

## Features

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## Full Price Fall Sales

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Managing inventory and appropriately merchandising throughout the season to hold price integrity is how you make a great year your best year ever. The name of the game is to balance the right amount of stock throughout the season while continuing to look fresh and ready for impulse sales.

*Pictured: The “Rule of 3s” works well with varieties like Shining Sensation Weigela, Tiger Eyes Staghorn Sumac and Iceberg Alley Sageleaf Willow from the First Editions lineup in a triangle formation.*

The reason discounting in fall occurs isn’t just because the season is winding to a close. In fact, more home gardeners are realizing the benefits of fall planting every year. Discounting becomes a tactic primarily due to not utilizing your retail super-power: keeping the momentum of spring sales going by bringing in fresh product, merchandising it well and engaging marketing efforts to maintain foot traffic for that ongoing eye candy.

Consumers shop in spring because they’re starved for green and blooming plants. But some of the best shrubs and trees aren’t at peak that time of year, so we must keep driving those home gardeners to shop—and teach them how to shop—during the times of year they may not typically be in the garden center: summer and fall. Merchandising shrubs and trees at retail helps communicate how and when plants will perform best in home landscapes.

You can help consumers choose their favorite new shrub or tree—or even better, a pairing of them—by merchandising in a way that makes it easy to shop. Research has shown that shrubs and trees can be intimidating, but merchandising and signage can break down those barriers, and increase unit sales and sales volume per customer.

The key to summer and fall sales success is to keep the merchandised displays simple. Here are some suggestions:

- Use sets of threes when merchandising: Our brains are quick to understand groups of three, so showcase three key varieties together that would complement each other in the landscape.
- Have fun with texture: Mix fine-textured plants with coarse. Foliage displays can be outstanding! Showing the

consumer how to plant a mixture of texture, foliage and color helps them build a well-rounded garden.

- Color-blocking: Create colorful combo displays like hot reds and oranges or cool blue, silver and white. Bring them back to elementary school with the color wheel theory to assist with landscape design. And really play up those species that shine in summer and fall; spring isn't the only season for eye candy any longer!
- Seasonal interest displays: Create blocks of plants that will be at their peak together: summer stunners and fall fashion.
- Plants that offer "double duty": Help customers understand that some plants do more than just bloom in spring, but can also offer fabulous great fall color or winter interest. Plants like Opening Day Viburnum and Jetstream Hydrangea have fabulous flowers in spring and early summer, and then have incredible deep burgundy fall color. Extending the "benefits" of plants add value to the consumer.
- Plants with purpose: Homeowners love their flighted friends, so why not position plants that add biodiversity and beauty into their gardens. Introduce home gardeners to unique new plants with purpose that also hit on major trends like ecological planting and pollinators.
- Project-based displays: This is the hardworking, problem-solving display. Foundation plantings projects with plants that stay under 4 ft., mass and privacy plantings for hillsides or property lines, small fruits for a backyard orchard, water-tolerant or drought-tolerant selections, and more. Solve the homeowner's problem by merchandising like varieties together will move more plants than having them sorted alphabetically.

Use your super-power skills of creating beautiful and functional merchandised displays at the peak of the season to steer away from discounted sales in the fall. Let's move past the idea of shoulder seasons and make spring, summer and fall all key retail seasons by creating the demand with fresh product.

Make a plan to move inventory and sell out at full retail prices. Imagine no discounted sales for fall 2021. With a little intentional planning now, one could reasonably avoid having to put shrubs on sale. What a great way to end another crazy year! **GP**

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