



## IS YOUR CLUB PLANT SALE WILTING FASTER THAN PLANTS IN AN AUGUST GARDEN?

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Now that many Fall Garden Club Plant Sales are wrapping up, some with disappointing results, the rash decision may be to give it all up. Time, physical labor and falling revenue can make the toughest gardeners decide to throw in the towel. But giving up may not be your best option. Renew and revive!

Why do some club plant sales fail when Farmer's Markets and quaint festivals are thriving? Now is the time to start "out of the box" thinking and planning.

- \* Change of Venue: Repeat locations year after year may tap out neighborhood buyers. Where is the buying public going for local events? One idea: be a vendor in a larger event if volunteers are limited.
- \* Marketing: Get training. Establish contacts with local media; negotiate advertising discounts.
- \* Keep advertising fresh. Most clubs rely on the same small advertisers providing a small business card advertisement.
- \* Consider corporate sponsorships (often more available than you realize) even with low/no fees the first year. These can substantial revenue and are often required by national headquarters. Sponsorships can bring in \$1,000 or more depending upon event size. In the case of a rain cancellation, this is not money lost.



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\* Building the Right Team: Allow newcomers to assume challenging roles. Members in same position too long bring complacency. Try two-year limits and switching roles. Query new members for specific business skills to help a sale. Make use of them.

\* Don't challenge every new idea or allow Debbie Downers to criticize every action but offer little support. Encourage. Experiment. If a new idea fails, move on and learn from it.

\* Visit successful events and retail nurseries, not just plant sales. What are people buying? Offer unique and special plants, but also impulse purchase, high profit plants

\* Sell for the Public: Don't get caught in the trap of selling only plants your plant committee values most. My personal favorite/ top seller: Brookwood Community's color pot in matching sets for instant front porch décor.

\* Technology: Simple inventory control and sales processing is available for even the smallest sales. Manual systems limit sales potential, confusing both buyer and volunteer. Sales processing programs provide wealth of information that cannot be duplicated in any manual system.

\* Most importantly, have fun. It will never be perfect and mistakes will be made along the way. But plant sales should bring the club together to work on a worthy project.

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