

The IGC Show Issue

Kids, Pets and Organics

As the American consumer jumps on the organic/eco-friendly bandwagon, the big hot button prompting them to change are their kids and pets. Concern about the safety of their tots and furry ones around what they perceive as potentially harsh chemicals in the lawn and garden comes up as the top reason for going green. Interestingly, concern for dogs and cats topped kids with some parents. The message for IGCs: Promote green sales by showing pets and kids in your marketing.

What's In a Name?

Increasingly, the well-worn "garden center" moniker seems to no longer be definitive enough for the modern day IGC retailer. Consumers - especially Gen Yers - don't even seem to understand what a "garden center" is, exactly. More than a few younger consumers have been overheard referring to IGCs as "garden-ing" centers - and they seem confused as to what takes place or is sold there. A re-emergence of "nursery" seems to be a better, albeit quaint, alternative.

Vignettes Without Walls

Garden vignettes - small landscapes that inspire customers to visualize how plants and decor could work in their homes - are nothing new in American garden centers. But today, an emerging trend is starting to take them one step further. **Some IGCs are doing away with the hard-edged boundaries, letting vignettes flow more naturally.** The result is a more natural, free-flowing look that contributes to the overall aesthetics of the garden center's layout.

you can
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BE GARDEN CHIC

Vertical Gardening

While now mostly limited to commercial landscaping, **vertical gardening seems poised to grow into one of the next big trends among consumers.** With tighter living spaces and increased hardscape and patio areas, opportunities abound to take gardening up the wall. Expect to see smaller versions of "green walls" to make their way to the consumer. Many of these systems include auto-watering and modular planting grids. Get ready to play a lead role in this trend.

Gourmet Honey

Look for honey to be the next big upscale speciality food item. Trendwatching.com reports that, unlike supermarket honey - imported from China and Argentina or blended from many sources, creating a homogenous taste - new "artisan" honeys are a big improvement. There's a vast variety of local and specialty honey out now, with floral sources varying from Tupelo gum tree and Tasmanian leatherwood to cranberry and orange blossom. Sweet!

Vegetable Renaissance

Home vegetable and herb gardening is staging a major comeback on both sides of the Atlantic. Spurred by eco-friendly awareness, there seems to be more thought behind the quality of food we consume. **Combine that with the wild popularity of both cable TV cooking shows and ethnic cuisine, and you've got the makings of a veg-growing revolution.** The newest trend: veggies as part of standard landscaping beds - organically grown, in many cases.

