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Something So Right

Both the June and July issues of *GPN* will include in-depth coverage of the California Pack Trials — the trends, new varieties, gossip and everything in between. But I just couldn't wait that long to congratulate Goldsmith Seeds on what I think is one of the most forward-thinking concepts shown at this year's Pack Trials.

Not a new flower color or a new marketing program, this concept could easily have been missed in all that Goldsmith and Fischer showed at their shared location. If you focused only on the new varieties, you probably missed it. If you rushed past "all that retail stuff," you definitely missed it. If you aren't looking for ways to expand the industry, you'll probably still miss it.

What could be that interesting and that important? Indoor gardening. I don't mean a bunch of cut flowers on a table or a potted plant on the window sill. What Goldsmith showed in one of their vignettes and what I think is one of the biggest growth opportunities for our industry is creating an interiorscape, setting a mood, decorating your home with flowers and gardens as much as paint and pillows.

The Next Frontier

We've all heard the doom and gloom reports about the future of the floriculture industry: X and Y Generations do not like to garden, people don't want to spend as much time gardening, novices are intimidated by our product, etc., etc., etc.

Container gardening has done a lot to counter these claims — to slow the market erosion we fear from aging Baby Boomers who no longer want to spend hours outside in the garden. But what about actually creating new markets?

If we can't get our current customers to spend more money in their existing gardens, let's get them to create new gardens. In the average 1,500-sq.ft. home, we can certainly find a few square feet for a garden; most people just don't think about using their plants in that way: as pure decoration, the focal point of a room.

When I was growing up, the breakfast room at my aunt's house had a great indoor garden.

She had given over a corner to it. A couple of hanging baskets hung from the ceiling; some kind of huge succulent in a raised, decorative planter was the centerpiece; and various-sized container plants were displayed on whatever riser was available. I remember it being beautiful and lush, an unexpected bit of the outdoors that made the room welcoming, comfortable and exotic all at the same time.

Who's Job Is It?


Scared you'll have trouble pushing the concept? Think this is the job of a retailer, not a grower? That might be the case for a project the size of my aunt's, but not all gardens have to be that massive. I have an herb garden on top of my refrigerator. It's just a large, shallow, square container planted with the herbs I use most when cooking. A friend of mine has a huge succulent/cactus garden in his living room. It's a big trough, 3 ft. wide at least, that sits on an aquarium frame (to lift it off the ground) and overflows with all kinds of succulents and cacti.

Sure, giving customers new ideas and new ways to use our product does fall mostly on retailers. After all, they come in contact with the customer, not us. But isn't it everyone's job to try to grow the market? Goldsmith certainly thinks it is, and I agree that there are things each of us can do to encourage more use of plants and flowers in everyone's daily life.

Welcome Aboard

Busy last month with finishing an issue while traveling, I neglected to introduce you to the newest member of our team: Tim Hodson. Taking over as managing editor, Tim will be responsible for a big part of what makes *GPN* work every month.

Tim comes to us with 20 years of publishing experience under his belt in industries such as safety and chemical engineering, so his technical background should fit in well at *GPN*.

He has already been out to California for the Pack Trials and visited with many of our authors about what they see as important industry issues. Tim will be making the rounds at the summer shows, so be sure to stop him to say hello. 

Bridget C. White

by the numbers

270: Billions of dollars spent annually in the United States on home décor and furnishings.

50: Approximate retail cost of a large herb garden at my local independent.

45: Millions of households, as of last year, established by people younger than 45, i.e., non-Baby Boomers.