

Tips and best cases

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The snack garden at the POS

by spoga+gafa
in cooperation with
Oliver Mathys



LIVING

BBQ

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

CREATION & CARE

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The new hobby gardeners are here...

Many people have rediscovered gardening and the importance of self-sufficiency over the past years.

Self-sufficiency became a trend and it has remained. And so have the self-supply gardens. These are a wonderful opportunity of harvesting fresh fruit and vegetables directly on one's own doorstep and of finding joy and relaxation.

Growing one's own food doesn't require much space – a beautiful snack garden can even be quickly created on a small balcony or in one's own garden. This is precisely where the specialised trade's chances lie! **Turn the snack plot into a living sales area** and into an experiential source of turnover: With an emotional and cross-product theme placement of the different ranges – from plants, to soil, raised beds and small tools, through to BBQ items and decorations. These product groups are easy to showcase and are gladly picked up on by influencers.



The share in turnover of the herb and vegetable department of a garden centre

Today more and more people are placing importance on healthy food and sustainability – which is why the **popularity of herbs and vegetables is constantly growing**. Garden centres have recognised this trend and adapted their ranges accordingly. The herb and vegetable depart-

ment is an important **turnover driver in the garden centre** and contributes significantly to the overall turnover. Not purely through the sale of the plants, but also through the sales of the garden tools needed.

Growth trends in the herb and vegetable section

The demand for freshly grown herbs and vegetables has continually increased over the past years. More and more hobby gardeners are discovering the joy of their own garden. This development is also having an economic impact.

Evaluations by procurement and knowledge exchange groups show that in the meantime the herb and vegetable departments account for up to 30 % of the overall turnover in many garden centres.

Classics like basil, parsley, tomatoes and different types of sweet peppers are particularly popular. The product range is enhanced by fruit trees, berry bushes as well as accessories like raised beds, small tools, soil, fertilisers and diverse small accessories.

Expansion of the target groups

The access to new target groups is also exciting: In addition to classic hobby gardeners, families who place **importance on fresh, home-grown food** are finding snack gardens increasingly appealing. With an attractive combination between berry bushes, fruit trees, vegetables and edible herbs, the DIY harvest garden becomes an enjoyable highlight of the garden. Visitors can find out first-hand how simple and fulfilling it is to harvest one's own fruit and vegetables.

Influencers have been able to inspire many new customers for gardening, especially over recent years.

These now have to be bound long-term through positive experiences and further motivated to continue carrying out this meaningful pastime.



The **positioning as a retail business** is also visually enhanced by the environment. It underlines a sustainable garden concept and at the same time arouses the interest in organic cultivation. In this way, the garden centre is not purely perceived as being a purchasing point, but indeed as an inspiring location for healthy and conscious gardening.

Saskia Voigt (@ellis_landliebe)

"I often hear: 'I haven't got green fingers' – but precisely that is the point. Gardening is allowed to be easy, permit errors and nevertheless still be fun. A snack garden at the POS makes this tangible – one sees how much can grow on a small area. It inspires, incites people to try things out and shows how real food looks, smells and tastes. And that is exactly what I share on my account: That gardening doesn't have to be perfect to be really beautiful."

www.instagram.com/ellis_landliebe/



Range design

1. Living products

For this section of products working with regional suppliers is recommended – if possible – to ensure a fast and regular provision. Furthermore, one should **preferably opt for organically grown plants**. Aspects such as peat-free production play an increasingly more important role for the consumers.

The trusted 80/20 rule also applies here: 80 % standard range, 20 % specialities. However, the latter require targeted communication or special marketing approaches. Consideration of regional factors. For example, in regions with a lot of small gardens, the demand for unusual (even exotic) plants increases. For example, the tomato variety San Marzano became well-known in Germany in the 1960s due to the Italian guest workers and **is still very popular today**.

Herbs

Annual (not winter hardy) herbs can partly be sown directly:

- Basil
- Coriander
- Chervil
- Borage
- Dill
- Cress etc.





