

Features

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Last-Minute Gift Ordering

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Here's the scenario: Your gift buyer got the holiday hot-sellers right. The products are flying off the shelves. Unfortunately, she also got the numbers wrong. You'll have an unhappy situation—empty shelves in your gift department—during the happiest time of year. Bah humbug.

Or maybe you had a late start to your gift-ordering season because spring was nutso. Or maybe you ordered product and it never came. Or maybe you're new at this and screwed up the scheduling. Whichever situation you're in, you're out of luck and woefully unprepared for the holidays.

Or are you? Is there something you can do, somewhere you can go to help fill Santa's sack?

Arett's Got It Covered

Checking in with Arett Sales, a major lawn, garden, home and outdoor living distributor, I was assured that buyers do still have lots of holiday-appropriate gift items available to them. "Every year we receive numerous requests from customers looking for holiday and gardening-related items that are good for last-minute gift giving," says Jim Williams, Arett's vice president of merchandising. "We recommend garden centers plan well in advance for these types of items. To ensure the best selection and on-time delivery, Jim adds, those purchases should be made in January. "Even for customers who miss the early buy window, last-minute items can still be found."

They have holiday-specific gifts through their Good Tidings division, including LED-lit snowmen, tree ornaments and the like. In Arett's Terra Verde Home division, garden- and nature-themed gifts still in stock include painted ceramic mushrooms, garden benches and plant stands.

A Kurt Adler Christmas

You may think the products available from Kurt Adler—a company and name synonymous with Christmas—would be sold out six months or more in advance. Not true! Peter Trovato of Kurt Adler suggests customers order "as

quickly as possible as merchandise continues to sell out,” he says.” However, even at the end of the year, we still have thousands of items available in all categories. We continue to ship through the end of December and look forward to helping the independent garden centers with their holiday needs.”

To find what’s in stock and what’s not, Peter says to register for a wholesale account on their website, www.kurtadler.com. This gives you access to the wholesale section for pricing and ordering purposes. Peter says, “Sold-out items will still show up on the retail side so that consumers can see what items we sell and possibly purchase at a retail location.” If you want to see the products beforehand, the best way to do that is to visit one of the 11 Kurt Adler showrooms, which you can find listed on the site.

Made in the U.S.A.

One sure way to get your late-ordered products in time is buying American-made. Studio M, which sells poles, planters, door décor and more, features artworks created by global artists. “Many of our products are made or printed in the U.S.A.,” marketing manager Maura Godat says. “We typically ship orders within three to five days so retailers can get what they need when they need it.”

Some of their newer items are appropriate as grab-and-go holiday gifts. Their Field Guide line has gift items such as tea towels, coffee mugs and more with beautiful bird, butterfly and wildflower illustrations. They also have the Garden Humor collection featuring witty sayings and trendy illustrations. “Our wide array of gift and garden décor flies off shelves all year round, but especially around Christmas,” Maura says.

Christmas for Kids

Home décor wholesale supplier Accent Décor is seeing garden center customers expand their customer base and including more home and gift options. Some of their most successful products are those for kids (and the kid within everyone), such as the animal-themed drop-in pots. “We continue to expand our animal trend with our exclusive Untamed Collection, which includes a cheetah, zebra and tiger—all great for dropping an air plant or succulent and have a great last-minute gift,” says sales director Jennifer Frisk. They also offer several holiday specific items, such as nativity scenes, ornaments and garlands. Accent Décor does their best to ship within 48 hours so you can stock your shelves quickly, and that is helped along by keeping inventory up in both their East and West Coast distribution centers. **GP**

Pro Tip!

Go to smart-retailer.com/trade-show-calendar/ and search for the words “cash and carry” and “immediate delivery.” There are several shows national and regional shows that offer chances for last-minute, buy-it-and-take-it-with-you deals.