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GCA's 2019 Best Garden Center Bathroom Winners Enhance the Shopping Experience Behind Closed Doors

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CLEARWATER, FL – **Recognizing that the shopping experience is everything in distinguishing their stores from the boxes and online sellers, these GCA 2019 Best Garden Center Bathroom Award winners are standing out by focusing on the smallest details behind closed doors - in their bathrooms.** A panel judged this year's entries on the bathrooms' creativity and comfort to the customer's overall shopping experience. The Gold Winner will enjoy one free registration to GCA Summer Tour Boston, June 22-25, 2020, as well as a plaque to display in-store. Additional honors this year include a Silver Winner and two Merit Awards.

Gold Winner: Monarch Landscaping & Garden Center, Auburn, IL

This "Rockin' Bathroom," as Owner Angela Davis calls it, showcases every variety of decorative rock for sale at the garden center in expressive symbols of nature, hand-glued and installed by the IGC's staff. Pallets cover one of the walls, delighting customers with colorful orbs, succulents planted in driftwood and props, including a painted wrought iron gate. Davis says, "We are always mindful to reuse and repurpose - we hope our bathroom fosters that idea to the community."

Silver Winner: Echter's Nursery & Garden Center, Arvada, CO

After 20 years, Echter's bathrooms were showing their age. Before the renovation, the bathrooms had pink square tiles on the walls, dull lighting and dingy tiled floors. Now, everything except for the roof and walls has been replaced. The wall tiles were swapped out for wood-grain wallpaper, which complements the nature-inspired decor and accent pieces. All of the decorative products in the bathrooms are from the retail store. The bright recess lighting and white stall doors are a striking contrast to the gray tile floor. Additional upgrades include automated Dyson hand dryers, larger sinks and a new baby-changing station.

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Merit Award: MRT Lawn & Garden Center, Venice, FL
The result of a complete overhaul to create a rustic aesthetic that invokes nostalgia and a “down-to-earth” feel, the bathrooms at MRT Lawn & Garden Center are decked out with mixed-grain wood paneling on the walls and crown molding on the ceiling, as well as new tile floors. The private stalls, separated by floor-to-ceiling walls, are equipped with automatic paper dispensers and hand dryers, mirrors, sinks, large trash receptacles, shelves for personal belongings, LED lighting and grab bars. To ensure the most clean and comfortable experience for both customers and employees, the restrooms are cleaned twice daily.

Merit Award: Prairie’s Edge Garden Center, Bowling Green, MO
With limited retail display space, Prairie’s Edge Garden Center makes every inch count, including merchandising their entire bathroom so customers can sit and shop - and it’s working, as customers regularly walk out with items to purchase. Every few months, the bathroom is refreshed with seasonally themed decor and art. For spring and summer, joyful ladybug garden art frolics among potted sunflowers, wreaths and other greenery, while vintage crates and lanterns create a country rustic feel. The bathroom transforms into a winter wonderland during the holidays, spreading spirit and cheer with at least one fully decorated Christmas tree for customers to admire.

Even prior to next summer’s official call for entries, all during the year, garden centers are encouraged to submit their bathrooms for consideration during the 2020 judging period. To enter the competition, send several photos of your store bathrooms, saved in jpeg file format, along with a brief paragraph about the bathrooms, the concept behind the designs and their benefits to your garden center. This information, along with the name of your store and key contact, address, phone and e-mail address, should be e-mailed to: BestBathrooms@GardenCentersofAmerica.com

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