Herbs

Perennial
(winter hardy) herbs:

- Rosemary
- Marjoram
- Mint
- Thyme
- Sage etc.

Vegetables that are sown

- Radish
- Spinach
- Carrots
- Beans
- Peas etc.

Vegetables

- Tomatoes (sown or refined)
- Cucumber (sown or refined)
- Cabbage varieties
- Salad
- Courgettes
- Pumpkin
- Beetroot
- Chard etc.

Onions and tubers

- Potatoes
- Jerusalem artichoke
- Onions
- Shallots etc.

Soft fruit

- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Blueberries
- Cape gooseberries
- Goji berries
- Red currants etc.

Fruit trees

- Apple trees
- Pear trees
- Fig trees
- Quince trees
- Cherry trees
- Plum trees etc.



2. Tools, materials and accessories

Consumers are **placing more and more value on sustainable production in this segment too and – if possible – on European origin.** The transparent traceability of the origin particularly plays an important role in the case of wood products.

Don't forget: Raised beds and greenhouses should ideally be presented on-site as example constructions. This requires sufficient space, does however greatly influence the purchasing decision.

- Cold frames and greenhouses
- Soil and fertilisers as well as mulch substrates
- Foils, jute and other covering materials
- Small tools and poss. rental machines
- Binding and other small materials
- Cultivation materials



