

Spencer's Lawn and Garden Center: An Urban Gardening Outlet with Deep Community Roots

A Family Affair

Founded in 1934, Spencer's Lawn and Garden Centers have served Colorado's Western Slope for more than 80 years. In addition to its core business of lawn and garden supplies, the company operates a seasonal farmers market stocked with local produce. With deep roots in the cities of Fountain and Colorado Springs, they feel a special responsibility to the communities they serve. Spencer's has been family-operated for generations, a tradition that's still running strong today. Treasurer and purchasing manager Jane Spencer understands the importance of relationships — with customers and vendors alike.

Cultivating Deep Connections

To develop tight-knit bonds with customers, Spencer's holds an annual gardening expo at its Fountain location. Vendors are invited to attend the three-day event, demonstrating their products to an eager audience. From planters to container gardens to hydroponic gardening supplies, customers get an up-close look at the latest and greatest innovations on the market.

"This is a chance for our vendors to show what truly sets them apart... to establish their value and showcase their unique benefits," Jane said. High Caliper Growing embraces the opportunity to develop local relationships. "We've put this show on for 21 straight years. As soon as High Caliper products hit our shelves, they were on board. They've been here five years in a row. It just shows how committed they are to serving customers."

A Unique Audience

In the foothills of the Rockies, people are uniquely attuned to nature. This keen awareness translates to a demand for high-quality, organic produce. During farmers market season, Spencer's sends a truck to family-owned farms in the Pueblo/Grand Junction area to purchase clean, pesticide-free vegetables. But the demand for organic produce doesn't stop there.

"People in this area do a lot container gardening and square-foot gardening," Jane observed. "They want to know if Smart Pots are chemically treated. Are chemicals or dyes emanating from the fabric? We have total confidence in telling our customers that Smart Pots are free of harsh chemicals and dyes and they're BPA-free."

Some Friendly Advice

After selling Smart Pots for five years, Jane has words of wisdom for retailers introducing the product for the first time. "Make sure you set up your display with live plants. People want to know how it works. They want to see it with their own eyes. They want to touch it."

At Spencer's they re-design their Smart Pot display each season to keep things fresh. "We have a permanent display that shows the different sizes and colors of Smart Pots. But we also switch it up from year to year. Sometimes, we have a three-tier display. Sometimes, we set up container gardening areas around the store. If there's a new color, sometimes we'll promote around that. It's really about giving people something new and interesting to engage with."

A Novel Approach?

Spencer's may be the first to discover a unique use for Smart Pots. "Smart Pots are great for weeding," Jane said. "They're lightweight, extremely durable, and unlike trash bags, they stand up on their own. We cross-sell them with rakes and encourage people to compost. In fact, we showcase them with our composters. It's more convenient and better for the environment."

A Flowering Success

In the final analysis, Smart Pots have delivered where it matters most. "At both stores, Smart Pots have shown consistent sales growth. Over the years, we've added sizes and colors. And in Fountain, people ask for it by name. We even created a chart for our sales people that shows exactly how much soil customers need for each pot."

For Jane, it's all about value, "We don't sell cheap stuff. Everything in our stores is well-made. The price has to match the quality, and it's got to be affordable. With Smart Pots, we found the best of both worlds."