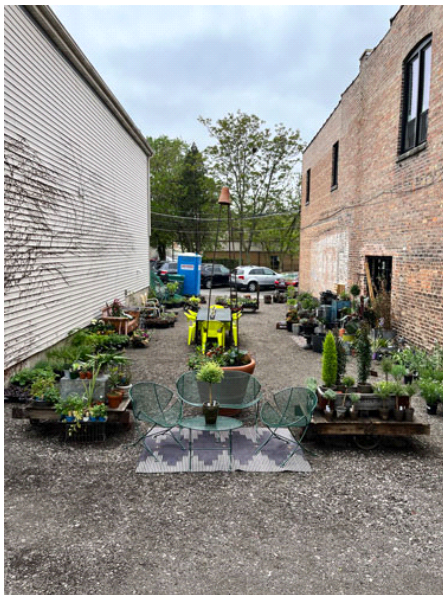


Kiss My Aster

6/1/2023

I Was Up Above It (Now I'm Down in It)

Amanda Thomsen



It was my intention to NOT write about the status of the shop this month, but I'm honestly so down in it that I can't think coherently about much else. And that's probably how it should be. I swear I'll move onto broader subject matter the second my brain will allow it.

Status report:

- Sales were down 47% in April and since I don't have a year of sales reports to base on, I ASSUMED my quite good sales in March were going to continue to escalate in April and I bought SO MUCH STUFF. I don't know how I could have not made this mistake. I'm only now selling through the stuff I bought and I'm struggling to pay it off. I'm not being hard on myself about it—it's all just part of the process and it happens when one assumes things. What made April slow? I can only assume the gorgeous weather sandwiched between horrific tornado-like weather and tax season ...?

- My outdoor sales area had a hard deadline of April 1 and that deadline just skidded right past me. As of mid-May, we have a surface and quite a bit of product, but the gates are hitched up in permitting and I want to scream. We are bringing things in at night like total idiots. This, however, is out of our hands and I need to just be Zen about it, which I'm doing a ridiculously good job at. My off-duty personality has always been too anxious, so it's kind of kicky to see my entrepreneurial self transcend the absolute crap and feel good about it.

- I have an employee I've brought on to help run classes that has fun excuses. The other day it was: "I guess my guinea pig had babies last night so I'm going to be two hours late." Listen, if someone doesn't want to do their job that badly, I have to laugh (and have a conversation with that person about their intentions, obviously).

- I'm waiting on payment from a recruitment grant from the village that will not put me ahead of the game, but will level everything out to the point where I'll just feel better. I turned it in back in March and every day I wake up hoping today is the day that puppy is in my mailbox. The grant offered half of my money back, if I spent \$25,000 on things like a register, fixtures, signage and construction. I remember my naive self, only one year ago, thinking there was NO WAY I could spend \$25k getting the shop open. Wasn't Past Amanda adorable?

- Speaking of the village, I chose the location for the shop because I was told (a year ago) that there was a bajillion dollar park going in behind the building that would bring in families, moms with strollers, etc., and up until last week I thought I had just taken their word for something that was never going to happen. Now I'm certain that something IS

going to happen, but I'm starting to doubt it will be the original concept of a food truck court, year-round ice rink and something for kids to climb on/get hurt on. We shall see! If it happens, my garden center area is a perfect pass through from one part of town to the park and it would be a lovely benefit.

I give myself grace, not only because the shop hasn't been open for a year yet. A galaxy of planets are aligning and I can feel it.

What we do is hard. Period.

And I'm the weirdo that purposely chose to start up now, of all the weird times, and then to do it differently. I'm breaking some patterns not only in myself, but where I believe traditional retail is simply broken. No lies, even on the worst days, I feel like I'm kicking aster. **GP**

Amanda Thomsen is a funky, punky garden writer and author. Her blog is planted at KissMyAster.com and you can follow her on Facebook, Twitter AND Instagram @KissMyAster.