

The Retail Benefits of Container Gardening: An In-Depth Look at TLC Garden Centers

A Change of Opinion

For Brandi Mosley, fabric plant pots weren't exactly love at first sight. As greenhouse manager at TLC Garden Centers in Oklahoma City, she rolled out fabric Smart Pots and Big Bag Beds with little success. The problem? They were a tad large. But in 2013, the makers of Smart Pots returned with new samples. This time around, the bags came in a greater variety of sizes. With nothing to lose, she sent them home with employees. It was a decision that turned out to be a game changer.

Rave Reviews

Brandi's employees loved the fabric bags. They were American-made and incredibly durable. But the real kicker was plant yields. By fostering superior root structures, Smart Pots and Big Bag Beds vastly increased vegetable yields. That made Brandi a believer, and soon fabric planters were back on the shelves. When the Big Bag Bed was reintroduced, it sold out in one weekend. "That's when we knew it would be a hit," Brandi reflected.

Selling the Benefits of Container Gardening

Brandi takes horticulture seriously. With a degree in the field, she employs a staff with no fewer than five years of industry experience. When she saw that Smart Pots and Big Bag Beds delivered superior results, she wanted her customers to know it too. "I tell them the bags last six to seven years. They don't just waste away or decay. I have one employee who's used the same bag for five years. You can't even tell it's been used. When you combine that with enhanced plant performance, they're really getting more bang for their buck."

And she doesn't just tell customers — she has some advice for fellow product buyers who are thinking about putting fabric planters on their shelves. "Big Bag Beds are the easiest raised beds for customers to set up. And our own employees use Smart Pots like crazy. These are people that know horticulture. The yields are higher in both containers. It's really a no-brainer."

Risk

For many retailers, fabric planters are an entirely new category. And with new product categories, risk comes with the territory. "It's a risk. Products are hit or miss, especially in pottery and containers. People are looking at durability vs. price vs. appearance. When you're introducing any new container you have to consider these factors." In Brandi's case, the gamble paid off.

Reward

At first, Smart Pots and Big Bag Beds were displayed on a shelf on the seed aisle. But as sales skyrocketed, TLC built a massive display just for Smart Pots. "Throughout the year, we've got broccoli, cauliflower, peppers or tomatoes growing right in the middle of the Smart Pot display. Having a small pot with huge yields coming off of it definitely helps sales."

Cha-ching

TLC uses Big Bag Beds and Smart Pots to cross-sell in adjacent product categories. "We sell our own line of potting soil, so we're definitely promoting that. We also sell tomato cages and fertilizer. We tell people to turn the cages upside down so they don't puncture the bag. It works great." But while cross-selling is a benefit, it isn't the biggest upside.

Explosive Growth

With Big Bag Beds and Smart Pots, it's not just plant yields that get a boost. Profits are growing too. In three years, TLC's fabric planter sales have quadrupled. "The culture has changed. People are really starting to understand the benefits of fabric planters." By aerating roots, preventing root circling and promoting healthier root masses, fabric container gardening is revolutionizing home and commercial gardens across the globe. Brandi sums it up nicely. "Don't fight the soil. Buy a Smart Pot or Big Bag Bed and watch your plants thrive."

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