

6 Ways to Educate Customers About Green Products

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Courtesy of Thomas Kimball/BowTie Inc. Like any new trend, acceptance of green water gardening depends greatly on presentation. Pond and water garden professionals said both typical and innovative approaches work.

Consider creating a dedicated green gardening area or outdoor setting and adjusting your marketing program.

1. Store signage and displays: Dispel myths and spark interest by presenting questions on signage such as: Did you know that planting low-water users together saves water? Did you know that ponds require less water than lawn irrigation? Did you know that a quality liner reduces water waste? Did you know that you can use rain run-off to water your plants? Group low-water users in the same display to educate customers about them. Accentuate the rich mix of color and refined appearances. Use pictures of actual settings whenever possible.
2. Hand-outs: Offer brochures and take-home materials that list drought-tolerant plants in your U.S. Hardiness Zone. Write related features in your newsletter, if you have one. Create marketing pieces devoted to drought-resistant water gardening.
3. Use computerized systems and other technical information to calculate and increase the amount of rainwater that can be saved through redirection. Visit www.rainexchange.com, www.daylightsystems.com and www.edcmag.com for examples and calculation tools.
4. Consider investing in CD-ROMs that show green products and water-wise builds in action. Distribute them to customers.
5. Add interactive green gardening features to your website or use continuous-loop TV viewing at your store.
6. Provide excel spreadsheets that calculate the true cost of pond and water garden ownership as well as timetables for return on investment.

Whatever approach(es) you use, appeal to your customer's sense of stewardship to capitalize on the media's current focus on green living.