing the paper piece, it posts the publication for download at its website twice a year. “We’ve had some decent response with it,” says Owner Dan Rodrigues, “probably every bit as much as we had with the direct mailing, to be honest with you.” In addition to featuring “In Season” at its website, the garden center e-mails the newsletter to a group of 30 to 40 regular customers. “People like to go the website,” Rodrigues says. “We change the pictures, and they like that. They can download the information, and it’s much simpler.”