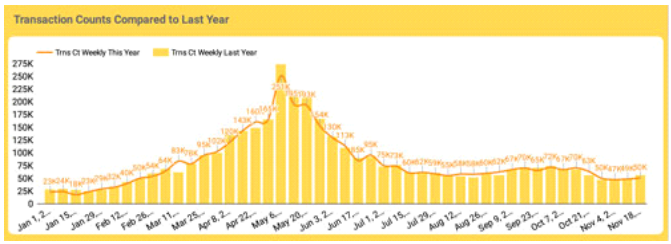
GROWERTALKS

Front Lines

1/1/2025

2024 Retail Recap

Chris Beytes



This is from my friend and yours, Danny Summers, managing director and "chief instigator" at The Garden Center Group (GCG). All year long, GCG gathers reams of useful sales data from its many member garden centers, which Danny and his team analyze and share back with the membership so they know how they're performing compared to their peers. It's all members-only stuff (which is why you should join—more on that at the end). But on a whim, I asked Danny if he'd be willing and able to summarize 2024 as experienced by GCG members and share it with the industry. And he graciously agreed! Here's what he sent me:

As we near the last few weeks of 2024, this year's results are all but final. The Garden Center Group's Weekly Department Review (WDR) will have had over 4,000 weekly uploads to produce a detailed tracking of performance across 28 Product Categories with Sales, Average Sale and Transaction Counts. All of this by Region and by Sales Group (centers grouped by annual volume).

Here's what we call The Big Three ... (as of Week 47, week ending November 24, 2024)

2024 YTD Sales: -5.0%

2024 YTD Average Sale: -0.1%

2024 Transaction Counts: -4.8%

Certainly, everyone's crystal ball for what to expect in 2025 is "foggy," but keeping an ear-to-the-ground for what garden centers are saying, what growers and hardgoods suppliers are saying—even what Charlie Hall and other industry analysts are saying—can give us a sense of what may happen next year.

Overall, I see most being optimistic for a better 2025. We know to be a gardener optimism is in our DNA, but here are a few things that can help give us more confidence of 2025 being an "UP" year:

- We do have a more enthusiastic young audience
- This will not be an election year
- We see interest rates coming down

- Many “new” homes built over the past couple years are not yet landscaped
- Many “new” gardens are not near completed (we would say a garden is never finished, but these new homeowners are just beginning in many cases)

None of these positive observations pushes garden centers to build inventories like we did several years ago. Instead, solid conservative growth, especially for the initial spring preparations, seems warranted. At the same time, we’re on this new plateau that was created since 2020.

Being fully prepared and ready for a great spring by proper planning and having the ability to react to positive growth will help create a great year. **GP**