

## More Plant Trends and Tips

When we turned this month to several florists for insight on strong plant departments, we also talked to Mike Langhammer of Chicago Foliage/BDC Plants, a division of the Bill Doran Company.

Langhammer has spent the last three decades in the industry and he offered his perspective on changes and trends. Some of his key insights follow.

- Over the past 20 years the science of tissue culture has allowed for the advancement of several varieties and introduction of new items. Basics such as **Spathiphyllum** (Peace Lillies) offer new varieties that might offer more blooms, larger blooms, bigger leaves, etc.
- **Anthurium** species now offer larger blooms with a more prolific bloom counts. **Bromeliads**, more specifically **Guzmania** and **Neoregelia** have more offerings in a multitude of colors, sizes and textures.
- **Aglaonemas**, Chinese Evergreens, now offer more than your basic greens and silver/gray options. There are varieties that have pink, white or red stems and different pallet combination of pink, red or white on their leaves.
- Beyond science, Mother Nature still lends a hand in offering up variations to old standbys like **Pothos**, **Dracaena Janet Craig**, **Algerian Ivy** with "new" lime green cousins such as **Pothos Neon**, **Dracaena Limelight** and **Neon Algerian Ivy**.
- Thanks to social media, "old timers" such as **Ficus Lyrata** (Fiddle-Leaf Fig) have made a re-birth and currently demand far outweighs production. Mother Nature came to work again with a sport that has been developed that is called "Little Fiddle" or "Fiddler" which offers a smaller, more compact leaf and both these can be found in bush/column or tree form, from 3'-12' or larger.
- Different cultural requests have increased the demand on items like **Fragrant Jasmine** and **Gardenia**.
- Other comebacks have been the **terrarium** but in a more non-traditional fashion with different shapes and sizes of glass, both desktop and options to hang from somewhere.
- An offshoot of this has been the **Fairy Garden**. Gardens can be purchased premade in a multitude of themes or folks have the option of making their own with 2" material of foliage, fern or succulent assortments, to mix and match. Local classes or Youtube help make this a sought after new hobby.
- I still believe spring is most everyone's favorite time of the year and you don't have to be a gardener to enjoy the color of tropical plants and flowers that have been integrated with the more traditional annual and perennial plantings and container gardens. Increased use of **Cordyline**, **Alocasia**, **Croton**, **Mandevilla**, **Hibiscus**, **Banana**, **Ferns**, **Palms** and the list goes on, can lend a feel of the tropics in front of one's doorway or on the boulevard of a major metro area or airport.