

August



Clearing the Mind & Soul

Gardeners are using their backyard retreats to restore their minds and souls. **More than half of America's green thumbs reported in a recent survey that they plan to use their gardens for relaxation or a spiritual retreat.** As demographics mature, this will become even bigger as older individuals deal with more lofty issues of life purpose. The research was conducted by TechnoMetrica Market Intelligence for the Garden Writers Association.

'Had the Best Apartments'

When asked how they came up with such outstanding displays, store management at Naples, FL-based garden lifestyle retailer the Garden District said it was easy. The owner hired a man he knew who "always had the best apartments." While he has no formal background in retail, the guy obviously has a flair for the eye-catching and stunning. Makes the point that **garden centers need not try to outbid the "high street" stores, but rather look for natural talents.**

you can
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BE GARDEN CHIC

Got Tree Pods?

Why would you want a gazebo when you could have a number of tree pods in your own back yard? A Canadian company has developed **Free Spirit Spheres**, which let you live your dream of hanging out in a pod house. The company markets them as being cool for **relaxation, meditation, photography and bird watching.** They can also be hung from any other solid objects, such as buildings or rock faces. Discovery Channel recently reported on them.

Color Me Outdoors

The "color mafia" is at it again. Most recently, they reminded us that **dressing outdoor havens with hues that complement a home's exterior color palette can add flair.** "With outdoor living spaces gaining in popularity, many are incorporating color on decks, patios and outdoor furniture as well," explains Debbie Zimmer of The Rohm and Haas Paint Quality Institute. "Given today's vast selection of hues, there's no reason these entertaining areas can't be a show-stopper."

Real Chow @ the GC

The antithesis to supermarket convenience foods, **the trend for "slow food," or hand-picked produce and handmade foods, continues to grow.** One of the sweetest new offerings is Bee Raw Honey, which produces a delicious range of 10 regionally sourced floral honeys. The brand is focused on educating consumers about honey, good for more than just toast. Particularly in the U.K., top-end garden centers have scored big with such quality food offerings.

Gardening Beats Bed

Would you rather spend time in your garden or with your spouse? According to an Ipsos Reid survey for HGTV Canada, **21 percent of Canadians prefer the backyard to intimate interludes.** That's not the only dirty little secret revealed. It seems one in five homeowners compete with neighbors for the best garden and greenest lawn, with men more likely to feel the need to vie for the best garden title. Another 17 percent admit to stealing flowers from other gardens.