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Shop Corner: Curating Your Selection

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Editor's note: We're starting up a new segment that will appear here each month, focusing on houseplant shops. In this space, we'll highlight business tips, marketing, buying and other topics that will help smaller shops make their businesses more effective. To contribute your thoughts, please email me at jpolanz@ballpublishing.com.

I recently stopped by Grow Geneva, an impeccably designed and curated store owned by Laura Pettit, a former schoolteacher who started her small business experience with a vintage shop in Sycamore before branching out into a plant shop in scenic Geneva, Illinois.

We talked about her method of selecting product as one of the keys to her success. She found early on that the majority of her customers didn't want rare and collectable plants, but instead good quality conventional houseplants (and lots of them). She still brings in some rare items, as customers enjoy seeing them and they do sell, but she works closely with a broker called Chicago Foliage to hand-select the plants she brings in

weekly. Creating key relationships with suppliers has allowed her to receive quality material.

"Our room for margin of error is so small," Laura says of the reason she goes to great lengths to make sure their quality is top notch and what her customers want. For non-plant material, she shops Faire, a wholesale site for small batch makers, to support other small businesses. In a business where every square foot counts, being super selective of the product and reading the surrounding neighborhoods' tastes becomes even more vital.

You'll be able to read more about Laura's shop in next month's *Green Profit* when we feature Grow Geneva in our On the Road section. **GP**