Summer sales, garden projects & last-minute gift ideas from Atlanta



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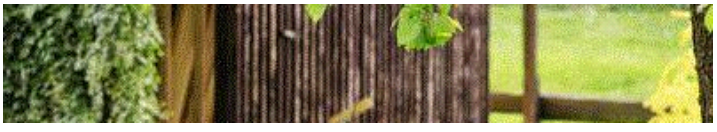
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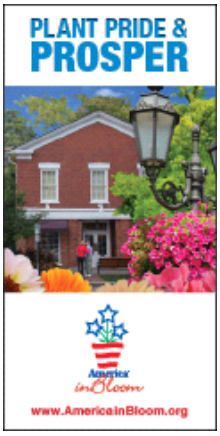


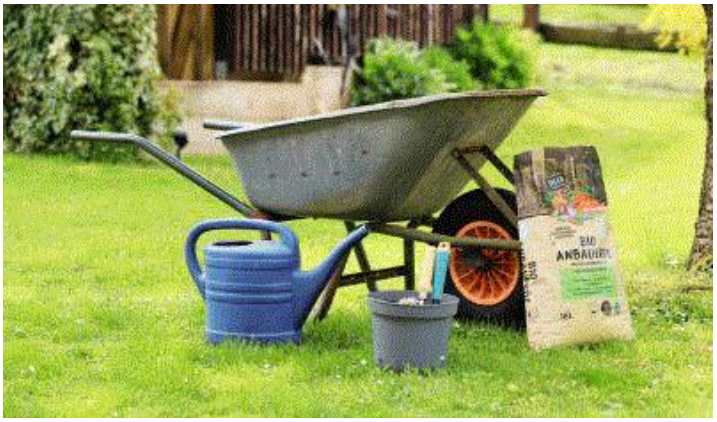
YipitData Recaps Summer Lawn & Garden Sales

You know that YipitData "Summer 2026 Lawn & Garden: What Shoppers Actually Bought" webinar I told you about last week? I sat in on it for you. And so did colleague Jen Polanz—I'll include her comment about it down below. But first, as a reminder, the YipitData webinar presented the information gleaned from more than 12,000 shoppers in the lawn and garden category during Summer 2026 and broke down each sub-category (consumables, tools, outdoor power equipment and pest control) within lawn and garden to see what moved. Their data is predominantly from big box sales—Home Depot, Lowe's, Walmart, Amazon and Tractor Supply. But of course, JP and I were listening with independent garden centers top of mind.







Some of the key points for me were:

- Assortment has changed significantly over the last two years, driven by new products. The only sub-category with a decline was outdoor power tools, but even that category did see growth in robotics and zero-turn products. Existing products did not perform as well.
- Amazon is taking share across all sub-categories, and mostly from big box brick and mortar. However, the lawn and garden products they are selling are typically one-offs, commodity items and replenishment-type purchases.
- Project-based purchased represented more than 90% of the purchases in lawn and garden and accounted for more than 75% of the shopping trips. In-store trips for project-based purchases totaled three times as much as online purchases.
- What products grew the fastest between March-July 2026 compared to in 2025? Better-for-home consumables (i.e. natural, organic and pet/kid-safe), premium and automated for outdoor power, and durability and comfort in tools.

When it comes to the last bullet point, the presenter suggested that products such as comfortable tools, self-driving mowers, pest controls and fertilizers that ease parents' minds—can have a higher price point because they do the customer a service of solving their problems.



About Those Projects

I am not on the nursery floor and the checkouts like you are, so it came as a surprise to me for the presenter to say that for project-based purchases, the bulk of a consumer's lawn and garden project spend comes *after* the first trip. Maybe they bought a raised bed kit, some soil and some plants or seeds. Afterwards, 85% of those folks will make a follow-up trip. Couple these stats with the fact that more than 90% of lawn and garden purchases are project-based, and you'll see that following up with customers to ensure those subsequent visits is where the real opportunities lie.



The presenter used the example of a first-timer coming in for an edible raised bed garden project:

- **First trip:** Purchases are seeds, plants, raised beds, soils, etc.
- **1-2 weeks later:** Things they forgot or didn't get enough of to finish
- **15-30 days later:** Items to maintain the garden such as watering items and more plants
- **31-60 days later:** Pest control
- **After 60 days:** Moving on to another project nearby since they had success with the first!

It's possible your customer could drift elsewhere or to another retailer somewhere along that timeline. The webinar offered some suggestions for how to retain them and encourage more visits:

- Use messaging and education, ideally during the first trip, to suggest what they may need in the near future. My friend Katie Elzer-Peters may have a word or two to say about how you could use e-mail and SMS marketing for getting this across to your customers.
- Offer a family of products from the same brand or offer bundles for each of those stages of the project journey.
- Suggest their next step. You're the expert. It's your opportunity to tell them what they should be doing next.

