

## IGC news & people

### Crowds Gather at Homestead's Grand Opening

**H**omestead Gardens kicked off spring in mid-April with a grand opening at its second location in Severna Park, MD, and *Nursery Retailer* was there - along with crowds that surprised, and delighted, the IGC in number. "The turnout was much bigger than we expected," says Tim Hamilton, Marketing Director for the leading independent, ranked No. 22 in *NR's* IGC 100 report with \$21.6 million in sales.

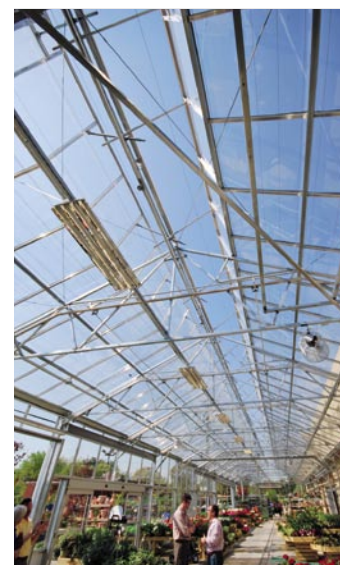
The new store is located about 20 miles from Homestead's flagship operation in Davidsonville, MD, and is about one-third the size, with a 15,000-square-foot sales floor and a 23,000-square-foot outdoor nursery yard. Nexus Greenhouse Systems designed and built the garden center's atrium-style greenhouse, connected to the existing building and leading out to the nursery yard.

"This was a huge departure for us on many levels," Hamilton says of the new format.

Indoors, Homestead followed the horizontal stripe paint pattern of the existing building, which housed a Frank's Nursery and a Boater's World more recently. To add interest vertically in the space, which includes 25-foot ceilings, "lifestyle" images displayed on 6'x3' GatorBoard are hung at an 18-foot height around the store. In the garden gift room, metal and cast iron trellises hang over head to help bring the ceiling down. Bird feeders and other "hangable" items are merchandised from the trellises.

Specialty foods, such as jams, jellies, sauces and produce, are featured in their own section, called The Market Place. Produce grown on site is featured here as well in the summer.

"I can't imagine the box stores feel like this during their grand openings," Hamilton says. "We were greeting our customers as they came in, and they were just gushing: 'We're so glad you're here.' 'It's about time.' 'This is fantastic!'"



#### INSIDE THE CELEBRATION

*(Pictured above, inside store) Don Riddle, Owner, Homestead Gardens, center, is congratulated by friends Angelo Petitti, Owner, Petitti Garden Centers, left, and Richard Lessans, CEO, Commerce Corp., right, during the Severna Park store's grand opening. The new location boasts a specialty food section, The Market Place. Nexus Greenhouse Systems designed and installed the store's attached greenhouse, which features central heating ventilation. Turnout to the grand opening event exceeded the IGC's expectations.*