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## Connecting the Dots

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It's always interesting to talk plants with friends. The conversation usually starts out with how to get plants affordably and I always try to keep in mind budgetary constraints. But then something interesting happens when I talk about specific plants and their benefits—the budget seems to become less of an issue. When I talk about better genetics and longer-lasting options that are less likely to disappoint (and are more bulletproof), the little extra cost seems like less of a barrier.

Sometimes what it takes is connecting those dots about why a product may cost a little more. I know that's not always easy to do, though. It requires communicating effectively in ways customers will actually see and hear—and in today's fragmented media landscape, that can be tricky. It might take posts and descriptions via a website or through social media, or it could be in-store at the point of purchase or

through workshops and seminars, or a combination of all of it. But after seeing the numbers from Axiom Marketing's latest consumer study, it's clear gardening customers are choosing home improvement box stores for plants first, but still say they get the best quality plants and their questions answered at independents.

*Pictured: January was a big month: I celebrated National Houseplant Day with a clivia gifted to me by my husband and then a Buckeye National Championship later in the month. Go Bucks!*

Perhaps this year we can connect the dots on why those plants are better, and why independents offer the best service and information—as well as why that might mean a slightly higher price tag. We can help get you started by offering the whys behind some of the products we're highlighting in this issue. For example, in my cover story on containers this month, I asked about the different materials being used and how they can be a benefit to the end consumer, whether that's providing a lighter, more eco-friendly or more durable container. To complement that story, I asked breeders for new upright and hanging basket combinations to put in those containers.

One movement I'm starting to see some traction on is the idea of planting groundcovers and creating flower beds where turf had been. I don't know if this is a full-blown trend (yet), but now there's even a day celebrating it on May 20 called Reduce Your Lawn Day. I like this for a couple of reasons—it encourages more plant sales, but doesn't do it by vilifying lawns. The message is simple: If you don't use the lawn for something, then consider reducing the size of it with more plants.

And, finally, you may remember Ben Futa from my profile of his South Bend, Indiana, store Botany in January 2022. Ben's back in *Green Profit*, this time as a guest columnist providing his five strategies for thriving in 2025. One of them (spoiler alert) involves retailers finding their own support system. I, too, think this is a great goal for this year—

connecting with each other will be vitally important not just for learning new ideas and concepts, but to find a common voice and commiserate with someone who understands.

I'm curious, too, what you think the keys for 2025 will be. If you'd like to share, please email me at [jpolanz@ballpublishing.com](mailto:jpolanz@ballpublishing.com) to let me know! **GP**