



Steal This Idea **Today's Garden Center ROAD TOUR** Look for us at the Farwest 2014 Show **Attend Farwest**  
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# CopperTree Outdoor Lifestyles

December 22, 2009

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**City:** Springfield, IL  
**Owner:** Laurie & Mark McWilliams  
**Website:** [www.coppertreedesigns.com](http://www.coppertreedesigns.com)  
**Size:** 9,000 square feet (6,000 retail, 3,000 landscape)  
**Years In Business:** 4  
**Number Of Locations:** 1  
**What changes have you made in the last 12 months to increase your garden center's profitability?** We added a key sales position in Landscape department and added two landscape crews. We found better sources for materials that helped cut cost overheads. We go straight to the source for as any of our

products lines as possible.

**What are you involved in that promotes your store while contributing to a charity or community cause?** Mark McWilliams is one of the head designers for Springfield Green, the city's greening initiative. Both Mark and Laurie donate their time and talent to Springfield Green in an effort to beautify the city. There are many self promotion opportunities that are presented through this involvement. The charitable organizations we donate to are also invaluable marketing.

**Why is your garden center Revolutionary?** We keep the younger generations connected to the garden through container mini gardens and edible gardens that we educate and assist them with through planning and installation. Plants do not go uphill in a garden center so we bring material in bi weekly straight from the grower for landscape jobs, retail sourcing and do it yourselves. We design for them and then bring the materials in for them in the size they specify in order to assist them in controlling the cost of their project and then arrange delivery for them so they have their weekend projects ready to go. For the retail store we bring in unique plant materials, hard to find items, sizes and the new and exciting. We design and source hardscaping materials for the do it yourselfer as well. We work to be the solution resource for the consumer and emphasize form and function for their spaces. In this way we have the opportunity to build relationships as the consumer sees that we are looking out for their best interests.

We showcase the landscape companies skills and abilities by building patio spaces in the showroom that exhibit building materials and some of the latest concepts. The spaces are merchandised and set up like they could be in your home. We are selling the landscape company as well as the product. We use our 4 season containers as an opportunity to educate customers on annuals, perennials, tropicals, succulents and how they can work together. There isn't as much product knowledge or general know how present in the younger generations that have not had the exposure to gardening that their parents did. Container gardening allows them to experiment and learn on a controllable smaller scale that allows them to feel successful and grow their knowledge base. By having a more customized, personalized, relationship based approach we can control our inventories, meet their needs, stay more current and flexible in our approach to retail so that we can keep it fresh and interesting.

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