

Features

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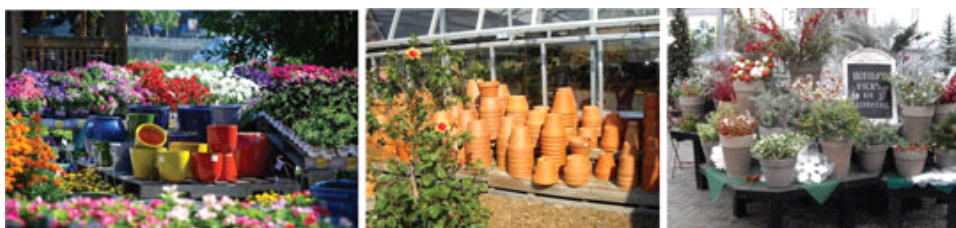
Creating a Container Frenzy

Katie Elzer-Peters

Container gardening is huge, but merchandising containers is often an afterthought. Do you have a leaning tower of pots in your display area? What about ceramics that haven't been dusted for a year? How about a mishmash of broken terra cotta, concrete urns and oddly shaped containers thrown together at the back of your garden center? If that describes the state of the (dis)union of your pottery category, you have nowhere to go but up. Here are two unique perspectives on merchandising containers so they're moneymakers instead of space takers.

Keep It Simple

Our first perspective is from Alec Junge of pottery distributor Ceramo Co., who declares simple is best. "I think that two of the most frequent failure points for a pottery display are succumbing to the temptation to over-merchandise and neglecting to maintain the displays," he says.



Crisscross

Stack pottery near the plants. The single most effective way to boost pottery sales is to incorporate the pots into other display areas of the store, and the easiest location from which to grab these additional sales is near the flowers. In the photo above, a simple display has been built from stacked pallets and positioned as an end cap of an aisle of flowers.

Clean & Accessible

Keep it simple with red clay/terra cotta pots. Farrand Farms in Kansas City, Missouri, merchandises these garden staples so they're neatly sorted, easily accessible and clean. They've used a very simple homemade fixturing system, grouped the pots by type and size, and most importantly, have done the ongoing work necessary to keep the display tidy and organized.

Two-For-One

Cross-merchandise to sell more. One of the most effective (and cost-effective) ways to market flower pots is to include them in other display areas of a garden center. Here at Knupper Nursery and Landscape in Palatine, Illinois, a range of Ceramo's German "Basalt" pots are part of the holiday fixturing. Using the pots this way is a two-for-one proposition: customers get more exposure to the pots while they're in another area of the store, and the "fixtures" (pots) can be sold at full price after the holiday display is taken down.

Investing In Pottery

Our second perspective is that of merchandiser and owner of Color Results Terri Coldreck, who emphasizes making an investment (not just money, but time) in pottery. Read on for her top 3 tips for successful pottery sales.



Don't Just Invest in the Pots

Fixtures make a difference—use good, well-maintained display tables. This display works well because it's sturdy enough to allow for more than one layer of displays and makes good use of the space below waist level. (It would be easy to re-stock the upper layer, as well.)

Plan, Plan, Plan

Plan and buy for specific spaces. Displays will be stronger and your budgeting more efficient if you map out your sales floor and plan what you're purchasing based on merchandising plans. For example, if you know that a particular table will be filled with cobalt blue pottery, determine how many large, medium and small-sized containers you need. Leave room for plants or accessories and a few pops of contrasting colors or complementary blues.

Block It (Color Block, That Is)

Most IGC customers are women and women respond to color. They also treat containers as accessories—like shoes to an outfit. They need to know what will go in the container when they buy it. Merchandising with plants that fit in the containers helps them visualize. **GP**