Jen Polanz had thoughts about the tremendous opportunity these project-based visits offer. I love her ideas here:

"I was thinking, it would be great if a garden center could really focus in on 3-4 projects and build out resources and product offerings around them. Like the example of the raised bed for edibles, you could really dive deep into it, creating a project section for it on your website with the products needed, instructions, plants, recommendations for pest and disease control and then targeted social media and e-news campaigns that get out information at the time it's needed (like pest and disease pressures) to drive repeat visits. And then harvesting products and canning/freezing/drying guides and products."

So many opportunities along the customer project journey!

Any of you doing this? Drop me a line with your tips.



"Homesteading" Is a Project

Americans just don't call it homesteading. According to new research from Curion Poll Pulse research, Americans surveyed about growing and preserving food at home don't see themselves as the trendy social media homesteaders but as folks who are just trying to stay healthy and lower costs.

The poll of nearly 15,500 Americans found that nearly 84% say they do at least one home-based food or household production activity. And nearly 70% say activities such as gardening, scratch cooking and making things at home are either a core part of their weekly routine or a regular hobby. Just 7% said these were part of a self-sufficient lifestyle and core to how they live.



The breakdown for why they do these home food-based activities goes like this:

- 65% cite improving health by controlling ingredients and eating fewer processed foods.
- 53% say it's to save money
- 49% say it's to improve well-being, reduce stress and spend time with a family activity.
- 27% point to sustainability and waste reduction.
- 26% cite lifestyle changes.

As I mentioned, only a small percentage—7%—claim these activities as a self-sufficient homesteading lifestyle. "The behavior is mainstream, the identity isn't," said Inga Verbicka, director of strategic insights at Curion. "People are baking their own bread and freezing their own produce, and if you asked them whether they're homesteaders, most would say no. They'd say they're just cooking dinner. That's not a movement — it's a habit, and habits are far more durable than movements."

Inga goes on to say these habits—gardening, preserving, making things from scratch and so forth—are largely disconnected from any social media trend. I love what she continued to say about it:

"This wasn't created by a content cycle, so it won't be retired by one. When nearly half of these consumers tell you the payoff is well-being—less stress, time with family, the feeling of having pulled it off—they're not asking anyone to take the work away. They're telling you the work is part of the point. Brands that read this as consumers opting out are going to miss what's actually happening—which is consumers deciding, deliberately, what they want to make themselves and ***where they still want help****. Knowing which side of that line your product sits on is the work worth doing right now."*

I emphasized those words in bold because where these folks still want help can come from *you*. This goes back to the webinar findings in the first two items. Sometimes folks don't know what they don't know. That's where *you* come in. Get yourself inserted as the expert source for home-related creations, from garden to canning, with a healthy dose of well-being and family time.



Rococo's Revival

We're now on Trend #4 on Garden Media Group's 2027 Garden Trends Report. And it's one that looks familiar to lots of us, but maybe we just don't associate it with the name.

It's Rococo, and it's so razzle-dazzle.



The 2027 Garden Trends Report shows a razzle-dazzling example of the Rococo vibe.

What *is* Rococo? It's an 18th Century style that emerged in France as a deliberate contrast to the stiffness of the prevailing Baroque style. The style is gilded and full of richness and color and is intimately playful. In a word, it's overflowing.

And it *so* represents many garden styles, especially tropical floral.

As the Garden Trends Report says, the 2027 version of Rococo is "ornate, romantic, abundant and unapologetically extra. Asymmetry. Ruffles. Gilded details. Femininity. Jewel-tone palettes. Gardens overflowing with unruly abundance." That sounds like a lushly flowering tropical garden to me.

In fact, *Country & Town House* magazine named Rococo Revival its interior trend for 2026. And as we know, garden design is always close on the heels of interior design.

Speaking of garden design, the Garden Trends Report has an excellent quote from garden influencer Erin Schanan, aka The Impatient Gardener, that I think sums it up this way:

"With the new Rococo garden movement, maximalist plants and garden designs are radiating exuberance over restraint. Trends always seem to 'over-correct,' and this playful, often satirical design trend offers a complete 180 from the staid monotone and minimalist plantings of recent years."

What are you seeing in terms of this trend? Drop me a note about it at ewells@ballpublishing.com.

Last-Minute Gift Ideas

Jen Polanz made a September visit to a buyer's mecca. Here's what she found for you.

Obviously if you offer gifts for the upcoming holidays, you already buttoned up most of that long ago. However, I was just at AmericasMart for Casual Market Atlanta and couldn't help but sneak out to The Gardens and some gift floors to see if I could spot some last-minute finds. Here are some that are readily available if you need to fill in any gaps.

Hi-Line Gift Ltd.

This is a relatively new showroom in The Gardens, moving in officially in June, and they have THE cutest realistic-looking resin animal statuary, along with tabletop and standing fountains. Hi-Line Gift Ltd. offer multiple sizes in many animal options, including puppy, juvenile and adult options for several dog breeds. The ones pictured are called Soreal Statues, and they are hyper realistic, with hand airbrushed details and expressive features. They also offer multiple bird statues, including some that are motion-activated to cue their birdsong.



