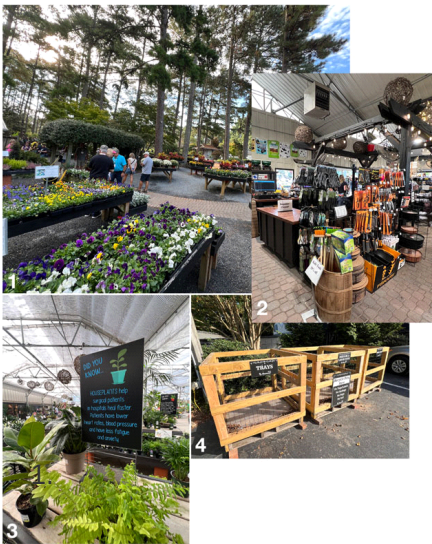


Features

10/31/2025

Pick Your Vibe

Jennifer Polanz



It's not often you visit five uniquely different garden centers in one day, but that's what we did on this year's Garden Center Group Fall Event retail tour around the greater Raleigh area. There were great ideas and lessons at each, and I'm going to hit the highlights here. Stay tuned in future issues for more photos, too (like Christmas Land at DeWayne's).

Homewood Nursery & Garden Center

Homewood, owned by Joe Stoffregan, has been a mainstay in Raleigh for 58 years, and this particular store has been "Rooted in Raleigh" for 47 years amid mature pine trees that make for a serene shopping experience. They're a grower-retailer with 33 total acres, 8 of which are retail.

A couple of things to note here are the black-rimmed display tables filled with seasonal product, the paved walkways leading through the sales yard and the mature trees.

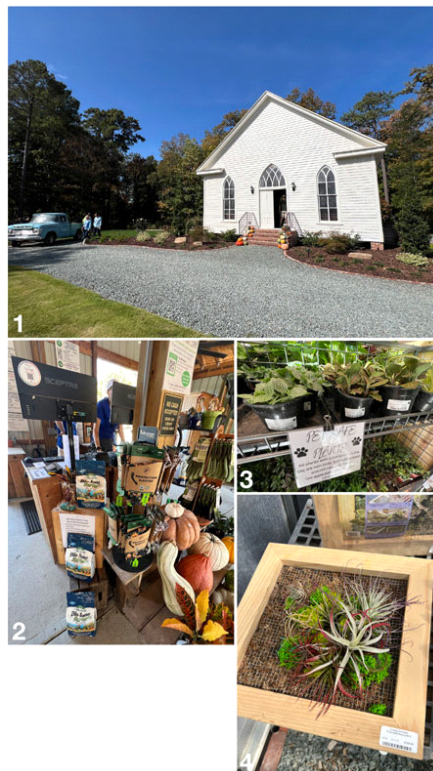
2. Inside the retail store, the checkouts stood out with a black pergola and twinkly lights, while last-minute impulse items like gloves, tools, drip trays and snacks tempted customers.
 3. Showing customers all the great benefits of houseplants can close the deal when someone is on the fence.
 4. Homewood gives customers the ability to bring back plastic pots and trays and recycle them. This is adjacent to the parking lot for easy access.
 5. The Potting & Design Center makes it clear they'll pot up any plant and/or create designs for customers looking for something special.
-

For Garden's Sake

In business for more than 25 years, For Garden's Sake in South Durham, owned by Scott and Marsha Pearce, is also amongst mature trees, but has a quirkier nature than Homewood. Set on 21 acres, only 1.5 acres are retail, and they just recently refurbished an old chapel to start hosting weddings.

There's a winding pathway from the garden center to the chapel and they have an open space for receptions, as well as building with multiple restrooms (not pictured).

1. There are a number of things to mention with the checkouts: A sticker with a QR code to leave a review on Google, tempting impulse items like protective sleeves, Bio-Tone Starter (which is great for any plant) and a notice that they don't accept cash, only debit or credit cards.
2. Now this is a great idea—a paw print on the label of every plant that's safe for pets. It's likely one of the top questions asked about houseplants.
3. Plant are art and with these Living Frames you can sell them as such. For Garden's Sake had them both pre-planted and just the frames.



Fairview Greenhouses & Garden Center

Now past its 50th anniversary, Fairview has been through many iterations to land at its current state of grower-retailer, growing all their own annuals and many of their own perennials. They have 15 acres, with 6 of it retail, and 24,000 sq. ft. of covered shopping, and their family atmosphere makes them a cherished part of their community.



1. FNGLA's Billy Deal helped me show off their "selfie" wall where customers can remember their experience with a pic.
- 2-3. Fairview had the best fall container combos I saw on this trip, with unique and fun pairings to inspire customers and set themselves apart.
4. This photo is just one example of the clean and shoppable displays that were everywhere at Fairview.

Logan's Garden Shop

The Logan family has been in the garden center business for 60 years, but has only been open at their current location about seven months. They moved from downtown Raleigh to the State Farmer's Market, a prime 2-acre location situated amongst multiple buildings hosting stalls for a permanent farmers market. Another interesting twist: They sell hardware store products along with garden.



1. The shop does a nice job pulling customers in with the visible graphics on the greenhouse and then setting the mood at entry.
 2. The outside retail is easy to shop with wide concrete walkways and wide aisles through trees and shrubs.
 3. Clear signage gives potential buyers a rundown on the plant's needs.
-

DeWayne's

This store, owned by DeWayne and Tina Lee, has evolved from a roadside pumpkin and produce stand in 1991 through multiple moves to it's current 6 acres and the retail destination it is today in Selma. With a garden center, upscale clothing boutique, Yeti store, ice cream and fudge shop, and now year-round Christmas (starting next year), it's far more than a traditional garden center—it's a retail experience. You'll see more photos from here in future issues.

1. The entrance changes seasonally and these massive pumpkins get customers in the mood for fall.
- 2-3. It's fitting since it started as a pumpkin patch that we feature the over-the-top display and the fact that 100% of the profits get donated.
4. I don't always take pics of flooring, but it rarely ever looks this good in a greenhouse. Between the floors, the beautiful dark wood fixtures and the endcaps, this is pretty much perfection.
5. This display is an example of no detail too small. It's a nearly full-sized mockup of the front of a house, giving customers more to look at while shopping birding products and air plants. **GP**

