

Kiss My Aster

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Let's Outfox Them

Amanda Thomsen



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I'm going to admit it: I've barely even set foot in a garden center in the last two years. I went from a full-time addict to someone that just shops in their own backyard. I have the skills to divide this, propagate that and start seeds when it's the right time. But why stay away? Firstly, I don't want to add to anyone's already heavy load. But, secondly, your other customers are 100% foolish these days and that spills out onto a reasonable shopper's experience, too. Of the three times I've shopped in the last two years the customers were cut-throat, stealing plants out of my cart, complaining loudly about having to wait in line and just overall getting in my face. You guys are real champs for dealing with it day-to-day. Can we hear a round of applause for YOU?!?

And while I haven't been shopping for plants, two things have been happening.

The list of stuff I actually need once things simmer down is getting longer and longer; I'm concerned that I won't even be able to get what I need when I'm ready. So brace yourselves, I guess?

I've been talking to YOU when I was out speaking at shows last month (thank you to the Tessman Buying Show and The Landscape Show for having me). You're all looking a little tired, my friends, but I also noticed a spark of optimism. Most of all, I think I noticed that you want me to entertain you with somewhat helpful, but definitely funny, tips on how to proceed without screaming! Am I projecting? Possibly!

Two of the things I spoke about were not in my prepared presentations, but arose out of questions from the crowd:

First off, we talked about moderating your Facebook page by adding a "word block list." This takes rude comments and puts them on ice until you get a chance to deal with them. You can find this in "Settings," go to "Moderation" and then add a list of words that don't pass the sniff test. Now, this just means you can moderate those nasty comments when you get to it—no one can see them but you.

Let's start a list together: Costco, dead, competitor, rip-off, died, lied, overwatered, Walmart, Home Depot, disease, karen, murder weapon, rude, dirty, mud, cheaper, Internet, ***** (just for good measure) and ***** (same). Sit down with staff and create your own tailor-made list of words that wave red flags so you, overall, have less to worry about (or more realistically, the same amount to worry about, but on your own timeline, at least).

The other super fun thing I have for you is a little morally ambiguous. Oh, did that get you reading just that much

faster? OK, here it is: There's no Facebook rule saying you can't make up a fake alter ego account and make that person do your dirty work for you. My alter ego is Ann Dewey (like the sausage, andouille) and if I need to go tell someone they're obnoxious and confused (while citing sources), but not as myself, Ann is ALWAYS up for the job.

Need something reported to Facebook? Ann Dewey! Need a review to counterbalance an iffy one a customer left? Ann Dewey! Now, I'm not suggesting you puff up your reviews or any other fakery, but what I am saying is that it's so much easier to stand up for yourself when it isn't ACTUALLY you doing the standing. Ann can get in Facebook Groups and suggest my design services in a much less dorky way than I ever could! So three cheers for Ann Dewey!

I know times are tough and I think we're all just getting so much sharper, smarter, faster and cooler, but sometimes it's just a little fun to outwit people in a slightly devious manner, too. So feel free to swipe Ann's name if you can't think of your own pseudonym. **GP**

Amanda Thomsen is a funky, punky garden writer and author. Her blog is planted at KissMyAster.com and you can follow her on Facebook, Twitter AND Instagram @KissMyAster.