

## Features

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## Nashville, Summer Style

Ellen C. Wells



### Moore & Moore Garden Center

The notes in the tour book promised an “unrivalled selection of decorative pots in all shapes, sizes, textures and colors.” They weren’t kidding!

- *The store’s pottery collection was one of the best I’ve seen. More important than selection, they displayed the pots in a well-coordinated color block scheme. The pottery was front-and-center as customers came in, so customers could keep it in mind as they strolled the plants.*
- *The expansive, varied and fresh nature of their combo containers in late June makes me believe these items are sought after all season long.*



### Yarrow Acres

This store is a specialty retailer on the main drag in the historic town of Franklin. It is houseplant-focused and had a pretty good selection of small- to medium-sized items—tillandsias to sansevierias and a bit bigger.

- *While it had many of the same categories as a garden center—houseplants, books, tools, apparel, décor—every product possessed classiness and quality. But the prices weren’t too precious, making it the consummate plant gift shop.*

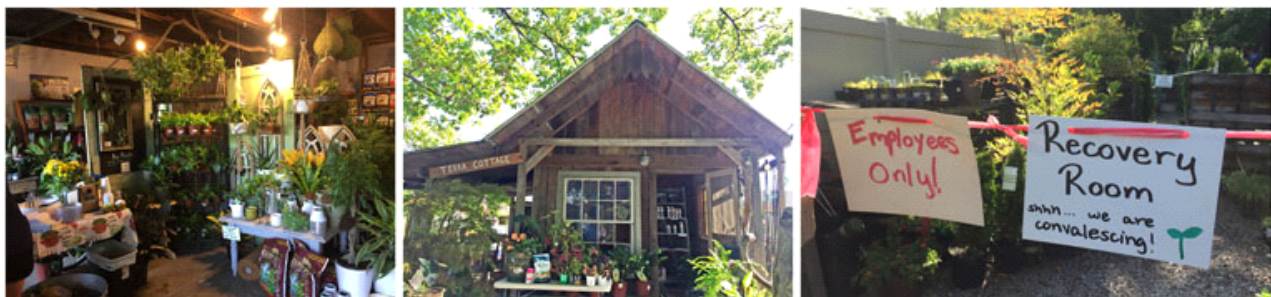
- Yarrow Acres's "Make-and-Takes" workshops help foster a sense of community with customers and personal connection with whatever the customer takes home.



## Bates Nursery and Garden Center

With about 32% of their business in rewholesaling, it made sense that their visible plant stock was moving toward shrubs, trees and perennials in late June. This extensive selection demands that they keep their inventory in order, so it's all in their database and searchable on the store's website.

- Bates' registers are state-of-the-art, with 32-in. monitors on adjustable stands, allowing cashiers to be as comfortable as possible at an on-your-feet-all-day job.
- See that floor mat? It's comfy for customers to stand on if they are cartless. But it's also used to halt a loaded cart at a certain position. The cashier is then able to swing their wired bar code scanners over to the cart for easier scanning. Great idea in lieu of wireless scanners.



## JVI Secret Gardens

The location appears to have been an old auto shop by the looks of the roll-up door. Converted buildings are cool, because you get to see the creativity folks put into the transformation. They have what Chris Beytes calls the "poke-around factor."

- The shop had a variety of items but was dominated with trendy houseplants. Paired with dinosaur pottery, the place had quite a Jurassic Period vibe.
- Recreate these ideas at your own place: An outbuilding dubbed the "Terra Cottage" and the "Recovery Room" for convalescing plants (or staff!). Customers can relate to that, and maybe it pulls on their heartstrings a bit.





## Creekside Garden Center & Landscaping

They had a devastating fire last September, but thanks to the local community, hard work and a fortuitous vacancy across the street, the fire wasn't a business-destroying event.

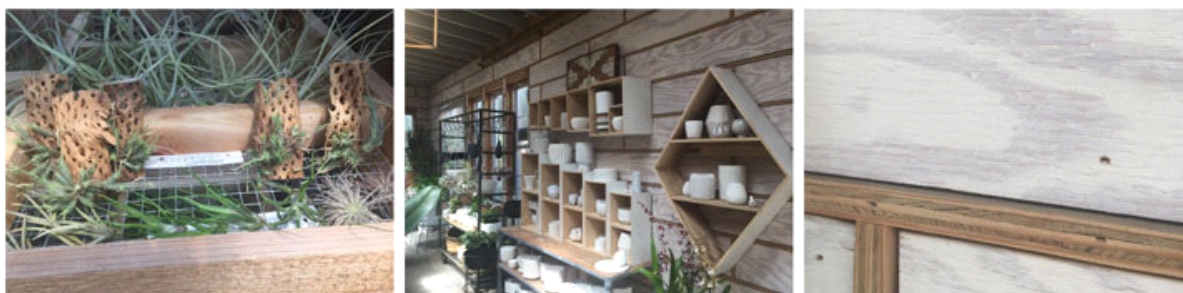
- *Zoning restrictions have prevented them from building a new structure, but they were able to enclose a pre-existing shed to create a shop for hard goods, chemicals, tools and checkouts. They were cleaned up and running again by January.*
- *They located their indoor plants and decor into a store across the street that became available post-fire. They carry a line of store-branded candles with fragrances named after local streets—a great local gift idea.*



## Gardens of Babylon Landscapes

The 16-year-old business sits on the same property as the Nashville Farmers Market, which is filled with farm and artisan vendors and a whole lot of food vendors. They do most of their business off-site as a landscape design/build and maintenance business, and the recent logo and signage redesign helps spread the word to retail customers.

- *They've installed screens looping landscape install videos as well as a decked out patio with fireplace and grill to advertise these services.*
- *They have a popular houseplant collection, and what make them stand out is the 70s vibe of macramé, woven baskets and 70s-era end tables.*



## Hewitt Garden and Design Center

Although it looks very nursery heavy outside, you'll see everything from 2-in. to botanical garden-sized tropicals and houseplants inside. Hewitt's had a 12% year-over-year increase in sales two years ago followed by a 7% increase last year—and they attribute it to houseplants and social media.

- *Tagging individual air plants can be difficult. Here they have wrapped colored wire around the air plants' base and the sign indicates the price.*
- *This wall looks like fancy tile, but on closer inspection it appears to be plywood whitewashed with a thinned paint of translucent stain (at least that's what Chris Beytes thought it could be). The thin brown "lines" are strips of plywood, too. Very cool. Very hipster!*



## Martin's Home & Garden

The Murfreesboro suburb is booming, too. The area surrounding the 37-year-old garden center has seen increased commercial building, and with that comes rules and regulations from the town about signs, parking and so on.

- *The signage within the store, however, is some of the best IGC signage I've seen: informative, anticipated customers' questions and in a few cases it saved Martin's staff a lot of hassle.*
- *I spotted two cement-related ideas at Martin's that you could totally steal for yourself: 1) arrangement of large cement blocks into which they put large-sized potted items to save arrangement hassles with other plants and 2) a triangular wedge of cement along a path corner to prevent carts from mangling plants.*

## Long Hollow Gardens

I missed this last stop, but I asked my bus seat buddy Sam Kirkland of Epicor if he could send along a thought about Long Hollow Gardens in nearby Gallant. The location, he said, definitely leaned toward events, with a superbly restored farmhouse perfect for weddings. The items in the retail area he thinks are easily moved into the venue for use during events. Oh, and it's also a winery! Makes my missing of this stop all the more regretful. **GP**