greenPROFIT

Kiss My Aster

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State of the Aster 2026

Amanda Thomsen



Where I'm Killing It:

I had the deadline of October 2025 for having my web shop up and married to my Square register system. Previously, I had a web shop, but it was a standalone, a pain in the aster and the inventory was always wrong. The learning curve was like a car driving off a cliff, but I'm so, so happy with it now. Our website sales saved my bacon when the weather was barftastic in December and continues to be a real win. A customer told me the other day they watch my site "like a hawk" because they know that new stuff pops up daily and … sometimes things sell before I've even told anyone. Anything I add to inventory, all I need to do is pop a toggle and it goes live on my site, either for shipping or only for pickup. It's pretty cool!

- Our classes and events are really giving me warm fuzzies! We keep offering encore classes and private things and … wow. It's so cool. We're amassing a following of truly creative people and they all leave with each other's contact info and they end up being friends after class. What a win!
- Our newsletters are sometimes memorized and repeated back to me; this is on the border of what I can deal with, para-socially. Still impressive! I can send out an email and reliably rack up a few hundred dollars in sales within 90 minutes of hitting the "send" button.
- What's selling? Anything custom and, luckily, I can accommodate. Over the holidays we spent the days the shop was closed making stuff like we were Santa's elves. To look at reports and see custom creations at the top makes me feel like I'm taking up space in peoples' homes and lives in a way that can't be easily replaced and, yeah, I want that.

Where I am Sucked into a Vortex of Inability:

- I've been trying to set my site up with Meta for MONTHS now. I have to go in and remove my old catalog and I just can't figure it out. It's past my skill set, but I'll keep banging my head on the wall over it.
- Google did a thing in November where my newsletters end up in bulk bins and I need to do better at preventing that. Luckily, my numbers went from "intergalactic" to "just normal." I pity anyone that doesn't send out a fun, informational newsletter. It's not just sales; it's a little therapeutic.
- I'm not going to ever send someone a check. Big companies have weird ways, but, yeah, if you can't send me an invoice that has a red box I click on and can pay you … you're going to have to chase me

for real. I'm giggling as I type. I'm the tiniest business, but I'll tell you what, I ALWAYS make it easy for people to pay me! When I take on a new vendor I ask if they send an invoice with a payment link. If they don't, I'll just move on to the next vendor. I think at this point credit cards are here to stay. Right? Add the processing fee anyway you want, but sheeeesh. It's like you never had a check for $200 fly out of your 1989 Suzuki Samurai while driving down I-294 30 years ago and it shows. Checks are not it and they're not coming back. I remember when I started this column 27 years ago I went on the same tirade about fax machines.

- Bureaucracy—I am giving up on my expensive BYOB license this year because the amount of work to do the right thing was just cuckoo. They told me the fee was completely arbitrary—some people paid $75 yet they wanted $250 from me. I had to do 24 hours of Bassett training, get fingerprinted and have a background check so that a few ladies can have a White Claw while they make a terrarium. I'm opting out. If you see a can in someone's purse in my shop? No, you didn't. **GP**

Amanda Thomsen is a funky, punky garden writer and author with her own store, Aster Gardens in Lemont, Illinois. Her store info is at KissMyAster.com, and you can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Threads AND Instagram @KissMyAster.