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Poly-Tex: An Extended Interview on Benching and Merchandising

Edited by Jennifer Polanz

Editor's Note: The folks at Poly-Tex answered our questions very thoroughly, and while we didn't have space in the magazine for all their answers, I wanted to include them online. Below is the complete email interview with Jayson Olson, VP of Sales and Marketing at Poly-Tex.-JP

Q: What are some of the recommendations you make for garden centers looking for a refresh or a new look for their annuals and outdoor sales areas?

Jayson Olson: Poly-Tex has been working with garden center retailers for 40 + years, and we recommend retailers think beyond fitting as many plants as possible into the space. A well-merchandised garden center should encourage discovery while making the experience inspirational and easy to shop.

We recommend starting with the customer journey. Create a strong first impression with seasonal feature displays, then use clearly defined merchandising zones that naturally guide customers through all product areas. Varying display heights adds visual interest and makes the space feel more dynamic without sacrificing capacity:

- Go Vertical
- Create Focal Points
- Integrate and Utilize Overhead Space



Flexible merchandising systems are achieved with the best designed displays. Inventory changes often throughout the season, so displays should be easy to reconfigure as product mix, crop timing and promotions evolve. Retailers that consistently refresh shopping areas create an experience that feels new with each customer visit.

Q: What should retailers look for to know they're getting a quality display that's going to last?

JO: Garden center displays work hard

and are exposed to all of the elements: water, sunlight / UV, fertilizers, changing weather, heat, freezing and frequent movement, so durability should be considered.

Poly-Tex recommends displays from companies with proven market success:

- high value designs and high quality engineered products
- heavy-duty steel construction; galvanized corrosion-resistant materials
- Structural connections minimize assembly time; minimize small, fussy hardware that rusts and is lost during seasonal teardowns
- Diverse product displays: live goods, potting and adjacent products, planting media and tools
- Ease of use and safe flexibility for employees; with tool-free minimal setup of new displays shipped flat packaged for minimizing freight.

When retailers invest in well-built displays, they're investing in lower maintenance costs, more professional looking sales areas, safety and fewer replacements.

Q. Are there add-ons that can improve sales easily?

JO: Yes, many add-ons exist to improve the customer experience. Some of the highest-impact merchandising improvements can also be the simplest:

- Clear signage and price displays, which are important sales tools. Customers make buying decisions more quickly with visible pricing, visible care information and promotional messaging easily visible.
- Shade Structures will improve the shopping experience, and shade structures will protect people and product from seasonal weather elements: summer heat / storm damage / unexpected freezing and frost.

Poly-Tex encourages retailers to think about integrated sign holders, hanging basket purlins, wave hanging basket fixtures, messaging header panels and merchandising accessories to help organize departments and reinforce branding. Realizing the opportunity for cross-merchandising containers, soils, fertilizers and watering products alongside plants will naturally increase sales.

The goal is to make for a comfortable and efficient shopping experience for the customer's complete project, beyond the plants they plan to purchase.

Q: It looks like most, if not all, of your display options come with casters—how important is it to have mobile displays? Can you talk about those benefits?

JO: Mobility has become a high value feature in modern garden retail, with constantly changing sales spaces. Fresh product arrives daily, weather influences buying patterns, and retailers are regularly creating promotional displays or moving inventory to maintain a full, attractive appearance.

Mobile displays on casters allow staff to make changes quickly and safely without disrupting operations. Fixtures on wheeled casters simplify restocking, reduce labor and make it much easier to rotate inventory. Portable fixtures allow for moving displays into secure areas for after-hours storage, improving loss prevention. Even small layout changes can create an improved shopping experience and encourage customers to explore more of the garden center.

Portable garden center displays are invaluable when retailers need to quickly transition seasonal departments or quickly move products under cover to protect from severe weather.

Q: What are the most common problems you hear from retailers when it comes to displays, and what solutions do you recommend?

JO: A common challenge for garden center managers is balancing inventory density with a comfortable shopping experience; avoiding the need to fill every available space with product. Poly-Tex encourages garden centers to avoid product over-crowding on displays.

Investing in displays that are not designed specifically for the demands of outdoor retail will likely result in fixtures that rust, become difficult to move, or fail and create unnecessary costs and operational challenges.

Poly-Tex encourages retailers to invest in merchandising systems rather than individual displays. Flexible merchandising systems with durable fixtures that can be used throughout the season will provide a much better return on investment, best meeting merchandising strategies year after year.

Q: Do you have anything new you're highlighting this year for spring 2027?

JO: For 2027, Poly-Tex is focusing on helping garden center retailers merchandise more efficiently, providing display fixture products designed for long-term lasting value.

Poly-Tex is converting customer needs and suggestions into new products we are bringing to market:

- Plastic Top Step Benches and Plastic Topped End Caps
- Stand-alone Hanging Basket Displays, with multiple Purlins to maximize hanging planter capacity
- Galvanized Steel Bench Tops: heavy duty, durable, strong enough for heavier product merchandising, and work perfectly with cinder blocks for supports. Galvanized Bench Tops are a true work horse with many uses in garden centers
- Plastic Topped Table, light weight and strong, for large areas of live goods display.

We're seeing increasing demand for display systems that are versatile enough to support multiple product categories throughout the year, allowing retailers to get more value from every fixture they purchase. Garden centers are also looking for solutions that are designed for customer and employee safety, reduce staff labor, improve inventory presentation and make seasonal transitions faster and easier.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to highlight when it comes to displays?

JO: The most successful displays highlight the merchandise, and are discrete, adjustable, mobile and

reconfigurable.

Poly-Tex recommends garden center business managers consider the following to compliment outdoor retail spaces:

- Shade structures
- Greenhouses with Wiggle Wire poly retaining systems
- Mulch and Rock Displays
- Tree Displays
- Paver Displays
- Cart corrals

A well-designed fixture supports healthy plants, presents merchandise cleanly and helps customers shop with confidence. Well-engineered fixture systems should also work just as hard for employees by making merchandising, watering, inventory rotation and seasonal resets more efficient.

Good merchandising isn't about more fixtures—it's about the best fixture plan with the best fixtures for the business model. When displays are thoughtfully designed and strategically merchandised, they elevate the overall shopping experience, strengthen the retailer's brand and ultimately help drive sales. **GP**