

Fabric Planters: Extending the Product Lifecycle at McDonald Garden Centers

Emerging Trends Drive Demand for Fabric Planters

Watching his grandfather tend a small farm, Mike Westphal grew up with a passion for horticulture. That passion came to fruition when Mike landed a summer job at McDonald Garden Centers in Southeast Virginia. Little did he know that summer gig would lead him to becoming manager, general manager and eventually corporate buyer for the company's three year-round Garden Centers and 13 Seasonal Markets.

As a seasoned industry vet, Mike has observed the meteoric rise of fabric container gardening in recent years. "Everyone has their own reason for container gardening. Organic has become huge. The X-Y generations want to grow their own food so they know what's in it. Some have started to grow vegetables to save money. E. Coli and Listeria have been in the headlines lately. With container gardening, contamination isn't an issue. And then you have urban gardening. Fabric bags are great for a roof garden or hanging garden."

Fabric Plant Pots Deliver Value to Customers

McDonald Garden Centers carry two varieties of fabric-growing containers: The Smart Pot and the Big Bag Bed, both manufactured in Oklahoma City by High Caliper Growing. "When we stock our locations, we're looking for high-end products that are affordable — something we can stand behind. We carry Smart Pots and Big Bags Beds because they're so affordable. There's no construction. The science behind it, the yields, the mobility, the durability — it's just an excellent combination of features for the price. We feel great telling our customers about it."

Mike knows the benefits of fabric container gardening first-hand — he uses the product himself. "High Caliper Growing gave our employees samples so they could try it out. Once they saw the yields, they were enthusiastic. It gives them a story they can tell our customers. I grow potatoes in my Big Bag Bed. They're easy to harvest and the yields are massive. Seeing is believing."

Fabric Planters: Longer Lasting, Longer Lifecycle

Mike was genuinely surprised by the durability of fabric plant pots. "Our display containers have held up fabulously. We've used the same containers for three years, dragged them across concrete, done all kinds of harsh things to them. I tell customers the residential lifetime is 5-10 years. That's longer than a wooden raised bed."

But it wasn't just the durability of the product that caught Mike's attention. Fabric planters have demonstrated a remarkable longevity in his product mix. "Sales of fabric planters have grown 20% every single year. It's great to see something to build steam

over time. There's a ton of potential to sell more and more of these. They're valuable, versatile, and affordable. Our average product lifecycle is two years. We've been selling Smart Pots and Big Bag Beds for four years. I don't see any end in sight." Looks like Mike has figured out what buyers around the world are starting to realize. Smart Pots are a smart choice for lawn and garden retailers.

To find a Smart Pot or Big Bag Bed distributor near you, visit SmartPots.com and BigBagBed.com.