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Looking Into the 2023 Crystal Ball, Part 3

Brian Minter

This is the last segment where we'll ask retailers what they're anticipating for 2023. In case you missed it, we ran thoughts from retailers in the [December 2022](#) and [January 2023](#) issues.

Brian Minter, co-founder, Minter Country Gardens, Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada

Along with the garden center, Brian is also heavily active in the green industry in Canada and the U.S. via the many industry presentations he gives. He continues to educate Canadian gardeners through writing a gardening column and appearing as an expert on radio shows, among many other educational endeavors.

When it comes to looking forward to 2023, he first went back to fall of 2021.

"It started to rain in September and there was no letup until the end of May, resulting in disaster in spring sales," he said, adding that there's potential for a repeat weather pattern on top of talk of a recession and the cost of goods rising. "As the prices go up it's going to be more staycations and people will stay home.

"I think the economy will play the same role as COVID—the stay-home situation is going to be helpful for our industry, so we expect the same traffic as last year and look for more value."

When it comes to their top priorities in 2023, he said the value of the experience is key. "What does it sound like, what does it smell like, what does it feel like?" he said. "My favorite garden centers in the world are Intratuin in Holland and you get sucked into the vortex of experience after experience after experience."

He also said it's vital to increase the value of the product, from selling individual plants already in decorative pots to selling larger products customers can take home and enjoy immediately. That can even mean edibles, as in selling strawberries that already have ripe berries on them and tomato or pepper baskets with ripe fruit.

"We force perennials to be in flower, so not only do they see a flower instead of just a picture of it, but the pollinators are out. It's magic to see the pollinators all over the flower," he said. "That's the value-added everything, not the green plants you can sell for \$1.99. It's the experience to see and taste and look and enjoy. That's high on the agenda."

Third, he said, is whatever is new and exciting and cool. Finding those plants adds to the customer experience and is "irresistible."

And, finally, I asked what's one new thing you'd like to try for 2023. For Minter Country Gardens, it's building the

brand on TikTok.

“My granddaughter told me, let’s do these one-minute TikTok things,” he said, adding they did one showing the stages of a seed’s growth. “We get 30,000 to 40,000 views on one of these one-minute videos. The response to that is so very, very important.”

They’re continuing to work on fun, educational videos with consistency to keep that audience growing. “The potential is there to really connect with people. You have to do it consistently, but we have a very talented group of people to do what they love doing and it shows their excitement.” **GP**