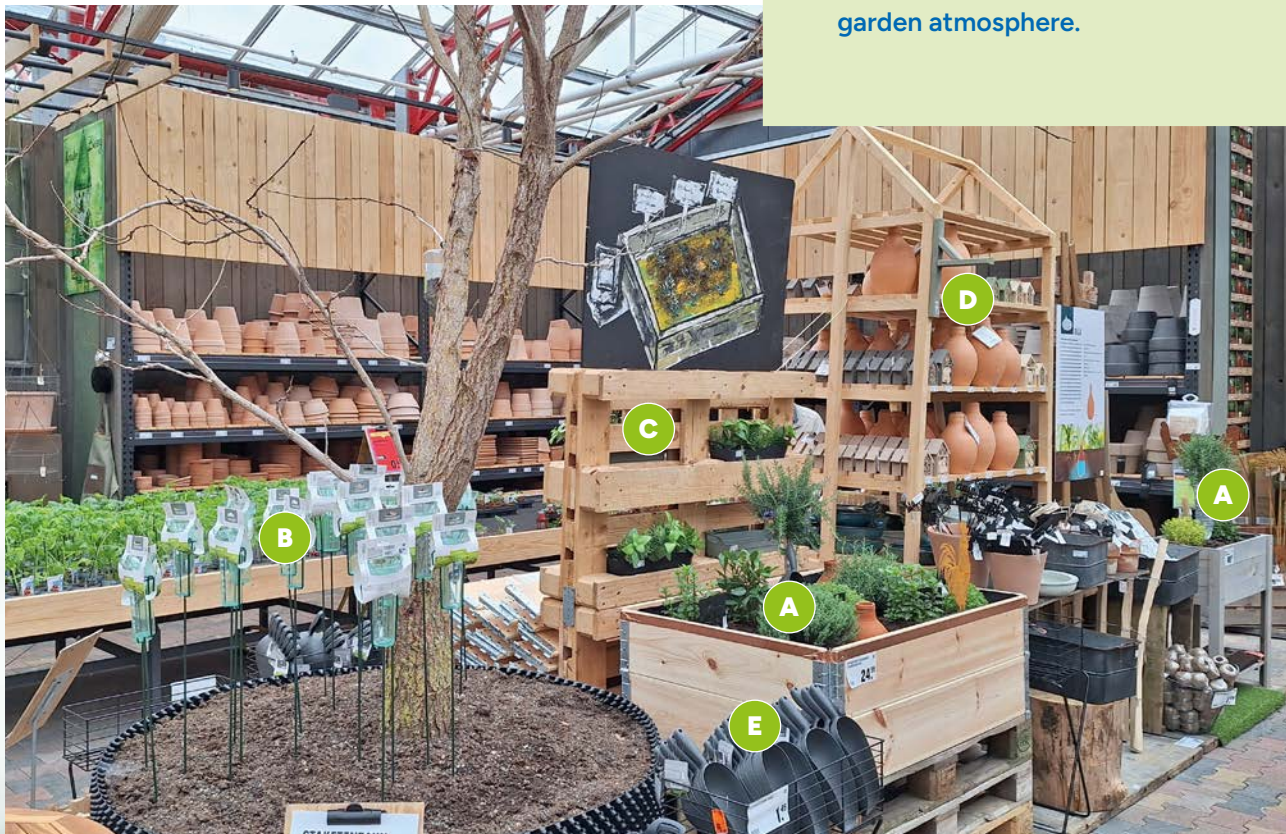
The department

Seasonal fluctuations

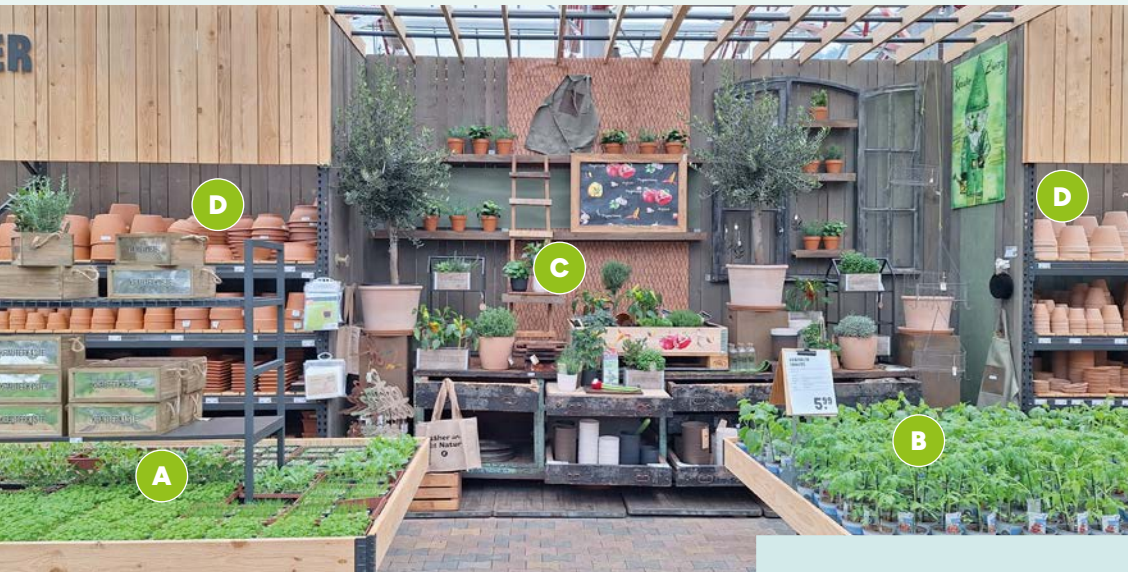
Since this department is subject to strong fluctuations due to seasonal influences, this should definitely be taken into account during the planning. **Inspirational zones should ideally be centrally located**, whilst peripheral areas should be equipped with mobile elements like planting tables, flexible shelves or platforms for hardware. This allows them to be dismantled easily if required and thus offer maximum flexibility in quieter phases.

- A** Sample raised flower bed
- B** Rain gauge accessories
- C** Hand-painted explanation of the raised bed incl. the plants
- D** Self-watering system
- E** Hand shovel for soil

The big climate tree adds more height to the sales area and creates an authentic garden atmosphere.



The department



- A** Seeding vegetables
- B** Refined tomatoes
- C** Inspiration area for one's own home
- D** Different clay pots, arranged acc. to type

The inspiration area brightens up the rather monotone plant pot shelves and provides plenty of design ideas for home on a small amount of space.

Clearly differentiate between the different varieties - for instance using alternating leaf shapes to avoid confusion, especially in the case of similar herbs and different types of mint. Well-visible signs for each variety are essential: As well as the growth habit and care instructions, the signs should also contain practical instructions for use



The department

Tip: Taking a look at plant care – focus on watering!