Pops Birding

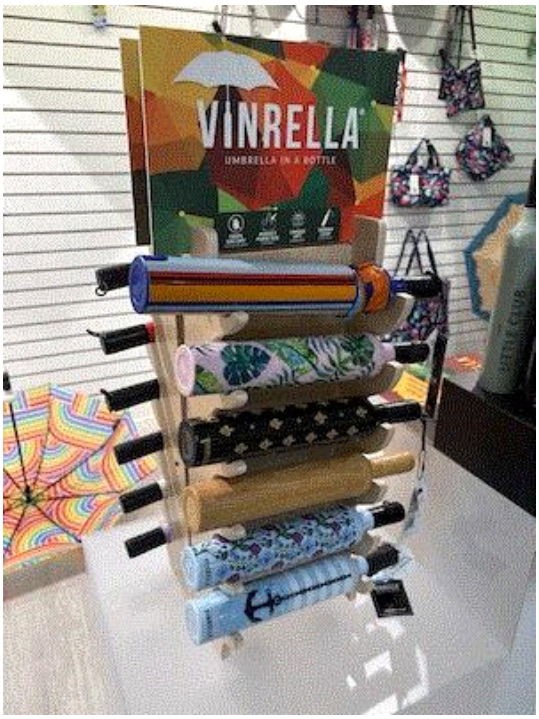
While wandering through The Gardens I saw ornaments shaped like Pops Birding's signature hummingbird swing. I reached out to President and CEO Bethany Sloan, who said these are a newer collection that they've added more options to, and they can either be hung on the tree or suction-cupped to a window for décor. One group of products I didn't get a picture of but Bethany noted are the Holiday Gift Bundles, one of which (the Hummingbird Starter Kit) includes one feeder, one small powder concentrate nectar and one original swing.



Garden Works

I spotted the Vinrella line of umbrellas with a wine bottle as the delivery vehicle at Garden Works, which is also in The Gardens. I asked President Sunshine Chapman about them, and she said they offer new designs twice a year in Atlanta, in January and June, so there are always fresh patterns to choose from. “Vinrella is a wine bottle umbrella—part functional rain gear, part fun hostess/gift item, and it’s been a strong seller for shops looking for something a little different in that category,” she said.

The displays are great, too, and really show off the designs. She said they are a big part of the magic, especially when they are displayed near the store entrance. The displays are made in the USA, and when stores purchase them, they receive six Vinrella umbrellas as an offset.



Three More

Jen's picks from Atlanta continue.

Kobo Candles

While in the Harper Group showroom, I happened upon 100% soy wax candles with a really clean, fresh design, then realized they were called Plant the Box from Kobo Candles. Turns out, this floral- and herb-themed line of candles, soaps and diffusers also include seed-infused boxes that grow the plant that inspired the scent (for example, Backyard Rhubarb or Somerset Thyme). New for this year are the Plant the Box tin candles, which include a seed-infused paper to plant. They also offer gift sets with a mix of candles, diffusers and soaps.



Kobo also has an elegant line called Winter Garden for holiday gift sales. There are three scents in this collection: Winter Garden Golden Pear, Winter Garden Rustic Pine and Winter Garden Festive Poinsettia. They also told me in the showroom if you order a Winter Garden prepack, you will receive six limited edition engraved wick trimmer and dipper sets with it (good until November 15).



Kikkerland

This is another product line that caught my eye while walking down hallways peeking into showrooms. Kikkerland is a brand that offers a wide variety of whimsical and practical gift-y type products, including a whole collection of garden and outdoor-related items. There were so many great things on display, from a leaf-foraging tool, to a plant rug (pictured), a capybara planter, a mushroom grow light and so much more. They had $150 minimums, and a whole section of Garden products in their online catalog.



Diverse Marketing

One final product note, I did go in search of a company repping NeeDohs, which I found in Diverse Marketing. However, they said Schylling, the company that makes NeeDohs, was not taking any more orders for the brand, nor were they opening any new accounts because of overwhelming demand they have received already. Diverse Marketing IS taking new accounts, though, for anything outside of NeeDohs and she pointed me to another fun line of products that she said is also very popular, called Squishy Dumplin' (basically anything squishy is trending with the kids). These ARE pretty cute, though. And there are some nice tabletop displays for the cash register area.



This showroom also had a really cute line called Buzzy that's closer to our industry with gift kits like the Organic Herb Starter Kit, the Apothecary Garden kit and more. These are very entry-level items with nice packaging. I will warn you that they are also in box stores.



One final note about the show overall. Since I was not there in January, I missed seeing this early on, and you probably are already aware, but even with the limited showrooms open I could tell that those adorable shaggy Highland Cows were very popular and seemed to be everywhere. Not sure if this trend will continue for 2027, but I thought I'd mention it!



Thanks for the trip report, Jen!

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, etc., drop me a line if you'd like at ewells@ballpublishing.com.



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Green Profit

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