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GMG's Garden Pulse Analysis

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You may have concerns about tariffs and their potential economic repercussions, but your customers don't—at least when it comes to their gardening. That's the result of some in-depth analysis that popped into my inbox from the folks at Garden Media Group and their Garden Pulse: Spring 2025 Analysis.

The report indicates that while other industries show slowing traffic and declining sales, gardening is holding strong if not growing—despite cold weather, consumer caution and tariff-fueled economic anxiety. They found that 2025 early spring garden sales are just 3.9% behind 2024 sales, despite some of the generally dismal weather we've had so far this spring.

"In 2008, 2020 and now again in 2025, we're seeing a familiar pattern," Katie Dubow, president of Garden Media Group, said in a release about the report. "When people face financial or emotional uncertainty, they return to their roots—literally."

What does the data say?

Frontline sales at independent garden centers were nearly identical to those in the first three months of 2024 and are up 27% from the first months of 2020, with strong demand for both edibles and ornamentals.

Wildlife garden certifications from The National Wildlife Federation have surged 12% over last year, reaching their highest number of new certifiers in April since 2021.

As of March 2025, garden centers using Square have seen an 8.6% increase in processing gross profit and a 9.3% increase in transaction volume compared to 2024.

What does this mean for you, the garden retailer? "The message is clear—don't pull back," The Garden Center Group's president Danny Summer said in the release. "Even in the face of tariffs and unpredictable weather, gardening continues to thrive. Now's the time for retailers to stay confident and visible and not discount."

Here are some suggestions from GMG and The Garden Center Group about what you should be doing now:

Reclaim the Story: Position gardening as the antidote to uncertainty. Utilize signage, email and social posts to highlight the value of staying home, digging in and investing in wellness through plants.

Host to Grow: Schedule events, classes and hands-on workshops now. Experiences are driving traffic and increasing cart sizes. From seed-starting to pollinator planting parties, give your customers a reason to come—and come back.

Stock What Sells: Prioritize high-demand edibles and convenience gardening products. Think beans, tomatoes, cucumbers—plus seed tapes, mats and pelleted options. Emphasize time-saving, success-boosting solutions at every price point.

Champion Real-Life Sustainability: Sid Raisch suggests you be the local, sustainable alternative to chain stores and imported goods. Promote growing healthy food without chemicals or heavy shipping costs. Inspire families to swap screen time for green time—building gardens together, learning real-life skills and reconnecting with nature and each other. Gardening offers not just food, but wellness, resilience and self-reliance.

Read the full spring analysis at gardenmediagroup.com. **GP**