

# Greensmith: Known for 'Ohio-Grown'

## Customers love that their money stays local

FOR EIGHT YEARS NOW, it has been Owner Jon Kolozvary's commitment to offer local Ohio-made products at The Greensmith Garden Center in Hinckley, OH. "All the box stores have products made overseas. We went to the local focus because they were selling many items we carried, at a price that was less than we could even buy it for," Kolozvary says. "Our customers absolutely love the idea that they can buy products that are local, and the money stays local."

Now, 75 percent of the products Greensmith sells are made in Ohio, and every plant is grown in the state.

Labels at each display area list the name of the local company that produces the product and what part of Ohio the product is made in. They also include the logo for Ohio Proud, a marketing program created by the Ohio Department of Agriculture that identifies and promotes products made or grown in the state. "They let us use their logo free of charge," Kolozvary says. "We can put it at our website or on our Facebook page, too, as long as the product is made in Ohio."

Being an affiliate partner of the Ohio Proud program benefits the garden center in other ways as well. "They have trade shows where just Ohio Proud members can get together and sell their products. They have vendor contacts, too, and they do an awful lot of advertising," Kolozvary says.



The No. 1 local seller at Greensmith is Sweet Peet, a compost made in Brunswick Hills, less than 5 miles from the garden center.

Wooden birdhouses are popular, too.

When Greensmith carries a vendor's product, it avoids offering competition for that product. "One of our vendors is an Ohio family that makes handmade soaps. We try to keep to just their product; we don't do 10 varieties of soap," Kolozvary explains.

Six of Greensmith's 40 vendors that sell their goods on consignment at the gift shop are from Hinckley, including Boswell's Beanery and Blends, which offers dry soup and dip mixes, gourmet coffees and teas, oils, vinegars, cocoa, rubs, marinades, sauces and salad dressings. "Customers who live in Hinckley look for these products," Kolozvary says.

Greensmith's garden center manager is tasked with keeping the green goods selection fresh, and travels to two or three growers in the state every week in search of new and unusual plants. By the end of each week, Greensmith's selection is far different from the week before, with at least 200 to 300 new plants. "We try to stay away from the common. The majority of our material is unusual," Kolozvary says. Plus, he explains, since the plants are grown under local conditions, "We don't have people bringing them back saying, 'This didn't make it.'" ■