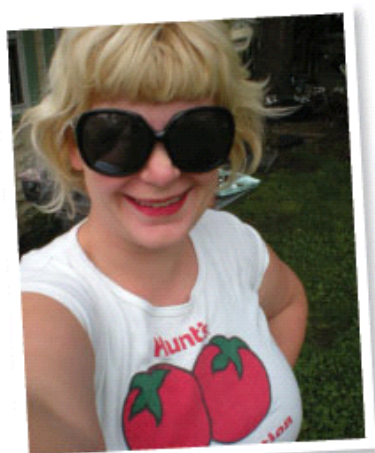


## Columns

4/28/2017

### Tiny Pieces of Stuff

Amanda Thomsen



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Every once in a while, my brain becomes so overly packed full of stuff that it starts to drip out. I'm not in control of how it drips because there's just too much going on. Too many directions. This is one of those times. I have a cold, I'm figuring out a new job as a farmer and I have a third trip to Walt Disney World (within 13 months!) imminent.

A friend is sending me many texts about borrowing tablecloths for an Alice in Wonderland party she's throwing (I own a zillion vintage tablecloths). I should be writing a book. My brain is a choppy sea right now ... or maybe more like a chopped salad? That sounds delicious, BTW.

Let me dribble a few totally disjointed thoughts, which may or may not pertain to the business of garden centers, down on paper for you:

- Please have one of the following things: a hot dog stand, popcorn booth, ice cream truck, grilled cheese van or person selling mixed tapes from a bicycle in your garden center. I shouldn't have to explain why; these are all necessary things for customer appreciation and employee satisfaction. You don't need to run them. Subcontract that.
- For every three displays of sophistication, please have one absurd display or humor, wonder or kitsch. Sometimes you just have to be as tasteful as a January watermelon.
- Now that I'm thinking about chopped salads, here's what's in a Portillo's chopped salad: romaine, ditalini, red cabbage, green onions, chicken, bacon, tomato, Gorgonzola and a spicy mustard/Italian dressing that has no mustard in it.
- I haven't mentioned Millennials at all in this column.
- When you're like, "Oh, we can't have weird plants in all the time because it's just too difficult" that's a lot like a sushi restaurant saying, "Oh yeah, it's too hard to have fresh fish in every day so we just use cans of tuna."

You know what's expected of you? To supply the unexpected. A least a little bit.

- Why do I see pots displayed by color but never by house style? Like here's the right pots for a Georgian style home, here's a good display of mid-century modern pots, check out some containers that look rad in front of a Cape Cod, here are contemporary containers ... P.S. I'd drive a long way for the promise of a mid-century display.
- Fall pots cannot ever be just four different kinds of cabbages/kales. Nope. If you use a ton of different stuff, you might be able to use two cabbages ... but you have to be a real master.
- Garden center owners and managers should sit in on local garden club meetings. It wouldn't hurt to hear what's on their minds. Bring your own coffee, though because they usually use that powdered creamer.
- Every garden center should have a cat on staff. I've been to terrible garden centers that I'd review positively on Yelp just because of the cat. More cats = better reviews.
- Have you found a school garden to donate to? Do it.
- I hope you have Hawaiian shirt Fridays (non-mandatory).
- I question garden centers that sell fake plants. Many conflicted feelings.
- You're Instagramming those packed benches, right?
- What Hogwarts house do you think most garden center employees are? I'm totally Hufflepuff.
- Did you know you can effectively clean off your muddy work boots with the air from a pneumatic tool thingie? I'm obsessed.

The bottom line: Life is busy, get your thoughts out however you can. Don't keep them canned up like tuna.

**GP**

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*Amanda Thomsen is now a regular columnist in Green Profit magazine. You can find her funky, punky blog planted at [KissMyAster.co](http://KissMyAster.co) and you can follow her on Facebook, Twitter AND Instagram @KissMyAster.*