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# Garden Center Displays to Increase Foot Traffic

*The following e-GRO Alert discusses retail garden center display considerations for encouraging in-store foot traffic.*

The retail garden center is an area of delight for customers. Rarely do we see two garden centers that have the same design and layout which gives a sense of adventure for visitors as they explore the store and peruse the products. Although this is an advantage, it can also be challenging as one determines the best way to showcase products within a predetermined (and sometimes limited) amount of space. Here, we will discuss displays and spacing for easier foot traffic within the retail garden center.



Figure 1. Color Wheel Demonstrating Complementary Colors that Customers Could Consider for Their Containers and Landscapes.

Photo Source: A. Rihn (2022)

Displays are a great means of generating customer interest. A key benefit of plants is their visual appeal, and displays are a way to help customers visualize the product in different settings. Some people come to the garden center with a predetermined idea or design that they replant year after year (e.g., geraniums in planters on the patio, a pathos for their coffee table), while others are more open to whatever appeals to them in the garden center (e.g., annual plant impulse purchases). Displays can be used to educate customers about possible combinations. For instance, a color wheel can be used to help customers understand and visualize various color combinations to fit their different personalities and tastes (Fig. 1).

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Plant displays aid customers through demonstrating the plant's potential (designs, colors, uses) in a variety of settings. There is an opportunity to show how the plant looks when paired with less familiar plants and allows customers to view the end product prior to purchase which can decrease customer risk and increase satisfaction.

Displays can be larger, showing how the plants look within the landscape or patio. For instance, demonstrating the integration of hardscapes and plants. Alternatively, displays can be smaller (e.g., containers; Fig. 2) or options for limited space gardeners (Fig. 3). The available space within the retail store is often what designates the number and types of displays used.

When considering store layout, aisle width can strongly impact the path people take through the store. If the aisles are narrow, people are less likely to venture into those areas without an incentive. In narrow aisles, providing a greater variety of products encourages people to explore these spaces (Levav et al., 2009). This also encourages impulse purchasing.

On the other hand, providing wide aisles (when possible) gives customers the personal space where they can fully explore the product offerings. Wide aisles also provide the benefits of space for shopping carts or wagons.

Shopping carts positively impact spending. For example, larger grocery shopping carts can increase spending by 40% due to improved convenience (Martin, 2023). Specifically, people can easily carry more items to the checkout. Shopping carts or wagons are a good option for garden centers if they can accommodate the associated logistics (storage, aisle width and composition).

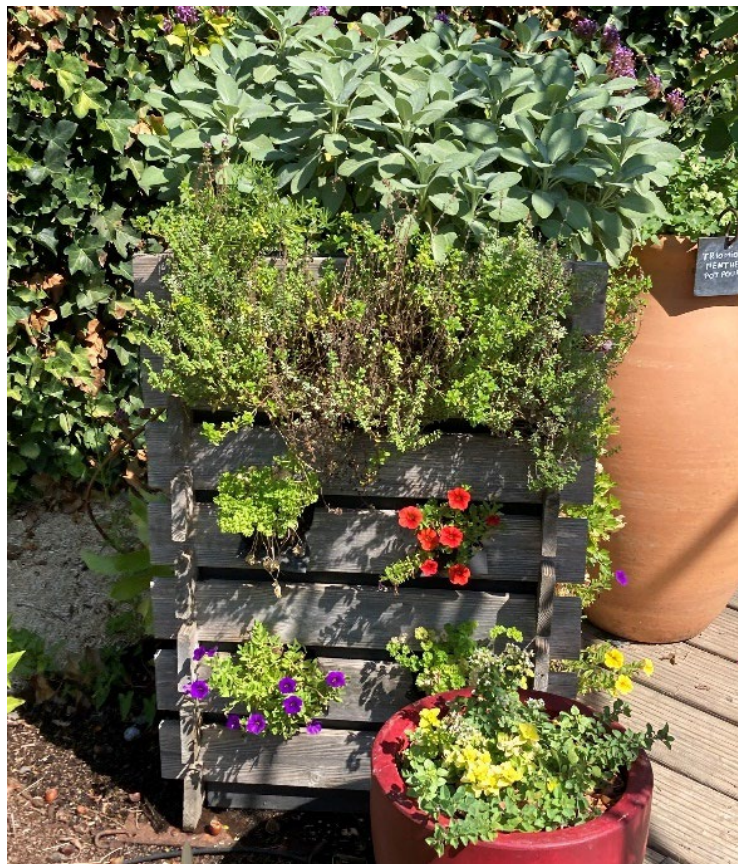


Figure 2. Small Vertical Planter Showcasing Herbs and Annual Plants.

Photo source: A. Rihn (2022)



Figure 3. Strawberries Planted in Bag of Potting Mix at a Retail Garden Center.

Photo source: A. Rihn (2022)

Lastly, use displays and product offerings to draw people through the store. Grocery stores use staple goods (e.g., milk, eggs, bread) to draw customers through the store, which result in greater impulse purchases. Consider things that may draw people through your store. For instance, do you have statues that kids like to find? Position them near the back and let the treasure hunt begin (Fig. 4)!

People love going to the garden center. Thoughtful displays can heighten that enjoyment and encourage additional sales. Below are a few key points from this article and other considerations for retail garden centers.



Figure 4. Garden Center Animal Statue

Photo source: A. Rihn (2019)

### Key points:

- Plants are visually appealing, displays demonstrate their various uses.
- Displays can be large or small depending on space and what customers value.
- Displays can aid in educating customers about their options.
- Wide aisles encourage people to wander and impulse purchase.
- If narrow aisles are used, offer a variety of products to entice people.
- Shopping carts or wagons can increase sales.
- If used, shopping cart or wagon logistics need to be considered (flooring, storage, aisle width) to improve ease of use.

### Other considerations:

- Grocery stores use milk to draw customers through the store, what product is your “milk”? Do people come to buy potting soil? If so, draw them to the back of the store to buy that item and increase impulse purchases.
- Deeper stores (like a rectangle) have higher impulse purchases than square shaped stores because people are exposed to more products. Is there a way to position your products to encourage people to pass more of them prior to purchase?
- Who is your core customer? What do they value? Is there additional services or products that you can introduce to generate more value? For example, Millennials and younger consumers value plant benefit information. Providing point-of-sale benefit information could generate additional interest and sales.

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