

ALL EYES ON THE CONSUMER

BY GERRY GIORGIO

How can you capture the consumer and differentiate your product offering through tags and packaging?

A rising tide of consumer awareness will lift all boats — be it retailer, grower, breeder or brander. Providing them with the products and information that match their needs will keep them coming back to the garden center. An important part of this is in the messaging delivered at the point of sale. That's where it all happens. When the shopper is standing there with money in their pocket and the decision to buy is upon them.

PROVIDE CONFIDENCE

So, what do most consumers want when making a purchase in the garden center? First, they want confidence that they will be successful with their purchase. Data indicates that most shoppers in a garden center identify as inexperienced, knowing just enough to get by.

Many don't even consider themselves gardeners. Their confidence might be low, but their desire for flowers and plants in their life is high. The opportunity here is to bring sufficient information and inspiration at the point of sale to ease their fear and sell more plants.

Even in a changing landscape of how best to communicate to the shopper in the store, research shows that the best way to reach consumers is through the tag and associated packaging, as this

remains the top source for consumer's gardening information. In fact, according to a Home Garden Panel study, 72 percent of consumers learn about new varieties in the retail store. This is still the biggest opportunity to communicate the value and performance expectations that are relevant to today's garden center shopper.

PROVIDE SOLUTIONS

In addition to delivering a relevant and helpful message in the store, new products can be developed to benefit those shoppers who need the help most. Research informs us that providing solutions to consumers who don't have experience and don't consider themselves gardeners is another opportunity. These can take the form of DIY products fashioned to meet their need for help.

Examples are out there in the form of the many meal kit services like Hello Fresh and Blue Apron — Pre-packaged ingredients and fool-proof instructions on how to successfully prepare a meal. This same concept can play out in the garden center with packaged, pre-selected plants, instructions and all one needs to make their own decorative mixed container. Having such a "kit" in the store can drive sales to

those who might otherwise be intimidated to locate all of the needed items for their project.

PROVIDE AN EXPERIENCE

Taking this thought further, finished, ready-to-use decorative items are on the rise. A new generation is looking for ways to have plants part of their lifestyle. But make no mistake, these are not "gardeners." Their purchasing decisions can be driven more by the space they live in and the amount of time they have. It's about their lifestyle and the experience they want from having plants and flowers as a part of it.

Here the opportunity is to reform what you already sell into beautiful, high value, finished decorative products. Declassify plants. Mix tropical foliage with annuals. Offer season-long blooming mixed perennials. Combine vegetables with non-edibles to create new, unique products. Then communicate with inspiration and the information needed through tagging and packaging to deliver your message.

The market for our products is changing. It's no longer sufficient to offer only the "raw material" of packs and pots. Consumers want more. How you communicate to them at the point of sale will make a big difference. The right product, tagged and packaged for today's shopper. Therein lies the recipe for success. Theirs and yours.

Gerry Giorgio is creative director with MasterTag and can be reached at ggiorgio@mastertag.com.

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DO IT FOR THEM.

Fifty percent of those who garden (62 percent of millennials) cite not having enough time as preventing them from gardening. Provide high-impulse finished items, quick and clear messaging, and grab-and-go collections.



EXPRESSIVE AND UNIQUE.

Millennials value customization, authenticity and expressing themselves. Mix tropical plants with annuals and perennials for a unique and out-of-the-ordinary deco container. Brightly colored containers and a whimsical tag complete the package.

FALL IS FOR DECORATING.

Seventy-eight percent of consumers decorate with plants in their fall displays. Eighty-seven percent of millennial home gardeners decorate for fall — far more than older generations. Increase fall sales by offering decorator finished items. A decorative container and a tag on a riser will make a nice, ready-to-use combo.



EXTEND THE SEASON.

Shoppers are now visiting the garden center into July, August and September. Offer season-extending finished decorator products for July 4th and Labor Day.



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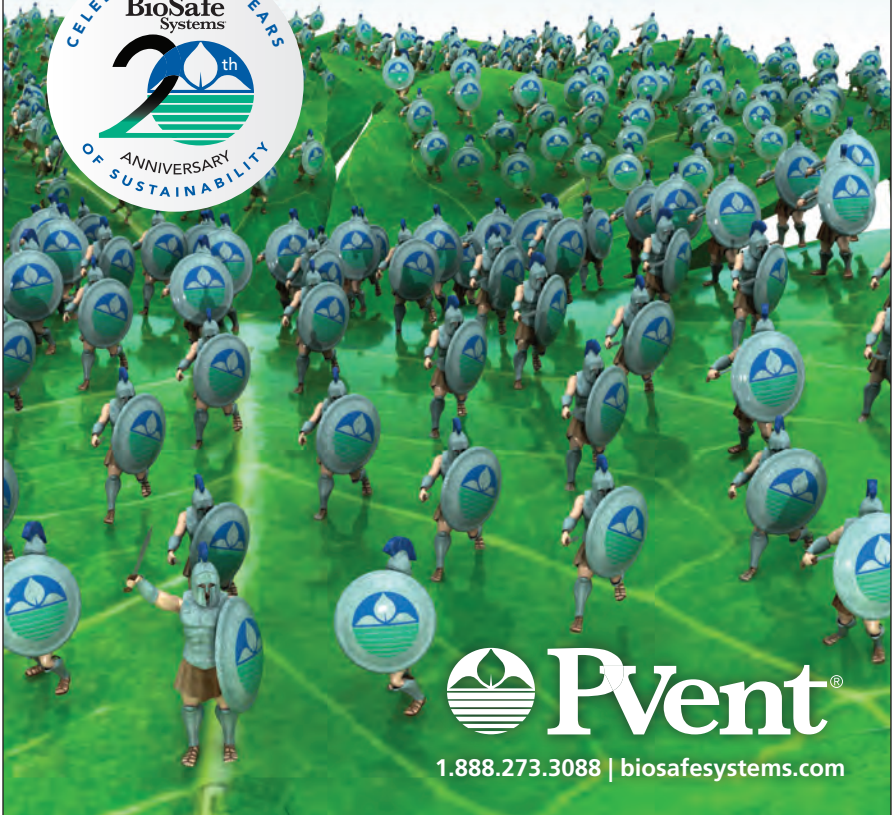
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INCREASE VISIBILITY UNDER THE RIM.

The plant tag is the No. 1 source for plant care and maintenance information at the store level. The majority of shoppers under 40 say they can feel overwhelmed when shopping for plants. Tags help guide consumers and give them confidence they can succeed.



A UNIQUE TAG CAN ADD VALUE.

Millennials want to refresh their containers, planting multiple times each year. They change colors with each season and show high interest in “drop in” or “no gloves” solutions. A unique tag, like the umbrella shown here, can provide information and add value as a decorative item consumers will want to keep.



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COMMUNICATE AND INSPIRE.

Pressure-sensitive labels offer another option for communicating. Their large space creates an opportunity for rich information and inspiration. Take full advantage of the space. Add images, text, bar codes and price. But be sure to provide as much detail as possible. Shoppers want and need help.

DO IT YOURSELF.

Sixty-one percent of consumers prefer an empty container and plants to plant themselves as opposed to ready-made containers. Provide ready-to-use “kits” for those who want to plant their own but don’t know what to choose. gpn

