Garden trends, Farwest wrap up, plus a plant-centric ecommerce site



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Green Profit's buzz

Retail news from inside and outside the green industry

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ShipMyPlants.com Comes Online

Colleague Jen Polanz put together the following information about one of the latest options for garden centers and plant shops looking to dip a toe, then dive into the world of ecommerce.

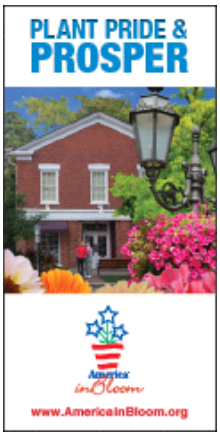
This is a concept I've been hearing about for a little while now, and we received word of the official launch of ShipMyPlants.com late last week.

It's not necessarily a new concept, as it's essentially what Amazon does, but with an industry-oriented twist. It's an online, multi-vendor platform where sellers post products and buyers are directed to them based on their location. Visitors put in their ZIP code right away, and the product they see would be from the closest seller to them (something Amazon does not do, at least not that I'm aware of).

The twist is, for the sellers on the site, there are a couple of benefits. One, the barrier to entry is







much lower than larger online platforms—this is based on a membership fee (there are tiers available based on the amount of products a seller wants to post). There are additional fees, like a transaction fee and commission, details of which you can find in the Sellers FAQ on the site.



Another benefit is the embedded NetPS Plant Finder Database, which has nearly 40,000 unique plant listings already built in. That means the sellers don't have to find images, write up a description and cultural information or add it to the platform, it's already in there. However, the site is not limited to plant material, and sellers of all sizes can list hardgoods, décor, controls and more.

Currently, if you peruse the site you will notice lots of products posted by Alsip Home & Nursery, a garden center with stores in Illinois and Indiana (or at least that's what I see based on my ZIP code). That's because Rich Christakes, founder and CEO of ShipMyPlants.com is also the CEO of Alsip, and has been for over 20 years.

"Niche marketplaces are the future of retail," he said in the recent announcement of the website's launch. "Until now, the consumer horticulture industry did not have any dedicated platform in which people can buy and sell goods at lower commission fees than our traditional big-box marketplaces.

By seamlessly connecting plant buyers with sellers, it's an ideal avenue for green industry businesses to establish turnkey ecommerce stores with minimal time and investment."

It's an interesting concept, and if you don't already have ecommerce, it might be worth checking it out to see if it works for you!

Thanks for the info, JP! If any of our retailer readers sign up, let us know how it goes. Drop us a note about it HERE.



Farwest Recap

I’m wrapping up the coverage of last month’s Farwest Show with the final group of Retailers’ Choice Award winners. It’s a nice smattering of perennial, shrubs and hardgoods.

Banana Split *Daphne odora* from Monrovia. This is a new selection with variegated foliage, each leaf having a wide yellow edge. Its rose-pink buds open to white, sweetly fragrant flowers. It grows to be 4 ft. tall and is hardy in Zones 7-9.



Guatemala Gold Coneflower, another item from Monrovia. This is a very short and compact echinacea with golden yellow blooms. The low foliage creates a dense mound with the blooms, which flower earlier than most, sitting just on top. Zones 4-11.



Boxwood Liberty Belle, a NewGen Boxwood. This boxwood is a low, spreading and billowing form with glossy, deep green foliage. The news here is that it has demonstrated resistance to boxwood blight as well as a good resistance to boxwood leafminer and deer! Use in containers, as a specimen plant or shear for low hedges. Zones 5b-8. Limited availability in 2024.





The Last Four

RCAs continued from above.

Dragon Baby *Hydrangea paniculata* from Van Belle. This is an improved hydrangea with some white-pink flower punch in a 2-3 ft. tall form for modern outdoor spaces. Zones 3-8.



Old Fashioned *Cotinus coggygria* from Youngblood Nursery Inc. This cotinus's foliage is gray-purple when young, turning blue-gray at maturity. Its bright yello-green flowers become eye-catching smoke-like tresses in midsummer.



Monstrella Wall Mounts from TreLeaf. What a very cool idea! These are customizable wooden leaf cut-outs that can act as a wall-mounted trellis. Customize them in a way that suits your style —paint them, draw on them, write messages on them, etc. My own scindapsus is attaching itself to the wall—I'd rather it attach to these! Doubles up as the most unique gift for a

fellow plant lover. Available in sets of three or five, depending on size.



BP4LI Battery Operated Backpack Sprayer from Dramm Corp. This backpack sprayer operates at a maximum of 150 psi, giving it excellent coverage. Fully variable pressure allows the BP-4Li to run from 10-15psi with the turn of a knob. Its battery runs for 45 minutes, and you can swap out batteries. The 4 gal. capacity is perfect for spot treatments or concentrated applications; either way it’s small enough to be comfortable.



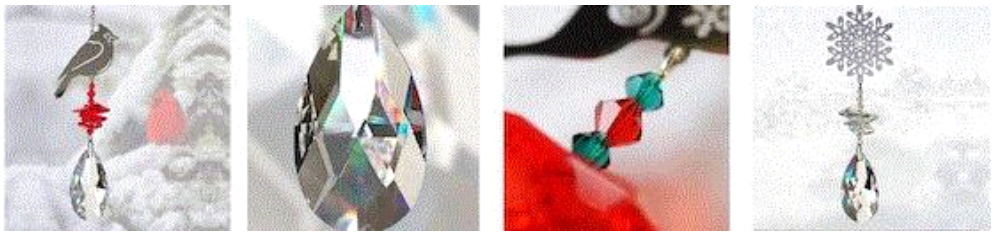
That's the last of the Retailers' Choice Awards for 2023, at least to my knowledge. Next ones will be from TPIE in January! My, how the year has flown by!



