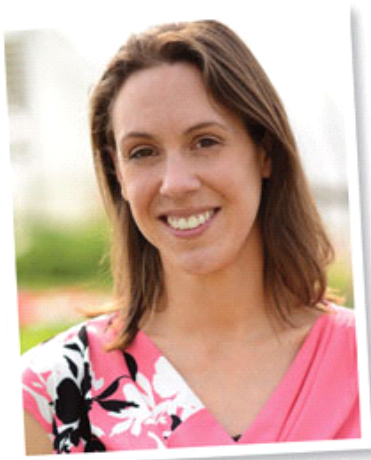


4/1/2018

Reaping the Benefits

Jennifer Polanz



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Perhaps I'm wrong, but I feel as though plants have a lot of momentum right now. We've just been through (and hopefully are on the other side from) a rather harsh winter, both in precipitation and in dreariness. The never-ending news cycle of chaos continues to wear us down. Spring is here and with it comes the color and renewal we all require to move forward and prosper.

The best part is, we have great things going on inside the home and outside. Customers will flock to garden centers for their annual shot of color for hanging baskets, mixed containers and (let's cross our fingers) their annual and perennial flower beds, as well as veggies for their raised bed gardens and patio pots. Even better is they likely will continue to explore plant ownership inside the home with houseplants, so we need to continue to be there for our customers in that department, too (in fact, long-time industry

consultant Ian Baldwin was recently interviewed by The New York Times about the explosion in Millennials loving houseplants).

Our momentum continues with the discussion of native plants, pollinators and beneficial insects. Our industry has a great opportunity to mold the minds of the future by talking with kids now about the importance of habitats for pollinators and the use of beneficial insects to control pest populations. Our kids need to get dirty and they need to learn about bugs. I'm happy to see many garden centers and public gardens taking on this task through fun workshop ideas and classes dedicated to our youth. I also see many teachers taking on these roles by incorporating inside the classroom and outside as clubs students can participate in after school.

We're doing our part here by talking about how garden centers can benefit from using beneficial insects in their stores and starting the dialog with customers about them. The concept goes far beyond just the bugs, and translates into new plants to recommend, and a more holistic way to approach pest control.

There are other benefits we can reap, too, this year if we look for them. Retailer Valerie Nalls debates the pros and cons of a looser warranty policy. Take a look and see which one works for you.

Meanwhile, industry consultant Sid Raisch concludes his series on Death by Inventory. You may find more benefit in a more defined inventory selection or by partnering with suppliers that can drop-ship to your customers for their convenience.

Also, columnist and consultant Bill McCurry visited the NRF's Big Show in January to find apps are the thing. Find out why, and how you can use them to your benefit.

When Editor Ellen Wells took a look at our Houseplant Department series this month, she decided to focus on the NICH infographics retailers can use to help sell these air-purifying producers of indoor happiness.

Hopefully, these stories and more in this issue help you to continue the momentum forward through spring and into summer and beyond. **GP**