

**FNGLA Endowed Research Fund Progress Report
Consumer Purchase Patterns in Florida (3 Year Study)**



**Study 1: The Impact of Displays
on Impulse Buying Behavior**



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FNGLA Research Priority: Enhance Quality of Life

Abstract

The objective of Study 1 is to record the impact of plant displays on impulse buying behavior through post-sale surveys and video monitoring. A preliminary study will be conducted October 2, 2004 on the Milton Campus at the West Florida REC Open House/Student Club Plant Sale. Three types of display structures and the post-sale survey have been constructed along with a list of plant species to market. Retailers in an urban and rural environment in Northwest Florida have been invited to participate this spring to complete Study 1. After data have been collected, surveys results will be posted on the University of Florida Commercial Floriculture Web site. Currently a “clearinghouse” of retail information is available at http://wfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/faculty/gibson/RR_2.htm to meet one of the study’s goals of developing employee plant knowledge to effectively educate consumers and increase sales.

Introduction

Traditionally, Florida has been a state known for wholesale production of plant goods. Wholesale plant sales represented over 2.3 billion dollars in 2000, while retail plant sales reached 1.2 billion. Hodges and Haydu reported an increase in retail sales during 2000, while the wholesale industry experienced a decrease in sales of 245 million dollars. With the increase in homebuilding and urban sprawl, demand for plant goods increases locally. Therefore, a need to investigate retailing is paramount.

According to the Economic Impacts of the Florida Environmental Horticulture Industry 2000 Report by Hodges and Haydu, 37% of retail sales are attributed to retail salespersons. Labor is the leading expense in any nursery operation, therefore methods that minimize labor costs must be investigated. Direct mail, discounts, radio and television advertising, and the internet contribute to 13% of retail plant sales in Florida. While these strategies are effective, they incur substantial costs to the producer. On-site strategies to increase plant sales, such as in-house displays, display gardens, and point-of-purchase materials, need to be evaluated in Florida. This research will introduce Florida grower-retailers to the alternatives to traditional sales techniques.

Materials and Methods

The study will investigate the impact of displays on impulse buying behavior. Two locations, each with a complete selection of ornamental plants (trees, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, perennials, and annuals) will be selected to represent a rural and an urban setting. A collection of 5 plant species that have historically experienced low sales will be displayed three different ways: a traditional sales area (control), an end-of-aisle display area (endcap), and a stand-alone display unit (island display). Firms that utilize a bar code system will be chosen. Three different bar codes will be used to monitor sales of the species. Consumer behavior will be evaluated by video camera, along with a post-purchase survey conducted on two Saturdays in the spring sales season. The post-purchase survey will define the customer's profile (male/female, education, income range, and reason for purchase).

Preliminary Experiment

To be conducted: October 2, 2004

Location: West Florida Research and Education Center Student Club Plant Sale

Materials to be displayed: trees, shrubs, groundcovers, vines, annuals, perennials, grasses, palms, and succulents

Display format:



Traditional sales area (control) for herbaceous plants in small containers.



Traditional sales area (control) for woody ornamentals. Signage will be incorporated into the displays to affect consumer purchase behavior.



Signage will be incorporated into the displays to affect consumer purchase behavior.



An information booth was displayed at the WFREC Student Club Spring Plant Sale on April 2-4, 2004. This form of display assisted the sales staff with consumer questions.

Specific species to be marketed:

1. Hardy Fern (assorted species)
2. Bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea sp.*)
3. Mandevilla (*Mandevilla sp.*)
4. Ornamental Cabbage and Kale (*Brassica oleraceae acephala*)
5. Ornamental Grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*)
6. Sedum (*Sedum spectabile*)
7. Oakleaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*)
8. Ternstroemia (*Ternstroemia gymnanthera*)
9. Virginia Sweetspire (*Itea virginica*)
10. Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*)

Display Methods:



Large end cap displays, similar to these structures have been constructed for preliminary study (Fall 2004).

Island displays, similar to this one have been constructed for preliminary study (Fall 2004).



End cap display, similar to this one have been constructed for preliminary study (Fall 2004).



Island displays, similar to this one have been constructed for preliminary study (Fall 2004).



Bench cards and banners will be visible to consumers in the control, island, and endcap displays.

Grower-Retailer Profiles for Spring 2005 Research

Proprietor: Vincent Grund
Company name: Bouvier Farms
City: Baker, FL
Type: Grower-retailer
Location: Rural location in Northwest Florida
Crops grown and sold: vegetable transplants, gourds, bedding plants, herbs, and herbaceous perennials

Proprietor: Emily Peterson
Company name: Garden Gate
City: Gulf Breeze, FL
Type: Grower-retailer
Location: Urban location 5 miles west of Pensacola, FL
Crops grown and sold: Vines, perennials, annuals, herbs and native plants (trees and shrubs)



Native tree and shrub display area at Garden Gate Nursery.



Perennial display area at Garden Gate Nursery.



Annual display area at Garden Gate Nursery.

Retailers interested in participating this spring:

Proprietor: William Wendt
Company name: Wendt Farm and Nursery
City: Pace, FL
Type: Grower-retailer
Location: Rural location 5 miles east of Pensacola, FL
Crops grown and sold: perennials, annuals, herbs, and vegetable transplants

Proprietor: Paul Brock
Company name: Garden Gate
City: Tallahassee, FL
Type: Garden Center
Location: Urban location
Crops sold: trees, shrubs, groundcovers, vines, annuals, perennials, grasses, palms, and succulents



2004 Post Purchase Consumer Survey—University of Florida-Milton

Gender (circle):

Male

Female

Age: _____

Household Income (circle):

≤ 10,000

≥ 10,000

≥ 20,000

≥ 40,000

≥ 60,000

≥ 80,000

≥ 100,000

≥ 120,000

≥ 140,000

Education (circle):

Not a high school graduate

High school graduate

College tech graduate

4 year college graduate

Graduate degree

Other:

Number of adults in the household: _____

Number of children in the household: _____

How did you learn about this retail operation? (circle)

Newspaper

Radio

Internet

Marquee/Billboard

Word of mouth

Other:

You bought plant material today because (circle):

Gift

For garden

Season to plant

Enjoy shopping

No reason

Other:

What were your initial thoughts on the plant display? (circle)

Poor

Fair

Average

Good

Excellent

Comments:

Did you like the plant display? (circle)

No

Somewhat

Yes

Comments:

Did the display area affect your purchase behavior? (circle)

No

Somewhat

Yes

Comments:

Were you pleased with the service? (circle)

No

Somewhat

Yes

Comments: