

## Kiss My Aster

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### Catching Your Breath

*Amanda Thomsen*



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October is traditionally neither here-nor-there for our people and that's exactly what we need. You might have sundry gourds, a collection of leftover mums and kale, the bulbs are selling like pumpkin spice hotcakes—but overall, the cruise-control has been activated, you're completely hydrated for the first time in months and you even had a genuine smile for a customer at some point last week. Now is a great time to cultivate some slightly cheeseball positivity to help you glide effortlessly through 2022. For example:

- 'Tis the season to buy several life-sized skeletons and move them about the garden center. Maybe dress them up in a staff T-shirt, apron or sun hat and make them look like they're getting the job done by stocking a bench or standing at an overflow register you don't need this time of year. First off, this kind of light-hearted mayhem is good for a Staff Laugh™ or possibly a Team Scream®. It's also fun for customers and especially fun for kids. It's a great sign for your brain to have some good times at the scene of the crime, er, on the battlefield ... What I mean to say is, let's change the context of the place that's ground you down all summer and add some wholesome goofiness in there to lighten your emotional load and help you re-associate your days with fun, whimsy and even eagerness.
- Speaking of eagerness: Apple cider doughnuts on the break table. All. Month. Long.
- I buy dozens of these favor-bag-sized sticky, stretchy slug toys from Oriental Trading to give to trick-or-treaters because, to be honest, we don't get any actual kids at the door so if I've got to be ready anyways. I like having these slugs around. I highly recommend them. They're funny and would look great stuck to, for example, your bagged soils and mulches. Or the leaves of any remaining hostas.
- Two words: Costume. Contest.
- In my daughter's classroom, they rotate through all the fun positions: classroom president, attendance-taker, show-n-tell spotlight, pledge starter, lunch-hander-outer, etc. What if we had that kind of fun at work? Maybe a terrestre jester of the day? The Green Queen? It can't hurt to be picked to be the \_\_\_\_\_ of the day. I mean, it just feels nice to be picked for anything! Or maybe it could just be your day to be guaranteed to take your entire lunch break. I think there's still some room to work on this one, but it has possibilities.
- Change the bathroom lights to blacklight. Spoooooky.

- Make yourself a drop-off site for old pumpkins once Halloween is over. You can do whatever you like with them, of course (got a trebuchet?), but you can always organize a drop-off at one of the fine farm locations listed at [pumpkinsforpigs.org](http://pumpkinsforpigs.org). And if you're lucky, you'll get to watch a pumpkin eat a pig. Scratch that. Reverse it. A pig eating a pumpkin! They get a little orange halo around their little faces and it's THE BEST.
- Adopt a handful of black cats to help out around the nursery. Funny story—when I was a young Aster renting my first apartment, someone once told me that if you adopt black cats, then you could have more cats than your landlord allowed because they all looked the same. Not relevant, but still funny.
- I want you to follow your bliss, which is probably something you're a little rusty at right now. It's okay to take the path of least resistance. Look for it. Take deep breaths. Feel the sun on your face without resenting every second of it. Get into something silly that isn't work-related or bring whole-hearted silliness into work with you. You've earned some time for creative flow. Make some time for yourself, listen to yourself.

Most importantly, buy some sticky slugs and plastic skeletons for yourself. Oh, and the cider doughnuts, too. **GP**

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