

5/1/2023

In a New Light

Jennifer Polanz



Jennifer Polanz

We talk in this space all the time about telling your story. We touch on the best places to talk about what you do and who should tell your story. Sometimes you can add to your story in a way that makes customers see you in a different light.

Here's an example. My colleague Ellen Wells went down to Georgia to see Monrovia's Cairo nursery (which, after nearly 20 years in the industry, I had no idea they had a nursery there). They didn't just invite trade media, though, they also invited social media influencers. Because even though we didn't know about the nursery, we've been to Monrovia facilities before and knew somewhat what to expect. These influencers, though, had no idea and were pretty impressed with what it takes to grow beautiful trees, shrubs and perennials for us all.

Of course, we all know there are many growing operations like this all around the country. But does the general public? When they're shopping retail do they even consider how, for example, that 1-gal. Echinacea Sombrero Lemon Yellow made its way to the bench? Maybe not, but if you showed them all the work that went into it, whether it's through a video or an actual tour, they might respect that price and the beauty of the plant a whole lot more. And they might start to think about your operation a little differently.

There's also opportunity to pair garden centers and plant shops with other concepts to change a customer's way of thinking. One of our stories this month highlights The Victorian in Atlanta, a plant shop with two locations. One is co-located with a coffee shop (I visited that one) and the other is under construction now as a cocktail bar and plant shop. These concepts bring in people who might not be plant people initially, but if they hang around enough, they might explore the plant options. Check out that story and don't miss the houseplant accessories story, as well.

Johnson's Nursery saw an opportunity to change the community's perspective slightly by opening its retail location to show retail customers they could offer them the beautiful wholesale products they were known for in the industry.

Sometimes we can look at plants in a new light, too. Annuals are often regarded for their blooms, but what about when their foliage does the heavy lifting? Don't they deserve some love, too? Well, this month Andrew Bunting provides the spotlight for them.

And, finally, speaking of a new light, last month in this space I moaned about "Cleveland in Winter" syndrome and the gray, dreary days of winter. But now the trees are showing their buds, the forsythia is bursting forth, the sun is making a triumphant return and the Guardians are back on the ballfield. Ah, Cleveland—in this light you don't look so bad after all. **GP**