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Leading the Revolution in Garden Retailing

West

Northeast

Southwest

Southeast

100 Revolutionary
Garden Centers
Midwest 2007



Meister Media Worldwide — Celebrating 75 Years

100 Revolutionary Garden Centers

Leading The Retail Revolution



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Within these pages you will find unique ideas created by independent retailers who realize the key to survival is change and evolution. They take risks – some pay off, and some don't. But they are giving it their all to stay profitable in a time of great competition.

I see that spirited competition coming out in these ideas. The garden centers on this list are providing a unique experience for their customers, be it through innovative loyalty program offerings; new, unusual product mixes or events and activities in and out of the store. They are branding themselves as the experts. You no doubt will recognize many of the names here. Many from last year are on again this year. But some are new faces.

We base the list on a questionnaire that we grade for a maximum of 100 points. That questionnaire asks retailers about everything from staff training and industry involvement to buying practices, marketing initiatives, use of technology and profitability.

Therefore, the retailers on this list aren't the ones that make the most revenue or have the largest square footage. They are many times working with the space and structures they have, making wise investments into the future and innovating to attract customers.

Last year, we set the threshold at 50 points – so anyone who scored 50 or higher got on the list. This year, we raised the bar to 60 points. The number of retailers who filled out a questionnaire and made the list totalled 89, which meant there were 11 retailers that, through industry research, we determined should be on the list even though they didn't fill out a survey.

New Developments

Just like our 100, we feel evolution is always a good thing – so we're adding a new element to the list this year. The five garden centers spotlighted on the following pages are the top scorers in each region, making them the Revolutionary 100 Regional Winners.

One out of these five will go on to win our Revolutionary Retailer Award, which we'll announce on the cover of the February issue. So stay tuned – the excitement is only just beginning!

Check out in-depth features of each member on www.todaysgardencenter.com, including photos and commercials. Congratulations to all who made the list this year! TGC

☼ = New Garden Centers on the List ✨ = Garden Centers We Chose for the List

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NORTHEAST REGIONAL WINNER:

Grossman's Country Nursery

Owners Larry and Frances Grossman reach customers with a popular weekly radio show, as well as female-specific events at the garden center.

And now, the Penfield, N.Y.-based retailer has started offering special events registries for five major life events: weddings, retirement, new homes, birthdays and second marriages.

Northeast

Company Name	City/State	Locations	Years	Revolutionary Concept or Idea
American Plant Food Co.	Bethesda, MD	2	84	Member of a buying group that offers private labeling – allows it to differentiate itself from non-members of the buying group and mass merchants.
Ashcombe Farm & Greenhouses	Mechanicsburg, PA	1	44	Several marketing activities, but “perhaps our most revolutionary aspect is that we don’t let any marketing idea become stagnant.”
Atlantic Nursery & Garden Shop	Freeport, NY	1	77	Began an effort to reduce SKUs in all departments to increase sales. “Yes, giving customers less choice results in less confusion and more and easier sales.”
Barlow's Flower Farm	Sea Girt, NJ	1	25	Produces most of its own signage. Includes slogans like “A Barlow's Favorite For Easy Care.”
Bayport Flower Houses, Inc.	Bayport, NY	1	74	Hosts a large community expo each year through the Chamber of Commerce at the garden center.
Bemis Farms Nursery	Spencer, MA	1	59	Has a program called Successful Gardening ... Guaranteed. “We do not have a time limit on it.”
Churchill's	Exeter, NH	1	50	All staff meets once a week to be trained on upselling, merchandising, plant care and products.
Country Market Nursery	Mechanicsburg, PA	2	61	Uses point-of-sale system to run purchasing reports, sales by the hour, reports for scheduling and Top 10 and Bottom 10 product lists.
Dearborn Market Garden Center	Holmdel, NJ	1	82	Affecting margin by “making more educated buying decisions through use of retail-ready merchandise, focusing on color for impact.”
Fairfield Garden Center	Fairfield, NJ	1	39	Promotes a two-year guarantee on trees and shrubs with tie-in sales of planting media – “An idea learned through the invaluable experience of networking.”
Gary's Gardens	Severna Park, MD	1	6	Reworked parking lot, entrance and wider walkways to bring customers through outdoor inventory - “realizing a 27 percent sales increase in that department.”
Herbly Wonderful	Batavia, NY	1	7	Hosts a two-day herb and flower festival that brings in customers outside the garden club.
Holdridge Home & Garden Showplace	Ledyard and East Lyme, CT	2	94	“A customer buys an umbrella with our name on it for \$15, and whenever it rains at our location anyone who brings in their umbrella receives 15 percent off their full-price purchases.”
Homestead Gardens*	Davidsonville, MD	1	37	Provides hanging baskets for Annapolis and Camden Yards each year to beautify the locations. It holds a fundraiser to support the program, featuring food, live music and an auction.
Martin Viette Nurseries*	East Norwich, NY	1	77	Carries an exclusive line of conservatories from Hampton Conservatories that provide an upscale sun room, pool enclosure or greenhouse option for customers.
Matterhorn	Spring Valley, NY	2	26	Created a “village effect” at the Spring Valley location, “creating a shopping experience with different stores within the village.”
Parker Gardens	Scotch Plains, NY	1	50+	“Reports are run prior to any major buying trips and analyzed for poor sellers, pricing comparisons between vendors or product shortages.”
Patuxent Nursery	Bowie, MD	1	8	Advertising is based on a series of four-page, full-color tabs inserted into local newspapers.
Peconic River Herb Farm	Calverton, NY	1	20	Offers free garden consultations including rough design sketch and plant shopping list “with minimum plant purchase or purchase of a gift certificate to be used in the future.”
Riverside Nursery & Garden Center	Collinsville, CT	1	34	“We use hand-held scanners to scan in barcodes and we enter our purchase orders in advance with item pricing, so when items come in, the receiving and labeling goes faster.”
Scenic Nursery & Landscaping	Raymond, NH	1	11	POS system allows staff to maintain a customer history to assist better when they come in looking for products or asking questions about something they purchased the year before.
Sonora's Gardens	Horseheads, NY	1	5	Participates in the local America In Bloom initiative for Horseheads, and the local garden club.
Stauffers of Kissel Hill	Liitz, PA	6	75	Gave the operation a makeover this year, from all the marketing aspects to the look of the facilities with a new logo, new signage and other improvements.
Van Wilgen's Garden Center	North Branford, CT	1	87	Uses POS system to watch inventory and number of turns. “We do reports to find out how fast products turn, when they are sold and if they are at full price.”
Waterloo Gardens*	Exton & Devon, PA	2	65	83 percent of retail sales come from loyalty program members, which total about 120,000 customers. Loyalty program members get many perks, like exclusive events and services.
Williams Nursery	Westfield, NJ	1	86	Decorated delivery trucks with full-color images. “(It) costs less than two newspaper ads.”