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The Perfect Gift

Jennifer Polanz



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According to a book published a while back, there are five languages of love, and giving gifts is one of them. While I'm not sure about the scientific accuracy of this sentiment, it's clear there are people out there who convey their emotions through gifts.

A thoughtful gift can strengthen a relationship, bridge a gap or just make someone's day. My personal favorites are simple ones—the \$1 Wonder Woman pin I wear on my purse because my son bought it with his own money; the very specific dark chocolates my husband buys me that he knows I love; the shell-bejeweled picture frame my daughter made featuring a vacation photo of the two of us. My other favorite is to buy an ornament representing any place we travel to or vacation at. Then, at Christmastime, we reminisce about all the fun we had at that spot as we hang it on the tree.

Carrying ornaments and gifts (and plants that can be given as gifts) in the garden center isn't just about providing a product; it's helping your customers convey to their loved ones how much they care. It's about a moment in time or a memory that needs to be commemorated. A well-curated gift selection can give customers years of good feelings, memories and enjoyment (hopefully, tied to your garden center!).

We know gift buying starts in January (or earlier, as one of our stories can attest), but sometimes you get to fall and realize you may need that certain something else to complete your department. Or perhaps a shipment got held up somewhere along the line. Ellen Wells did some legwork to find some suppliers who can get you last-minute product before the holidays get underway. Check out her story, along with a link to cash-and-carry shows coming up.

You can read about retailers who skip the suppliers and January markets, and instead go direct to the source. With the help of a seasoned veteran in the gift and garden products segment, they visited manufacturers in China, Thailand and the Philippines to tour the plants and place orders. A trip for Christmas 2020 is happening this fall, so read that story to see if it's the right fit for you.

Columnist John Friel, who inspired my title, gives us a rundown of his favorite gifts for gardeners. And speaking of gifts, your plant knowledge is truly a gift to your customers. Turn to Amanda Thomsen's column on how to guard against customers abusing the gift.

At the risk of sounding super cheesy, the greatest gift we have is the gift of life and this beautiful Earth we call home.

Ellen highlights a recent story out of The Guardian saying trees have a “mind-blowing” potential to remove carbon emissions from the air. How can we band together as an industry to get the word out about the benefits of simply planting a tree? Is it a holiday item (can you gift a tree?) or is it more for fall (fall is for planting, right?) or spring? Email me (jpolanz@ballpublishing.com) and let me know how you’re helping customers to learn the benefits of trees. **GP**