

## Features

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## Styling Solutions: Must-Have Mix-Ins

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**BRAUN**  
HORTICULTURE

### Styling Solutions: The Series

Working closely with their customers over the last several years, Braun Horticulture realized it's important to not only offer distinctive garden products to retailers, but to present solutions to displaying these products, as well. To fill this need, Braun has developed a line of fixtures and display elements in various styles. For more information about the Styling by Braun program, call (330) 607-7538 or e-mail [sued@braungroup.com](mailto:sued@braungroup.com).



### Mixing in Plants

When it comes to seasonal plants, consumers may be more motivated to purchase them if retailers provide tips and hints for how to mix them in with different non-plant items. Seasonal plants, such as poinsettias, are best displayed in combination with everyday items, as well as other seasonal items, says Rochelle Zimmerman, showroom and display designer at Otter Creek Wreath Factory. "Successful merchandising with plants as well as other items is all about making people think outside the box," she says. Luckily for retailers, the possibilities are limitless.



## Less is More ...

It's important not to make a display too busy when cross-merchandising plants, says Renae Bobbett at Beaver Bark Gift and Garden Center. She recommends retailers start with a focal point of interest and work their way out from there.

Indeed, retailers shouldn't have too many ideas in one display but instead should focus on a main theme, such as color, texture or a particular plant, says Nancy Proman, director of independent retail services at the Dynamic Experiences Group LLC, a retail consulting firm. "Simple displays without clutter will give a clear message to customers, helping them to understand the point of the display in the first place," she says.



## ... But Don't Forget the Fun

Just because a display should be simple, but elegant, doesn't mean retailers can't express creativity and have fun. Use the shock element and incorporate something that instantly draws attention to a display, says Fiona Brinks at Bordine's Nursery. "We built a huge three-tier cake out of moss and used potted plants around each layer. Even though we had the same plants located in the area, customers had to have the ones in the cake. We constantly had to fill the cake," she says.

Vibrant and exotic color schemes are also good ways to show off plants, says Rochelle. "Paint your walls hot pink and display red poinsettias in it. Evergreen garland with oranges and cinnamon sticks in it is a visually stimulating setting when combined with pink poinsettias," she says. A modern display could combine mirrors, silver balls, white lights in clear vases and red or white amaryllis. "A truly successful display is always about inspiring and convincing people that they can create in their own home the beauty you have displayed in front of them," says Rochelle.

**Cross-merchandising plants with containers, gift items and more can be fun for retailers and exciting for shoppers, but there are a few "don'ts" to consider.**

- Avoid wilted plants and yellow leaves.
- Keep displays with plants away from cold areas.
- Elevate plants off the floor to avoid tripping hazards.
- Exercise care when watering to avoid spills and puddles.
- Don't overfill displays, which can reduce shopability.

## Build It Up

Incorporating crates and other items into plant displays can help add dimension to a flat surface and build it up, says Fiona. "Simple crates, colorful pottery or small wood tables can help get the plants to eye level," she says.

During the spring, some of Bordine's biggest moneymakers are combination planters displayed in the center greenhouse areas. The planters sell as complete items, but are also good mannequins for all the components used in the container. "We grew mandevilla, Euphorbia Breathless Blush and lysimachia in a beautiful pot complete with an obelisk this year," says Fiona. "They retailed for \$69.99. We sold every one, but better yet, we went through two containers of mandevilla vines."



### Quick Tip

**Always include a sign on the cross-merchandised display, recommends Renae. However, the sign should never focus on price "unless that's what we want the reader to focus on," she says. "Usually, it is whatever the benefit would be of what they are looking at."**

## Can You Feel It?

Texture can be a good theme to build a display around. When it comes to fall mum displays, Bordine's tries to incorporate as many textures as possible, says Fiona. "Fall mums are probably one of the easiest plants to tie in sales and have an instant impact at the register," she says.

Displays can include straw bales as easy bench risers, flowering cabbage, corn stalks, Indian corn, pumpkins and Bordine's pumpkin pots, says Fiona. "Combination planters this time of year are also great additions to the display. You can either sell as is or customers get instant ideas about what to put together themselves."

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