

# The IGC Show Issue



## Quest for Quality

An analysis of consumer preferences indicates **quality-driven consumers favor garden center shopping, and price-driven shoppers prefer mass merchants.** During the last three years, a consistent “quality over price” attitude has been evident among households. Half of consumers value best quality as an important attribute in plant selection, while only about a quarter value best price with the same intensity they have for quality, according to research from the Garden Writers Association.

## Upside of Global Warming?

As the left- and right-wing talk shows debate the cause of global warming, the gardening reality of it all is heating up. Increasingly, **gardeners from Central Florida to the northern states are surprised that plants typically not viable in their zone are now doing quite well.** More tropicals and semitropicals will make their way north, some experts predict. The flip side is that some state flowers and plants may disappear, moving to cooler climates.

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## The Move to Casual

Demand for fine tableware is declining as the new-generation consumer shows more interest in less formal, affordable luxury. **More interested in creative, spontaneous entertaining, today's consumer is looking for “convenience, functionality and style,”** the International Housewares Association reports. Funky oversized wine glasses that serve not only *vino* but a trendy appetizer or dessert as well are hot - and most likely destined for the outdoor room.

## Women are ‘Greener’

It's probably no surprise: Recent consumer research out of the U.K. answers clearly which gardeners are “greener.” **The “slash and burn” attitudes of men stand in contrast to the gentler, more organic approaches of women.** The male gardener is much more likely to strive for instant gratification than his female counterpart. He wants results as quickly as possible, while she has more empathy in the garden, thus employing more organic means of garden controls.

## ‘Happy Staff’ Rethink

Just when everyone thought it was a fact, new research to prove a happy staff makes for happy customers - and happy profits - may not be panning out. Recent findings indicate some stores may have a gleeful staff but not-so-happy customers, or vice versa. **Some findings suggest a better understanding of customers' wants and needs is much more important.** One motivation tip: Talk to workers in person; they'll believe it if they can look into your eyes.

## Retros Roll On

Call it nostalgia: car manufacturers and many other consumer product designers are continuing to fulfill the “good old days” desires of aging baby boomers. Remake-inspired car models from the '60s and '70s are growing in numbers. Likewise, **plant types once almost forgotten are making their way back to garden centers, as are the much-maligned plastic pink flamingos.** Savvy designers are likely pouring over yellow-paged gardening magazines from the past for retro ideas.