Make sure you consider **the maintenance aspects when planning the area** – also for special offers on CC containers. Where is the nearest water supply? Does the ground slope in the greenhouse so that surplus water can drain off?

The temperatures in the greenhouse particularly go up above 30°C fast in the spring – and then young plants need a particularly large amount of water. Because the plants mostly have to be watered outside the opening hours, the schedule has to be planned so the customers

are disturbed as little as possible. Hose pipes left lying around across the paths are not only a safety risk – they also spoil the purchasing experience. **Hence, watering hoses should not be left on the paths used by customers during the opening hours.**

An attractive presentation has a direct impact on the average purchasing value of the customers.

Clearly arranged tables with mixed cultivation recommendations offer valuable combination tips at a glance. These are also ideal when no employee is available for a consultation or when a direct exchange is not desired.



It is worth placing complementary seeds right next to the seedlings. In this way, for example, radish, carrots or pluck lettuce as well as onion sets can be taken along directly. These products are often found in another section of the garden centre, which means valuable additional potential goes to waste.

In a practical double placement, in addition to the seedlings here, appropriate seeds for the simultaneous sowing process are found. The offer is enhanced by different foils to suppress the formation of weeds or to protect the plants against frost as well as mechanic and biological plant protection.

How can the necessary expertise be passed on effectively?

Different approaches are possible here:



Personalised advice on-site:

If seedlings are not just sold in trays of 6 or 12, but even sold individually, a direct customer contact automatically arises. This offers the ideal opportunity to pass on well-founded knowledge and the targeted promotion of complementary sales. However, one needs skilled employees on the sales area.

The department



Specialist literature and digital information offers:

Whether in printed form or online – well-prepared contents offer customers valuable knowledge about gardening.

Workshops and events in the garden centre:

Events on-site incite people to join in. For example, raised beds can be built and planted together.



The department



- A** Raised bed with a foil roof
- B** Low bed enclosure
- C** Work bench with diverse accessories
- D** Worm composter for integration into the bed
- E** Fruit and berry bushes
- F** Irrigation system
- G** Real rolled turf immediately creates a garden atmosphere – underneath waterproof foil and water-storing felt mat



Metal rods were integrated into the bed to present both the decorative wreaths and the beneficial insect aids effectively.

- A** Upside down clay pots filled with straw to accommodate beneficial insects
- B** Insect packaging attached to the wreaths for better visibility
- C** Fruit trees with striking brand labels to heighten recognition
- D** Grow plants underneath like tomatoes, peppers and different herbs

Information at the POS for the customers/labelling:



Recipes offer customers real added value for the use of different herbs – whether digitally via the website and social media or in classic, printed form.

The plant label provides information on the location needs, growth habits and harvest season of the courgette. It is enhanced by a flexibly implementable caution sign that refers to possible plant risks during cold weather – and which if needs be – can be attached or detached.



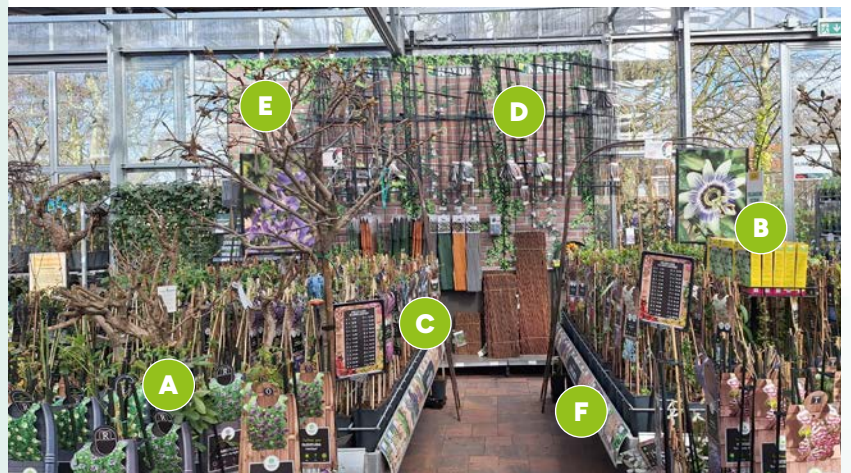
The department



The two displays draw attention to the organic quality of the herbs – supported by the prominently placed insect hotel as an additional visual indication of sustainability.

