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## Making the Thrill Last

Jennifer Polanz



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It's June, and there's a collective sigh of relief reverberating among garden retailers (although some of you may still be cranking, depending on weather and enthusiasm).

Some of you are wrapping it up for the season, closing it all down and taking a much-deserved vacation. To you I say bon voyage and enjoy!

Others are taking a breather and figuring out the game plan for summer and beyond. Sometimes I find it helps to look at where I've been to figure out where I'm going. That might mean a debriefing session, where you and your team take a look at what worked during the season (victory cheers all around!) and what didn't work (solicit strategies for helping to avoid the pitfalls in the future).

It can be difficult to do these sessions right away, but it's helpful to do it while everyone's memories are still fresh. Focus on the strategy part of it in a positive way, too, otherwise it can become a complaint session. The goal here is to fix anything that went wrong to keep positive forward motion into summer and fall.

Let's talk about late summer and fall, too. I've heard some great strategies over the years taking leftover plant material from spring and repurposing it into mixes to refresh tired-looking combos late in the summer. Gardening items that didn't sell can be made into gift bundles. Or here's a really inside the box idea (ha!): gather up things like gloves, seed starter kits, small fertilizers, plant markers—anything that would fit into a pretty box—and create surprise boxes for sale. Price them depending on what's inside. It's amazing how excited people get over unboxing surprises. Want to really sell the idea? Ask a local influencer to do an unboxing video. If you really want to get serious about this idea, [I found a great Shopify blog post](#) about ways to elevate the unboxing experience.

Do you have an idea that's worked well for you? If you'd like to share it, drop me a line at [jpolanz@ballpublishing.com](mailto:jpolanz@ballpublishing.com).

We have lots of stories in this issue focused on extending selling opportunities and making the most out of those shoulder seasons, too. Industry consultant Sid Raisch wrote us a great story on how garden retailers can incorporate a subscription service into their businesses and even offers a list of ideas for themes (the unboxing idea could be one of them!).

Then read Matt Olson's story on mixed combos for fall and winter. Sometimes I think we give up on containers once football season starts. However, consumers are getting more into fall and winter decorating than ever, and containers are a great way to keep the gardening thrill alive while beautifying porches and patios. Plus, I'm seeing

lots of silver options for my scarlet and gray containers this year (go Buckeyes!).

We even asked this year's nominees for the *Green Profit*/The Garden Center Group Young Retailer Award to write about strategies for reducing the depth of the valleys in the "hills and valleys" of garden retail. Read their responses and don't miss Unplugged on Monday, July 17 at [Cultivate'23](#) in Columbus to meet them in person and hear us call out our award winner.

These are just a few of the great stories we have in this issue, so relax, grab a cold beverage, take a much-needed break and enjoy. **GP**