

GROWERTALKS

Columns

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Cheap Tricks: Holiday Displays Unwrapped

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The GCA Holiday Tour of garden centers in the Pennsylvania and Maryland area was packed like Santa's sleigh with a ton of holiday display ideas. We've unwrapped the best of them here for your consideration for the next holiday season.

Wreaths

Waterloo Gardens in Exton, Pennsylvania, has employees working like elves in their behind-the-scenes wreath-making workshop. During the Christmas season they make 4,500 wreaths and approximately 1,500 other greens pieces such as runners. They split the workshop into two areas: average-priced wreaths created by employees using a template or theme, and high-end wreaths created by designers. Wreath designer Heather says table pieces are popular items and fun to create. They buy in mantle runners, twist them into an S-curve, and replace the pre-existing trinkets with higher-end and higher-quality accessories.

Hang 'em Up

You take time and care to create beautiful wreaths. Why not show your customers just how gorgeous they'll look hanging from their doors and windows? Feeney's, Buck's Country Gardens (Doylestown, Pennsylvania) and Waterloo Gardens did just that. It's a simple way to help your customers envision their homes decorated for the holidays.

Little Houses

We know about creating theme rooms in your retail area. Why not take that a step further and create a separate house or shed? The addition of a "roof" gives you yet another area from which you can hang and display items. It also gives the products inside a sense of being special in some way. It definitely adds a "poke-around factor" to your store.

Let There Be Light

When setting up your Christmas displays, take advantage of your entire facility—including the ceiling. The dark ceiling of Feeney's in Feasterville, Pennsylvania, is the perfect backdrop for an array of white twinkle

lights. The lights stay up year round (turned off until Christmas season) to avoid the hassle of reinstalling them every fall. Feeney's even created lighted "clouds"—a nice touch. The effect was stunning.

Valley View Farms in Cockeysville, Maryland, created a star-studded sky above their Christmas shop, as well. These lights are attached to a canopy of welded iron "branches." Valley View previously used regular twinkle light sets, but found they had to replace bulbs and even entire lines every year. For 2008 they replaced their entire lighted heavens with LEDs, which use less electricity and have a much longer bulb life. Unlike Feeney's, Valley View does remove the lights each year.

Winter Fountain Display

Fountains have a life beyond summer. Feeney's is showing their customers that fountains can add beauty to their winter landscapes. Add some faux evergreen trees and snow to a gurgling fountain and inspire your customers to think of fountains in a new season.

Light Displays

Do you find boxes of lights opened and uncurled lying on your shelves? Show shoppers what their boxed light options are by setting up a comparison display. Add length and price and you'll make your customers' buying decisions even easier. This light display at Stauffers of Kissel Hill shows customers what awaits them in the packages.

Think Creatively

Scott Daley is the creative guy behind these Department 56 displays at Homestead Gardens in Davidsonville, Maryland. Their traditional way of displaying the themed villages—on boards they'd move to different locations each year—was getting stale creatively, Scott said. So he thought way outside the box to find fun, creative ways of displaying the village themes. For example, a yellow taxi for the Christmas in the City series and a freezer for the North Pole series. Note the trees next to these creative themes hold ornaments related to each Department 56 theme.



Give 'em Ideas

Assume customers aren't creative thinkers. Tell them how to use your products by posting signs. For example, a sign at Stauffers at Kissel Hill suggests adding a second, smaller tree to one's holiday décor, while a sign at Feeney's reminds customers about gift ideas.