



Pack Trials in California

All of the on-line newsletters for the last couple of weeks have been about various aspects of the Pack Trials in California.

Here are a couple of items that I thought you might find interesting.

Make It Simple Plant Combos

A [brief video](#) providing another perspective on using combination plantings for your customers.

A Fresh Take on Marketing Veggies

Another [brief video](#) talking about Master Tag's merchandising program to promote vegetable gardening. Some of the ideas can be transferred directly to your operation.

New Varieties

Check out these previews of some new varieties that have been introduced

[Ball Horticultural Company](#)

Taishan marigold
Can-Can calibrachoa
Breathless euphorbia
Debonair Petunia Collection

[Goldsmith Seeds](#)

'Cora Cascade' vinca
'Mammoth XL' pansy
'Big Kiss' gazania
'Aromas' snapdragons
Picobella mini petunias

Pansy Growing Guide

Link [here](#) for a very nice growing guide for Pansies. Information and pictures on potential insect and disease problems and their control are presented in full color. This guide is provided by Syngenta.

Ten Tips to Save on Fertilizer Costs

According to the USDA Economic Research Service, during the past four years, per-ton bulk-fertilizer costs have increased by 100%, 204% and 210% for nitrogen-, phosphorus- and potassium based fertilizers, respectively.

Here are the 10 tips for getting the most out of your fertilizer dollars. For the complete article link [here](#).

1. Group your crops according to fertility requirements
2. Only leach when necessary
3. Know what rate your plants are really getting
4. Irrigate more efficiently
5. Consider water capture and reuse systems
6. Consider controlled release fertilizers
7. Test your Water supply
8. Spend money to make money
9. Prevent costly deficiencies
10. Keep a fertilizer "tool box"

Clean Up Clutter

Judy Sharpton of Growing Places Marketing offers some ideas on how to de-clutter your Garden Center.

Empty the cash wrap counter of everything. Gather staff who use that space and make decisions about what needs to be in that area to make their jobs easier. Assign maintenance responsibilities. Give it a fresh coat of paint while you're at it.

Install a slatwall near or adjacent to the cash wrap. Make that space a "Do you need?" area. Stock it with products customers may need. Install the same collection if you have more than one cash wrap and make a "Do you need?" prompt card to help each register worker.

Collect all containers into one area. Invest in pallet racking to create color against the deepest wall of your store. Customers need space to look at containers and to compare price points. They should be able to handle the lightweight containers alongside the traditional glazed pots to comparison shop.

Create departments for products like water management, gardening clothes, statuary and birding. Collect related products into these departments and sign them to help customers locate those items. If you think a gardening hat is a "Do you need?" item in July (I do!), then move that product to the slatwall display at the register.

Empty the restroom and clean it from top to bottom, including the back of the door. Be sure to wipe the tops of picture frames and the tops of stall enclosures. Encourage customers through signage to alert employees to any problem in the restroom.

For the complete article [link here](#).

2010 AAS Winners

Three flower varieties have been named [2010 AAS Winners](#)

Gaillardia F1 Mesa Yellow

bred by PanAmerican Seed Company.



Snapdragon Twinnny Peach

bred by Hem Genetics BV, Netherlands

Zinnia Zahara Starlight Rose

Bred by PanAmerican Seed Company



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