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NEWS RELEASE

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GOLD-WINNING 'GREEN' DESIGN TOPS GCA'S BEST BATHROOM AWARDS, COMMUNITY REPURPOSED ART PROJECT BRINGS HOME SILVER

CLEARWATER, FL – Garden Centers of America (GCA) is recognizing five IGC retailers for their winning store restroom designs with the 2013 GCA Best Garden Center Bathroom Awards. The third-annual honors were presented during the GCA Membership Networking Lunch at the IGC Show, on Thursday, August 22, at 12:30 p.m. on Navy Pier's Rooftop Deck. A panel judged the entries on the bathroom's creativity and comfort to the customer's overall shopping experience. The winner of the top honor, the Gold Award, received a plaque and comp registration for the 2014 GCA Summer Tour. Other recognitions included a Silver Award and three Merit Awards, also honored with plaques.

GOLD WINNER

New Era Nursery

Hillsboro, WI

The resourceful design of this bathroom at New Era Nursery lives up to the garden center's name. While the rustic pine exterior is reminiscent of an old-time outhouse, the interior ushers in a new era of sustainable living with aesthetic appeal. Nothing is wasted in this eco-friendly restroom, which features a composting toilet and waterless urinal, housed in a building constructed almost entirely of recycled and repurposed materials. Comfort and elegance are key parts of the design, too. The restroom is handicap-accessible, and the walls and ceiling are lined with raised cherry wood panels. Solar panels power the ventilation system and the glass and solid brass light fixture, which is activated by a motion sensor to conserve energy. Natural light enters through a one-way mirrored window, which allows the sun's rays to shine in while maintaining privacy. Topping off this one-of-a-kind "green" design: the living roof, where more than 150 plants take root.

SILVER AWARD

Oakland Nursery

Delaware, OH

In finding a new use for discarded plastic plant pots and water bottles as decorative wall hangings, Oakland Nursery's Creative Director Melissa Bargar not only discovered a way to spruce up the store's

bathroom, she found a new way to connect to the heart of the garden center's community. Girl Scouts, seniors, adults with special needs and others were recruited to help her cut, bend and paint the plastic into vivid flowers of different shapes and sizes. The result is a cascade of colorful blooms that appears to float up and down each of the bathroom's blue walls as if a gust of wind had blown them there. In addition to the wall art, a globe of painted white flowers forms a hanging light fixture and creates a dandelion effect that hints of wishes yet to come. The creative repurposing project got customers excited and involved - children helped Bargar with the flowers while their parents shopped, and shoppers spontaneously jumped in, cutting up plastic bottles to make their own masterpieces.

MERIT AWARD

Brent and Becky's Bulbs
Gloucester, VA

Opposites attract customers' attention and curiosity to the retail store's pair of bathrooms. Motifs in each of the non-gender-specific restrooms have changed through the years to include cat and dog and Democrat and Republican during an election year. The current themed murals, garden at day and garden at night, were painted by local artist and former employee Nancy Fuchs.

MERIT AWARD

Lammscapes
Jackson, WI

Many customers using Lammscapes' bathrooms find something new every time they pay a visit, and even those who don't have to "go" often consider browsing. That's because the garden center keeps its restrooms fresh with merchandise displays that are changed out every other week. The ever-evolving vignettes allow customers to experience how the showcased decor could transform their own bathrooms at home, which often results in the sales of garden art, pictures, baskets and more.

MERIT AWARD

My Garden Nursery
Mill Creek, WA

My Garden Nursery doesn't miss a chance to inspire customers with its displays – even in the store's bathrooms, which are decorated with merchandise for sale to show people how they can use the same items at their homes. While a visit to the store's "facilities" may not result in a purchase every time, it will put a smile on customers' faces. Inside the women's restroom, displays inspire "designer divas" with examples of planted pottery, statuary and other decor. The men's restroom pays homage to masculine gardening duties with titles like "lawn mower king" and "chief hole digger" painted on the door, and pays tribute to the role of "purse holder."

The necktie window curtain puts the formal neck restraints in their place and allows men to sit back and take it easy while their wives and girlfriends shop.

For more information about the many benefits of GCA Membership and to sign up for yours, visit GardenCentersofAmerica.com.

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