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Good on You!

Jennifer Polanz



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This month is a celebration: of you! It's been a long, hard slog since March of 2020—first the uncertainty of shutdowns and the scariness of a global health threat, then the insatiable demand for anything plant-related that continues today, plus navigating a new world of retail (let's not mention all the supply chain headaches). To say you've been through a lot is an understatement of epic proportions.

So let's focus on the positives! Every year in our December Style Issue we focus on what's trending at the moment. In the past, we've taken a look at succulents and houseplants as their trajectories skyrocketed; we've looked at wellness and how that factors into garden purchases; and last year we interviewed Gangsta Gardener Ron Finley about his experience teaching all these new gardeners via MasterClass. This year, we sat down to figure out what's trending and realized ... it's you! Garden retail is having a moment not

seen since the 1970s (I was a Bicentennial baby, so I'll take everyone's word for it that it was pretty hot back then).

This newfound popularity awards you some benefits we haven't seen in recent decades—some much-needed capital that can help tweak the look of the operation, and perhaps buy some new fixtures to modernize. It also may allow you to work your pricing differently this year (more on that in my cover story looking ahead to 2022). In that cover story, I also highlight how we can be the "it" place to work, resulting in hiring quality employees that will shore up the operation for years to come.

Now I'll take a moment to make a special request: if you're in a hurry, don't read this magazine (right now). Put it down and go about your business. When you have some time, grab a cup of coffee or tea, or a mocktail or glass of wine depending on the time of day, have your phone or tablet handy, and settle in. We've interspersed QR codes throughout the issue that will take you to Instagram pages, flipbooks, websites and even podcasts designed to inspire your creative thinking. If we're going to keep a younger generation's attention (and make no mistake, these new gardeners are younger), then we've got to WOW them.

How do we do that? We've got lots of ideas to mull over. Read Amanda Thomsen's chat with the Bieberfeld sisters at County Line Nursery and then go down the rabbit hole of their Insta pages. Bill McCurry shows us the wonderful personality that shines through at The Watering Can, a destination garden center in Niagara Falls. If you're looking for WOW, make your plan to recreate a dress made from hellebore cuts for your next big event. Then shoot the QR code to see 11 more designs to spark your creativity. And get some inspiration from our annual Stuff We Love

editor's choices.

That's just scratching the surface of this issue—there's so much more in it. But, as Bill says in his story, part of retail is the joy of discovery, so I'll let you peruse at your leisure to find the rest of the gems.

Here's to you, my friends, and a prosperous 2022! **GP**