

CONTAINERS, COLOR & COMMUNICATION

WHAT'S ON TREND TO GENERATE MORE PLANT SALES IN 2014?

By Sarah Hayes

What's on trend for consumer gardening in 2014? The answer is mixed annual combos in containers, vibrant colors and black and white, according to Nancy Fire, design director for HGTV Home and the HGTV Home Plant Collection. Fire travels the globe each year to report trends that HGTV Home can apply across all product lines, from paint colors to fabric and plants.

As founder and creative director of Design Works International, Nancy Fire has worked for more than two decades helping companies update their brands, capitalize on emerging trends and develop new product lines. Her other clients include Playtex/Energizer, Kimberly-Clark Corp., Restoration Hardware and Graco, among others.

To stay ahead of the curve, each year HGTV consults Fire's trends report to re-evaluate product lines and implement her findings in plant selections and store displays. Here's what's on trend to generate more plant sales in 2014.

Container Gardening's Growth Spurt

Mixing complementary patterns in design is big going into 2014 along with the growing trend of mixing plant varieties in container gardens. The HGTV Home Plant Collection was one of the first horticulture groups to introduce preselected mixed combos in 2011 to take the guesswork out of container gardening for consumers. Professionally designed mixes allow consumers to color-coordinate and create a polished look at home in minutes.

Mix It Up

There's an art to designing mixed combos and we do the design work before sending our products to

market. The end result is perfectly balanced container garden mixes that thrive throughout the season with proper care. Every Expressions Annuals mix features thrillers, spillers and fillers in complementary growth habits and colors.

This year, as expected, the demand for the mixes has been so strong that we have expanded the line for 2014 to include more than 20 mix options. The mixed combos range from Big & Bold featuring mixes with dahlias, geraniums and petunias to Friendly Fusions with bahia, verbena, petunias and calibrachoa, along with newcomers like Shady Showoffs designed for sun-dappled areas. Together they cover the spectrum of color trends for 2014.

Black & White is Back

Pairing black and white creates a modern, upscale look in any room or garden. HGTV and Nancy Fire saw this trend occurring on a grand scale, resulting in the Chic Black & White mixes. The two-tone mixes run from Black Magic and Midnight White to Black Tie Affair, added to the product line in 2013.

Hello Again...NEON!

Neon was everywhere in 2013, in clothing, jewelry and interior design — so why not plants? The companion varieties that accent Chic Black



Friendly Fusions Orange Bliss

& White include mixes with splashes and pops of vibrant, neon colors.

These trends affect every aspect of the Plant Collection, from the metallic containers right down to the names for the plants — ‘So Amazing! Neon’ geranium, ‘Sweetunia Electric Violet’ petunia and Orange Wow from the Big & Bold color series.

Full of Energy

The colors of rooms, décor and plants can either enhance or detract from energy levels. That’s why interior designers advise using calming colors such as grays and blues in bedrooms to soothe the mind and body. High energy colors like pink, red, orange and yellow elevate mood and energy levels. When showcasing vibrant hues especially with black and white — whether in home décor or the garden — consumers instantly create contrast and higher energy levels.

Growing Culture – Increasing Knowledge

What’s on par with color to lure in gardening customers? Data, knowledge and instant information on plant care, landscaping and gardening tips. Inspired by the Internet culture, educating the consumer on product uses and applications is all the rage for 2014. In much the same way that growers rely on plant growing tips to maximize yield, hardiness and plant beauty, the HGTV Home Plant Collection passes



Shady Showoffs Fashionable Fuchsia

pertinent gardening information along to customers in the form of HGTV Know How! This refers to the plant care tips, landscaping inspiration and gardening ideas featured on the brand’s plant product tags, online and in retail stores.

Promotional Strategies Pay Off

To keep the sales growing, it is important to employ plant promotions and displays that follow

retail design trends, including garden inspiration store displays. That’s why you’ll see premixed, branded containers on display in garden centers so consumers can get container ideas on the spot. We further enhance the sales process with POP banners and in-store displays that educate the consumer on ideas and care for the mixes.

HGTV also turns to the media of the moment — social media and websites — to attract customers and sales. In 2014, we plan to engage customers and drive purchases with geo-targeted digital content and promotions appearing on HGTV.com, DIY.com, HGTVgardens.com and Facebook, proven to generate hits and sales with gardening fans. We will also execute our national marketing plan, which will feature ads on both HGTV and DIY Network beginning in April.

The new world of gardening and consumer marketing has some new rules. Know your customer and know the trends that will generate future sales. HGTV is pleased to share these trends with wholesalers, growers and retailers across the country as inspiration for product mixes, store displays and sales generators. Interested in receiving more information on trends for 2014 in gardening? [E](#)

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