

November



Wal-Mart Goes Upscale

Hard to believe, but **Wal-Mart seems to be serious about targeting upper-income demographics.** Two prototype stores just opened in Texas and Pennsylvania are not what you'd expect. Five-hundred-dollar bottles of wine vie for shoppers' dollars, along with large-screen plasma TVs. After Wal-Mart's disappointment at the placement of Smith & Hawken in Target, the question remains how the discount giant will pull up its L&G and garden decor categories.

Houseplant Comeback?

A garden center category that had fallen into the doldrums may be readying for a comeback. **Houseplants, or tropical foliage, once a darling of garden retailers, are regaining their standing on the heels of improved varieties and snazzier pots** from the likes of Germany's Scheurich. What's more, Florida growers coming back from last year's hurricanes are eyeing high-end retailers as a more desirable market than depressed corporate interiors whacked by client cutbacks.

you can
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BE GARDEN CHIC

French Uprising

Not the sort of customer feedback any retailer would encourage, **French environmental activists are going to garden centers across the country, applying protest stickers to containers of Roundup herbicide.** Part of a society among the most opposed to genetic engineering in the world, the French protesters want to call attention to the fact that Roundup is a product owned by Monsanto, which has been targeted there as a backer of genetically engineered crops.

Orchids for All!

Once thought to be for the elite, **orchids are growing in popularity and are quickly becoming a mainstream favorite - thanks, in part, to lower prices from increased production.** Second in potted flowering plant sales right now with a wholesale value of \$128 million, orchid sales increased by 5 percent this past year. It's the second highest increase among all potted flowering plants. Orchids are second only to poinsettias; mums come in a distant third.

Pets Rule in the U.K.

Seventy percent of all pet food and supplies are bought at garden centers in the U.K. The American models of grocery, pet and warehouse retailers leading the category here don't apply across the Atlantic. **Many U.K. garden centers have expansive pet departments - often featured prominently at the front of the store.** Quality is key across the category, with high-performance chows for dogs and cats, beds, grooming gear and even hip duds for the well-dressed pet.

20.4 Mil. Shoppers Gone

It underscores the vital importance of turning Gen-Xers into gardeners: **Between now and 2030, we will lose more than 20 million baby boomers as they "march on to the pearly gates."** Of the remaining boomers, 54.9 percent of them will be female. In 24 years, boomers will be between the ages of 79 and 88. Still, these aging consumers will have higher levels of disposable income than the older generations before them. Will you be positioned to win their business?