

Kiss My Aster

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Cottagecore and Conjecture for 2021

Amanda Thomsen



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The moment we've all been waiting for, 2021, is here! While a new year is supposed to be a blank page for us to do with what we want, 2021 is already carrying a lot of baggage on Day 1. I'm concerned it's less like a new start and more like when the Brady Bunch went to Hawaii and the episode left on a cliffhanger, with us waiting until next week to find out if Peter can shake his bad luck. Here's some conjecture on how 2021 will go:

- Growers should start every seed because everything will sell. Will spring be widespread buying panic? I think it'll be worse because now they know just enough to be dangerous. "Prebooking" will mean less and less as the sing-song phrase my daughter was taught in preschool is sadly appropriate, "You get what you get and you don't throw a fit."

- Cottagecore goes mainstream: flowy dresses, vintage picnic baskets filled with artisanal foods made with care, laundry lines with floral linens drying in the sun—an idealized country lifestyle is now known as "cottagecore" to a new generation. What you can sell that's cottagecore: anything with mushrooms on it, flower-pressing kits, vintage home goods, wildflowers, bug stuff, fairies, growing fruit to make jam, aprons and self-sufficiency while looking very adorable. Now, many of you are thinking none of this is anything new because this has been what you've been into since you watched "Anne of Green Gables" on PBS 35 years ago (raises hand slowly), BUT there's a new crop of consumers looking for this, so why not make it easy for them to find you and your selection of raspberry plants and straw sun hats?

- People are finally realizing that lawns are dumb (in some circumstances, of course), so how can you assist people that want to plant anything BUT turf? If someone walked in today and asked where they should start if they wanted to cut back on the amount of lawn they have, what would you tell them? This is a topic well worth rehearsing.

- As supplies remain elusive, it's time to embrace those items you can produce, inexpensively, out of nothing. The one that leaps to mind is hypertufa troughs filled with sempervivums and sedums. The supplies to make troughs will always be available, cuttings from sedums are always available. What other products are like spinning straw into gold?

- I mean, duh, outdoor living is still selling like Cabbage Patch Kids in 1983. Dining sets, fire pits, umbrellas, outdoor heaters, play equipment, shade sails and outdoor rugs are still going to be ripe for the picking in 2021. I bet you could sell old tires for tire swings—that's how hungry the market is. Although you don't have the time, you could be browsing Marketplace for vintage patio sets (etcetera) to clean up and sell at a great profit.

- Cutting gardens are bigger than they've been, mostly doubling back on that cottagecore thing, which is a delight to me. Cutting gardens haven't gotten their due, says me, someone who's seen a billion gardens and, like, three cutting gardens in my life. Such a romantic, but self-reliant, idea is perfect for newbies and long-time gardeners alike. When starting off on a cutting garden I ask customers to choose colors that will match the interior of their house (for some reason this is mind blowing to some) and then ask about nostalgic flowers, like components from wedding bouquets or great-grandma's favorites. This is the kind of project that's easy to get customers excited about and once they're feeling good and sentimental, they'll drop lots of money on it.

Now that we've hopefully left the tabu tiki in the sacred cave we can all move on to a more mentally balanced and less-jaw-clenching 2021. I raise my coffee mug to a profitable and sane year for all of us! **GP**

Amanda Thomsen is a funky, punky garden writer and author. Her blog is planted at [KissMyAster.com](https://kissmyaster.com) and you can follow her on Facebook, Twitter AND Instagram @KissMyAster.