

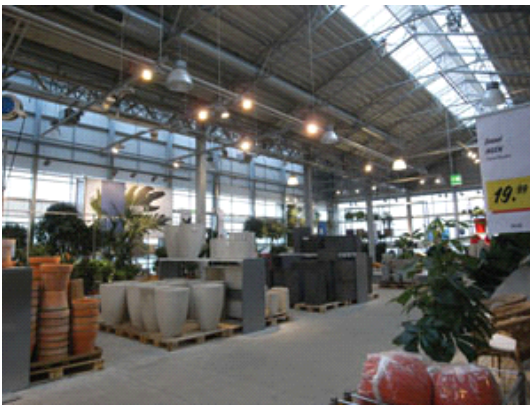
# GROWERTALKS

## Features

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## IKEA Goes Garden

Chris Beytes



In late January, *Green Profit* spent a week in Germany for the IPM Essen Show (see stories on the Flip Side, GT 10 and GT 66). Knowing that Germany was home to two of the four existing IKEA stores with actual greenhouses attached (the other two are in Italy and Russia), we visited the Oldenburg store to see how serious the Swedish home furnishing chain is about the concept ... especially as it pertains to livegoods.

### ***Here's what we found:***

Our first impression was, "Where's the garden center?" We couldn't find it. After patrolling the entire store (and stopping for lunch in the café) we found it at the bottom floor, right-hand corner.

The greenhouse area is L-shaped, with doors dividing the two legs of the L, so there are two zones. Upon entering the first part, the top of the L, we found a variety of spathiphyllum plants priced from 5.99 euros (\$7.80) to 35 euros (\$46), along with larger floor plants like you'd see in a typical box store. But mostly this section had lots of ceramic containers in black, red, galvanized, terra cotta, "inky zinc" and concrete finishes, plus some wicker and baskets. This was also where they marketed garden furniture and cushions.

IKEA's real emphasis was obviously on patio décor, what press contact Sabine Nold called their "in-between" range. "The glasshouse is not only about plants," she says. "We have plants in the other stores. That's not specific to the glasshouses. It's also about rattan furniture, for example, and other things for living in the garden and in the home." In other words, don't expect IKEA to carry flats of bedding plants anytime soon.

The second house (the bottom of the L) had a small selection of cut flowers, smaller houseplants priced from 50 euro cents (\$0.66) to 14 euros (\$18.43), and some orchid plants, plus a large selection of plastic plants in all sizes. There were also lots of candles and other home and patio accessories.

There are just four IKEA greenhouses in the world so far, with a fifth being built in Hamburg, Germany. Sabine says the program is still in the testing phase, and no decision has been made

to take the concept chain-wide.

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### **About IKEA**

There are 293 IKEA stores in 36 countries, 259 of which are IKEA-Group owned. They plan on opening 26 new stores in 2009. The US has 34 stores and Canada has 11, compared to 43 in Germany, IKEA's largest market. Russia has 11, China 6. [www.ikea-group.ikea.com](http://www.ikea-group.ikea.com).