

## Kiss My Aster

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### For We Need a Little Christmas

*Amanda Thomsen*



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The pandemic isn't over just because we're over it.

People are rabid for things and experiences to plug the holes where our everyday lives (that we TOTALLY took for granted) used to overflow. That means this winter, sales will be ripe for the picking (if only we have the sustained stamina to go out there and do the picking). I'm currently seeing social media posts where people have decided to buy themselves a plant every time they're having a bad day (and they're always having a bad day) or driving three hours to take a photo in a field of sunflowers. This is all in our wheelhouse to convert into a winter of sales, if only we have time to continue to pivot, plan and coordinate it.

Based on the current sentiments of early September, as I sit and write this, everybody seems to need a little Christmas, right this very minute. Yeah, I'm

hearing talk of sweaters and pumpkin spice lattes first, but I'm also hearing the loud rumbles of how the winter holidays will be navigated under current circumstances.

Overall, by not travelling, eating in restaurants, going to the movies, parties or bars ... we're willing to spend that money on just about anything else for a hit of serotonin. Was it just last year when people were trying to buy live trees in early November BEFORE there was even a pandemic? Yeah, so this year they're going to want live trees at 12:01 on November 1. People will be actively seeking to cut down their own trees, hunt down and shoot poinsettias in the wild, field dress wreaths and garland, and ambush amaryllis before Thanksgiving.

I fully expect the hygge trend (that I was already in love with, if you aren't familiar please Google it) to go code red—more families will have matching pajamas than ever (including the pets). Plaid blanket sales will go through the roof, as will old-fashioned thermoses that can be filled with hot chocolate. Drive-in movies will be held in parking lots and driveways across the country so we can watch "It's A Wonderful Life" or "White Christmas" together, while not being near each other. Christmas cactus will be the new monstera. I sense the return of the traditional Christmas card, BIG TIME, in 2020.

If you aren't including make-your-own-wreath kits that accompany a festive Zoom on your calendar, are you even keeping up? If you aren't setting up mask-friendly photo op spots, I'm going to have to ask why not. If you haven't invited food trucks, who've gone from having their dance cards overly full to sadly desperate in these last few months, are you just not even that hungry? So Santa may be canceled, but in lieu of visits, scavenger hunts or "Easter egg" hunts for items and messages sent from The Big Guy Up North can be an easy draw, while staying

distanced.

Even easier than all this is just selling houseplants and featuring them on social media as they enter your inventory. People stuck at home want new green friends to cohabitate with and you have what they want. Many are shopping at big box stores only because they have no idea what kind of gold mine you're sitting on top of, so take every opportunity to tell them. This is your time to brag, right this very minute.

In summary, this winter can be what you make of it if you have the goods and let people know about it. How can you fill the voids in the new normal? How can you serve your customers while, as the song says, growing a little leaner, growing a little colder and growing a little sadder and growing a little older? Turn on the brightest string of lights I've ever seen. **GP**

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