Fruit and berry bushes

- A** Berry bushes
- B** Fertiliser
- C** Price tag acc. to code
- D** Espaliers and stakes
- E** Solitary fruit trees for height in the department
- F** Coloured product range label on the edge of the table



Further inspiration?

We published the first whitepaper on the theme "Christmas design at the POS – tips and best cases". In this paper we showed you based on transferrable recommendations and best cases how you can successfully design your sales area in this important turnover phase.

Discover the latest trends and themes as well as pioneering concepts for the POS live at spoga+gafa (22.-24.06.2026). More about the authors and further information is available at www.spogagafa.com

Do you have any queries or your own best cases?

Tag us with your appropriate posting or send us a message via the social media channels. In this way, we can engage in an exchange and strengthen the garden industry together. Because long-term success can only be secured if the customers experience the trade as true added value.



Further inspiration?

Statements from the market

Review: What active participants in POS Green Solution Islands have to say.



edelman
since 1898

"Thank you for the inspirational integration of our brand MICA at spoga+gafa.

It is always interesting to see how current themes are conveyed on the space. In the year 2024, the theme sustainability connected us very strongly because it is also anchored in the DNA at Edelman, which one can see among others also from our B-Corp certification.

The POS islands offer the garden industry valuable ideas and impulses and give us the opportunity to engage in an exchange with existing trade partners or establish new ones. I am looking forward to future events and I am convinced that we will still see many new ideas."

Michael Bollmann

Sales Area Manager DACH



"Visiting the POS Green Solution Islands has become a yearly tradition for us and a true highlight of the fair. We always find new and inspiring ideas that reflect the latest trends in our industry. We particularly appreciate the strong focus on sustainability, which aligns perfectly with our values and supports the future development of our work in the garden sector."

Silvano Girelli

Director Flover Group



"In spite of the time pressure, we always enjoy visiting the POS islands every year during spoga+gafa. We like to inform ourselves about new trends and let ourselves be surprised by inspiring presentations. It is a good opportunity to engage in discussions with the merchandise team about what we think is good, what can be implemented in our company and what direction we are headed in together. We always take a few ideas from here with us. For example, this spring we placed even more priority on the theme "Snack Gardens", self-sufficiency and sustainability, starting with striking presentations in our entrance area."

Bart Kuipers

Managing Director Gartenwelt Emsbüren GmbH

Our service for your customers

You can print out this small checklist for your customers at the POS or make it available to them digitally so that the customers are animated to make themselves

acquainted with the special features and can buy the related plants and equipment directly from you. Kindly provided by [meine-ernte.de](https://www.meine-ernte.de).

Snack garden on the balcony – big harvest despite little space

1. Your checklist for getting started

Herbs: Basil, mint, oregano, lemon balm, rosemary, parsley, thyme, sorrel, chives, ribwort – upgrade your menu all year round and enjoy an extra portion of nutrients.

Vegetables: Chilli, bush tomatoes, snack peppers, radish, salads, peas, beans, Swiss chard, courgettes, onions, carrots, potatoes, pumpkins, mini cucumbers.

Fruit: Strawberries (also hanging), raspberry bushes, red currants, blackberries or blueberries as well as fruit trees like apple or pear trees – also thrive wonderfully in pots on the balcony.

Tip: Use the height: Hanging varieties such as strawberries or herbs in hanging baskets save space and create optical highlights.

2. The right pots

Not all vegetables need a lot of room – here an overview of suitable plant pots and their application.

