

Lesson 22: GARDEN CENTER BASICS

Class Activity: Plan seasonal marketing events

A marketing program should be planned for the entire business year. One key element in your marketing plan should be special events. A garden center business is characterized by seasonal variety. Sales volume and products sold vary from month to month. The goal is to maintain traffic in the garden center year round. Each month offers opportunities for promotions. Use holidays and high points of a garden center's season to help in picking the dates. It will help you plan your weekends and activities, and also help you decide how you will divide the dollars that your budget provided you. Following are some examples of promotion times and themes for garden centers.

- January - Appeal to the nature lover's desire to attract birds. Offer birdhouses, feeders, seed, books, binoculars and hardy ornamentals that attract birds.
- February - Capitalize on Valentine's Day with floral arrangements, houseplants and impulse gifts.
- March - Prepare for spring. Offer seeds, hardy plants and clinics for those gardeners itching to get started in the spring.
- April & May - This is the busy season. Most garden centers are packed on weekends. Try to boost sales by offering special promotions during the week. Remember Mothers Day.
- June - Address local pest problems. Offer information for control as well as pesticides, sprayers, gloves and tools.
- July & August - Emphasize the leisure aspect of gardening. Promote garden furniture, barbecue equipment, fountains, lighting, statuary, fish and equipment. Celebrate the Fourth of July.
- September - "Fall is for planting" and bulbs are the themes for September. Feature plants with autumn effect. Display bulbs with all the accessories needed to plant or force them. Capitalize on Labor Day themes.
- October & November - Show customers how to winterize their gardens. Offer tools, sweepers, and pruning shears. Feature gourds, pumpkins, and Indian corn.
- December - In December the garden center becomes a Christmas shop. Sell high-quality trees, display them properly and provide care instructions with each tree. Inside, decorate the garden center and display ornaments, wreaths, Christmas decorations and garden gifts. A gift certificate makes an excellent gift for an avid gardener.