

# Keep Them Thinking Green



The recession seems to have shifted the consumer mindset from one type of green to another, but there are many eco-friendly products that make great sense on both the financial and sustainable fronts.

By Paige Worthy

**D**id you hear? We're in the middle of a recession. Actually, it turns out we've technically been in it since December 2007. And with this economic downturn, eco-friendly products — which were all the rage and being sold at a premium, even a year ago — seem to have taken a back burner to products that scream value above all else.

Consumer research published in February by Mintel, a global supplier of consumer, product and media intelligence, indicates that the number of Americans who almost always or regularly buy green products remains unchanged since 2008, at 36 percent. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't keep giving your customers eco-friendly options within your product mix. There are plenty of fantastic products that keep the environment in mind and offer great value to your customers — you just have to know where to find them.

## Plant the Eco-Friendly Seed

In addition to those products, here are a few "green" gardening tips you can share with your customers, from Kristian Laws, a renowned landscape designer with more than 20 years' experience.

**Plants are hungry, too.** Over time, soil can be depleted of nutrients because of rain and constant overirrigation. To combat this, "kick-start" the growth of new plants with a good-quality organic feed.

**Organic, organic, organic.** The golden rule of soil feeding is to put into the soil only what nature intended: Use only organic rather than synthetic wherever possible.

**Mulch.** Mulch is simple to apply, and the benefits are huge. As mulch breaks down it will help improve sandy soil and clay soil alike while reducing weeds and decreasing water loss. Watch out for cheap imitations — sometimes chopped-up, color-dyed lumber — that add few long-term benefits to the soil.

**Sprinkle, don't soak.** Reducing the amount of water you waste with overhead sprinklers by installing bubblers or drippers is relatively inexpensive and simple to do yourself. The plants prefer the water getting to their roots, and you'll save a significant amount of water with less overspray and run off.



## Thatch remover

This product is a concentrated all-natural application that helps remove unwanted thatch from the lawn. It is a living microbial treatment that turns thatch into rich natural fertilizer. It is intended to be safe to use around children or pets. Thatch Remover is available as a 32-ounce hose-end spray bottle or a 1-gallon refill size. Alpha BioSystems. [www.alphabiosystems.com](http://www.alphabiosystems.com) (888) 265-1929. **Write in 1442**



## Biodegradable pots

The DOT Pot is 80 percent wood fiber and 20 percent peat; no fillers, glues or binders are used. Retailers are cross-merchandising DOT Pots with other organic products, to meet consumer demand for more "natural" products. The Strip Market Pack has colorful packaging with easy planting instructions. Bethel Organics, Inc. [www.dotpots.com](http://www.dotpots.com) (800) 226-3057. **Write in 1444**



## Insect repellent

A new look has been unveiled for the popular 4- and 6-ounce pump sprays. The new design is intended to revitalize the product's packaging, utilizing contemporary, attention-grabbing graphics and colors. According to lab and field studies, Geraniol, the plant-based active ingredient in BugBand, has been proven effective in repelling a wide variety of insects. BugBand. [www.bugband.net](http://www.bugband.net). (800) 473-9467 **Write in 1445**



## Compost bin

The Tumbleweed Composter is designed to hold about 60 gallons of kitchen scraps and yard waste. It features an easy spin design and rugged construction that should withstand harsh climates. Constructed of a heavy-duty, UV-protected polyurethane plastic, the assembled bin stands 46 inches high, 26 inches wide and 34 inches deep. Clean Air Gardening. [www.cleanairdistributing.com](http://www.cleanairdistributing.com) (888) 439-9101. **Write in 1446**



## Outdoor furniture

The innovative interlocking design of the Geo-Vase furniture allows four chairs and one table to be stacked together to create one space-saving unit to make the most efficient use of any area in the home or outdoors. Furniture is made of an environmentally friendly and recyclable all-weather resin wicker. Each piece is backed with a two-year manufacturers warranty. Deeco Consumer Products. [www.deecoconsumerproducts.com](http://www.deecoconsumerproducts.com) (888) 993-3326. **Write in 1447**

