

Garden Décor Sales Increase

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When the prices for copper doubled last year, Joyce Dixon, designer for The Garden Gallery in Bend, Ore., expected the increased cost of their products would result in a huge sales slump. What really happened surprised her.

“Our products are selling as much, if not more than ever,” she said. “That tells me that people are going to continue buying garden décor.”

According to American Institute of Architects, outdoor living is a trend growing in popularity. Explanations for this include rising fuel costs curtailing vacation plans and the current housing slump making it more difficult for people to upgrade.

As a result, “people are putting more money into their homes so they can entertain family and friends,” Dixon said. “They want something that makes them feel good when they walk into the yard. A blank space just doesn’t do that.”

Homebuyers seek products that lend interest and charm to their outdoor living spaces, Dixon said. These items include: birdbaths, benches, planters, wall art, statues, lights, water features

Bianca Orlandi, sales manager for Orlandi Statuary in Chicago, Ill., said these items continue to sell because of the turning economy. “They’re a little bit lower ticket items. People aren’t buying the higher-priced items right now.”

When homebuyers choose between different versions of the same item, they seek several features, Dixon said. Functionality (many double as a water feature), Their décor, favorite colors and personal interests (such as a bullfrog statue or one of a child fishing), Material (weight, durability and appearance)

With so many types and designs of garden décor, it can prove a difficult choice for customers. Retailers can help in two ways. Orlandi said to use a practical display so customers can envision what the feature will look like in their yards. “Put a plant in one of the urns or a ceramic bird on a birdbath,” she said.

Dixon said to help customers choose items that will make them happiest. “Ask about what theme or interest they have,” she said. “Find out what makes them most comfortable or what they are interested in.”

Both Dixon and Orlandi said the garden décor market will remain strong. “Everything is tough with the economy,” Orlandi said. “That’s why more people are choosing to stay home with their gardens.”