Types of plant pots and volume recommendations

Type of plant pot	Suitable for	Volume recommendation per plant
Balcony box	Pluck lettuce, radish, herbs, Swiss chard, spinach	5–10 litres
Plant pot	Tomatoes, peppers, mini cucumbers, strawberries, courgettes, cucumbers, pumpkins, green beans, berry bushes, baby carrots	10–20 litres
Raised beds (balcony format)	Pluck lettuce, spinach, carrots, radish, herbs, diverse snack vegetables, courgettes, pumpkins	Total volume at least 40–80 litres

Our service for your customers

Type of plant pot	Suitable for	Volume recommendation per plant
Planting bags/ sacks	Potatoes, tomatoes, diverse herbs, lettuce	15–40 litres
Hanging basket	Strawberries, herbs, ranking mini tomatoes	3–7 litres
Vertical plant systems	Herbs, lettuce, snack vegetables	3–5 litres

Tip for raised beds on the balcony:

- Make sure they are stable models with a water reservoir or outlet.
- Balcony raised beds are normally 80–100 cm high – back-friendly and space-saving.
- Bear in mind raised beds are heavy.
- Tip: Use a light substrate blend (i.e. coconut fibre + compost + soil) to reduce the weight.

3. Location: Sun or shade?

A sunny balcony (approx. 6 hours of sun or more a day) is ideal for tomatoes, peppers, courgettes, cucumbers, strawberries.

Grow in the semi-shade (approx. 3 to 6 hours of sun): Herbs like mint, parsley, chives as well as lettuce, Swiss chard, radish, potatoes, beans.

You can grow various mushrooms, Asian vegetables, lamb's lettuce, spinach or parsley **in the shade** (under 3 hours of sun).

4. The basic equipment

Armed with the following basic equipment, self-sufficiency in small spaces is guaranteed to flourish.

- Plant pots: Balcony boxes, pots, tubs or plant bags (with extraction holes)
- Soil: Rich in nutrients, peat-free
- Seeds or young plants: Ideally open pollinating and suitable for growing in pots
- Small watering can: For gentle watering
- Liquid fertiliser (bio/organic): For regular supply of nutrients
- Hand shovel & gardening gloves: For simple replanting & care
- Trellis (optional): For tomatoes, cucumbers or peas
- Coasters or water catching trays: For balcony boxes & pots so no water drips down

5. Extra tips for a good harvest

Watering: Because the roots of your plants can't grow deep down, it is important to water them regularly. Water them ideally either in the morning or the evening to reduce the evaporation. Make sure that no waterlogging can occur in the pots and that superfluous water can drain off.

The right soil: Use high-quality peat-free potting soil. This contains nutrients that favour optimal growth.

Choice of plants: Begin your snack garden adventure with simple plants like lettuce, radish, herbs or strawberries.

Use the height: Use trellis nets or hanging baskets to save space.

Tip: For further inspiration and detailed instructions visit www.meine-ernte.de

meine ernte – self-sufficiency made easy

For over 15 years, meine ernte has been helping people to realise their dream of self-sufficiency – simply, sustainably and feasibly for everyone. Whether with rental gardens in over 25 cities in

Germany or with clever products for balconies, gardens and windowsills, meine ernte makes self-sufficiency a reality – all year round and without any prior knowledge.



About the author

The long-standing cooperation between Oliver Mathys and spoga+gafa shows how innovative solutions for the garden trade can arise through strong cooperations. Don't just discover the latest trends and themes in our Whitepaper, but also live at spoga+gafa (22–24 June 2026).

More about the author and further information can be found here www.spogagafa.com



Oliver Mathys

As an **experienced market expert for the international garden industry and a passionate plant lover**, he puts the current trends and zeitgeist of the consumers into practice across all sales channels in a targeted way. He connects providers, producers and sales areas all over Europe together to develop tailor-made concepts for plants and flowers.

spoga+gafa

spoga+gafa is the **world's biggest garden and BBQ trade fair**. As an international trade fair at the location in Cologne, it sets impulses for the entire garden world. At the leading global trade fair, the garden industry talks about the line-ups and trends of the coming season and presents solutions for current and future challenges. The focus of spoga+gafa lies on **trends and innovations from the garden bbq, garden creation & care, garden living and garden unique sections**.



