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## What Your Pots Say About You

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You can learn a lot about a person by looking at their container collection. If they don't have one, well, A) that's sad, and B) that's just a whole lot of opportunity there, isn't it?

Take mine, for example. It's rather telling. I'm not what you'd call a "put-together gardener." I'm more a "haphazardly dashed-together gardener." I don't have a clear style, and my beds tend to be a mish-mash of plants I've discovered I liked over the years (peonies and hostas!) mixed with free plants I've trialed and decided I liked (too many to mention).

Along with that mish mash of plants comes a similar hierarchy of containers. The front-facing beds (that all the neighbors see) are somewhat cohesive, and likewise the dual porch planters match, as do the teal planters in the front flower bed. But wander around to the back and it's a different story all

together, from the basket-style covers and large containers the previous owners left on the back patio to the hodge-podge of plastic, glazed and ceramic pots, and wire hanging baskets that I've gathered over the years.

Others, like Bossman Beytes, are far more put together with a carefully curated collection of containers that come together to create serene surroundings. Which brings me to my point—consumers are drawn to many different styles out there and it's tricky for retailers to figure out which ones to carry. As a retailer, you really have to know your customers and understand the micro-trends around your community.

In this issue, we have a couple of stories to help you figure out the nationwide trends that consumers will be seeing in their favorite style magazines, blogs and home improvement shows, as well as what to put in these fabulous new pots. Ellen focuses on the edibles trend and which containers can help customers be even more successful this year with their herbs, veggies and fruits. Then I took a look at another growing trend, hanging containers. And finally, I pulled together some thoughts from experts on overall trends in containers for 2021.

We also wanted to continue to address how retailers can continue last year's successes. Long-time industry consultant Ian Baldwin heads up the 5 Numbers Project, a data-driven subscriber group that identifies key metrics and shares aggregated data to better understand garden trends. He highlights some of the key findings from last year that can help retailers better prepare for this spring. And Bill Calkins gives us a rundown of some of the easiest-to-grow, time-tested varieties that new gardeners are sure to be successful with.

This year it's all about preparation in anticipation of a big year. And for me, trying to get some pots that actually

match on the back patio. Hey, we all have goals, right? **GP**