

## Front Lines

4/30/2025

### Dynamic Trio

Jennifer Polanz



There's something new at Cultivate'25 this year, geared toward helping smaller independent garden center retailers and plant shops thrive. It's a full day of retail sessions hosted by the titular dynamic trio: Amanda Thomsen, owner of Aster Gardens and *Green Profit* monthly columnist; Katie Elzer-Peters, owner of Garden of Words and bi-monthly *Green Profit* columnist; and Benjamin Futa, owner of Botany and *Green Profit* contributor.

The three entrepreneurs will be coming together for six sessions on Saturday, July 12 that are included in the All-Access Pass and designed for businesses around \$1 million or under (although anyone can find great ideas from any of these sessions). The goal? For attendees to leave with strategies for building community connections, leveraging data and technology, enhancing operations, and maintaining balance.

I asked each of them why they wanted to create this day-long series.

"I know that programs like ours are important because I have people telling me all the time that they wish things were a little more ... unexpected. And I've been hearing this sentiment since forever," said Amanda, who added the world is changing and programming should, too. "It's time to shake some things up and maybe get out the disco ball ...?"

For Ben, it's about authenticity, and helping small business owners create community and show their value.

"Our community needs to see who we are. Why we are. How we are," he said. "Really, it's ... a mantra, a calling, a mission, a challenge to ourselves to be more authentic, more vulnerable and more honest."

Katie also sees the struggles of small retailers through her consulting business.

"From my perspective, it is so important to have a day like this that is geared toward local and independent retailers that are not multimillion dollar companies because most independent businesses are not multimillion dollar businesses and yet they still have to DO all of the functions that a larger business does," she said.

Interested? Check out the schedule below and head to [cultivateevent.org](https://cultivateevent.org) to register. We at *Green Profit* are thrilled to sponsor the events of the day.

## Sessions in the Series

**9:00-10 a.m.—Nothing Small About It: Rethinking Local and Independent Retail**

**10:30-11:30 a.m.—Indie Biz Report Boot Camp**

**11:30 a.m.-Noon—Indie Biz Swap Shop**

**1:00-2:00 p.m.—Mind Mapping: Business Planning But Make It Fun**

**2:30- 3:30 p.m.—Indie Biz Tech: Building Your Tech Stack**

**4:00-5:00 p.m.—Burnout & Balance as a Local Indie Business Owner**