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## What's Trending in Retail

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The National Retail Federation has weighed in on "what's trending." The organization, which keeps tabs on all sectors of retail, has analyzed the goings on of 2020 and is predicting that many of the "pivots" retailers made to adjust to the suddenly changed shopping environment are here to stay. Like e-commerce and contactless purchasing, for example.

But you knew that. Of NRF's list of 11 predictions of trends that will shape the next 12 months, I'll list the few that A) you don't already know and B) are most applicable to garden retail (at least in my opinion).

Malls will evolve. The department store-anchored shopping concept will shift to smaller environments that keep consumers' needs top of mind. Using more of an outdoor shopping concept may be beneficial to plant-focused retailers who could benefit from the foot traffic from the other retailers.

Social commerce has the potential to grow faster than overall e-commerce. Socially driven shopping and shopping experiences that take place via social media is at its inception.

On-demand manufacturing will increase. This allows big retailers to respond faster to changing customer demand. Closer to home? Well, I can think of custom containers, various plant-focused kits. We're nimble, can read the customer and the local situation, and quickly respond with new products using whatever it is we have on hand. We're even ahead of the trend!

Pay when you can or want. NRF says, "The old-fashioned model of paying for items in full is fading fast as the next generation of shoppers embraces pay-over-time models and subscriptions." I always let my card pay for it. I guess I'm old-fashioned, then!

Livestreaming will be the fastest-growing category for 2021. That's exactly what Max Luthy predicted in his Tropical Plant International Expo keynote last week. Nothing beats the in-store live experience, but when that's not possible, livestreaming helps retailers connect and relate to customers. Here's a good quote: "Experts say digital-savvy shoppers want more than just a product; they want to feel a connection to a brand." **GP**