

GROWERTALKS

Features

4/15/2010

Cheap Tricks: Greetings From Manchester, England

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Hi Chris & Ellen,

We had a fantastic trip to Manchester, England, for the International Garden Center Association annual meeting and garden center tour last September. Thought you might like to see some of the displays; each of the participating garden centers had something of great interest to offer. Each facility could fill an article all by itself!

Cheers!

Ernest and Jack

P.S. The 2010 ICGA meeting and tour will be in Japan this October! Hope you can make it!



1. Talkin' 'bout the Car Wash

This was a tented car wash in a parking area near Dobbies Garden Centre, a very well-known company in the United Kingdom with 24 stores throughout the country. What an interesting option for customers to take advantage of while they shop!

2. Reference Room

This Garden Advice Centre at Lady Green Garden Centre was certainly a cut (or two!) above what one often sees. It's a very comfortable spot for customers to get professional advice and browse a number of reference resources.



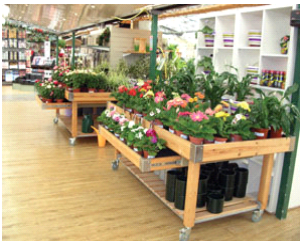


3. Details Make a Difference

Bents Garden Centre does a superb job with its professional displays and quality of product. Some things that we see here that make a real difference in the shopping environment are their use of an open roof system; folding walls, which can essentially open and close the entire side of a greenhouse; and an eye-catching Information Center—always staffed, and always busy!

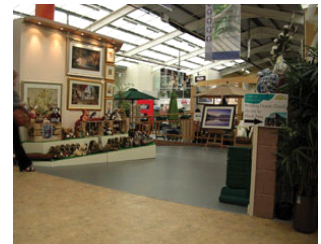
4. Legal Thorns

This sign just demonstrates that the threat of litigation we have to put up with here is not an isolated situation; the stories the owners of Daisy Nook Garden Centre were relating were unbelievable; one customer wanted her leather coat replaced because it was scratched by a thorn—and she got it!



5. Clever Considerations

Grosvenor Garden Centre's gift-wrapping area was on the other side of the reception area, which is opposite the entrance. Another clever aspect of this facility is its display tables with a retractable second shelf for additional plants or ancillary products.



6. Generous Inclines

Changes in level are, of course, to be avoided. However, Gordale Garden Centre not only made the ramp wide and easy to negotiate, but they also made sure not to neglect the display opportunities it afforded.



7. Plant Parking

Creative display techniques like this one at Burleydam Garden Centre are not something you see every day! It would be interesting to see how this changes seasonally.

8. Top Notch

This new facility for Barton Grange Garden Centre opened on June 10, 2008. It offers a spacious retractable roof sales area, a first class food hall, an extensive product mix, and some exceedingly talented staff in charge of displays.





9. Making Levels Work

Chatsworth is an example of a garden center that had to resort to numerous level changes due to the topography of the site and preservation of some existing buildings—there wasn't the luxury of having space for ramps, as was the case with Gordale. Regardless, they have made the best of a very difficult situation.

10. Sweet Last-Minute Sales

There was no shortage of sweet-tooth temptations at the checkouts in Woodford Park Garden Centre. Impulse sales can take on many different forms. GP



Ernest Wertheim and Jack Klemeyer are partners in the firm of Wertheim, van der Ploeg, & Klemeyer (www.wvkdesign.com), a San Francisco-based architecture and landscape architecture firm with more than 55 years experience. WVK was involved in the planning of four of the facilities on last year's IGCA tour in Manchester—All-in-One, Barton Grange, Bents and Daisy Nook—three of which are featured above. They can be contacted at (415) 664-0134 or by email at wvk@sbcglobal.net