Looking for Holiday Gifts?

Those are all great additions to your garden center lineup, for sure. But maybe you are looking for something more appropriate for your gift department as we approach the year-end holiday season. Sullivans has just introduced a new line of sun catchers that is both gifty and wintery that might just be what your customers need for the holidays.

There are five new suncatchers in all, each crafted with genuine Austrian Crystal and featuring mirrored silver Christmas icons—a cardinal, a reindeer (two different ones, but only one pictured), a Christmas tree and a snowflake.



Hang ‘em in a window, on a tree, use them as a splash of color on a gift—or gift them. These are actually quite classy—you might want to just buy one for yourself while you’re placing your order.

Speaking of ordering, see Sullivans’ entire Seasonal Collection HERE.

GMG’s 2024 Garden Trends Report

Garden Media Group has been pretty spot on—and a few years ahead of—some of the important trends that have impacted our industry. Backyard fruits? They predicted it. Container gardening? They knew that would be big back in the early ’00s. Sustainability, native and pollinator plants, the ever-increasing use of tech in the garden, the Garden Trends Report knew these were coming and had the good graces to let you know about it.

Which of the seven 2024 Garden Trends will be the next gardening or lifestyle movement you’ll definitely not want to miss out on? I will be showcasing these Garden Trends over the next few weeks so you can get familiar with and prepare for styles, trends and changes impacting our gardening public.



The overarching theme connecting all seven 2024 trends is what they are calling Eco-Optimism. This term speaks to the green industry’s potential to alleviate eco-anxiety among the world’s 1 billion-plus younger citizens. Optimism of any kind necessitates action, and these seven trends ask us, ask *everyone*, to engage with a purpose in a positive direction.

With that introduction over, let’s move on to the first trend, which is Zoom Out. This is a reference to Gen Z, also known as Zoomers. Despite being so young (born 1997-2012), they are taking on home ownership more quickly than previous generations—they’ll need plants, décor and supplies sooner than Gen X and Millennials did! Zoomers also are:

- Willing to wait and pay more for a higher quality product
- Interested in unique products with a story to tell

- Influenced by creators rather than celebrities or social media ads

The Garden Trends' suggestions for Zoomers? Step up your ecommerce platform, become a trusted online source, adjust inventory and pricing strategies to "no excess" and create promotions with short-form videos.

Thoughts on these trends? Tell me about it HERE. And if you want to examine the Garden Trends Report for yourself, you can do so HERE.

Top TikTok Décor Trends

Since we're on the topic of trends, I received a press release about the Top 10 #interiordesign TikTok tags for the U.S. market as of the end of August. We're in there! Most specifically, horticulture is present in the top trends in the form of Biophilic Design, coming in at No. 7. Biophilic Design, if you don't know, is incorporating living plants in homes, offices, restaurants and other interiors so folks can partake in the benefits that green plants bring to an environment (air quality, peacefulness, less stress, to name a few).

The full Top 10 list is as follows:

1. Maximalism
2. Mid-century Modern
3. Boho décor
4. Grandmillennial (aka granny chic)
5. Cluttercore & Pink Bathroom for a tie
6. Japandi (mix of Japanese and Scandinavian styles)
7. Biophilic Design
8. Cottagecore
9. Black Accents

These might be what's tops in interior design, but each style could be translated into garden and patio designs, most definitely. Cluttercore? Isn't that everyone's garden by the end of the season? And with the range of colors and flower sizes of some annuals, Maximalism is easily within reach of today's gardeners. Keep these trends on your radar for the next few years. Trend rankings may fluctuate regularly but their appearance in the top rankings takes a while to disappear.

Reader Comments

Mentions of credit card swipe fees in *Buzz!* always elicit comments. Several of you wrote in with thoughts on the topic.

Jill Rieta from Hilo, Hawaii, had this to say:

"As a small business on an island we certainly prefer 'old school' cash or check. Of course it's much easier to do when you are wholesale only. However, I find it interesting that yours and other articles on this or related topics never seem to mention the Fed's new instant payment network, 'FedNow.' It has been out since July but seems dead before it's even begun."

Interesting you should say that, Jill. I've only heard of FedNow twice—the first time was in the Forbes article I referenced last week, and the second was in your response! Maybe it's "dead in the water" as you say because they haven't been great at spreading the word about it.

From Ed Hebbe IV of Circle Growers in Montana:

“The question is why? Why would you be using traditional credit card processing and pay all those stupid fees? I stopped that years ago. PayPal and Square have some great POS options and all you pay is roughly 2.7% up front when using these CC services. No additional monthly fees, statement fees, and any of the other BS. It’s a bit more if you have to occasionally manually enter CC accounts. I’ve been using PayPal/Zelle for a couple years and haven't had any major issues. There’s always a few qualms, but there are some workarounds.”

The winery I work at occasionally uses Square, and these folks wouldn't use something where they had to pay exorbitant fees, believe me (yes, I heard about Square’s nationwide outage last Thursday, oops).

And lastly from Robin Kaiser of Robin’s Nest:

“I said this years ago: If every merchant STOPPED accepting credit cards for even one day … The fact that Visa and MasterCard are charging the customer and the merchant is beyond ludicrous. If it weren’t for the merchant, there would be no Visa and MasterCard. Seems to me that they should be paying the merchant, instead of the other way around. Just sayin’.”

Any differing views out there? Let me know about them HERE.

Questions, comments, suggestions? Drop me a line if you'd like at ewells@ballpublishing.com.



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