

# Fresh from the Garden

SEPTEMBER 2015

    
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## Observations People Make the Difference

*by John Darin, President*



English Gardens received the 2015 IGC Retailer of the Year Award at the IGC (Independent Garden Center) Show in Chicago last month.

It was a proud moment for me personally, when my parents, all English Gardens shareholders, and a group of managers and associates who attended the show, were on stage to accept the award.

The IGC Retailer of the Year Award is presented annually to a garden center demonstrating notable leadership and innovation. The award was established in memory of Dick Morey, founder of IGC Magazine and an advocate for the independent garden center industry.

As I was on stage, I was thinking about all of the people at English Gardens who make our company great.

As much as our customers shop our stores for our great products from around the world, it's our friendly, knowledgeable associates who've established relationships with our customers that keep them coming back.

It's our great displays that bring customers in week after week to see what's new, and how we've displayed our products in ways that hadn't thought of.

Our people want customers to have success with their projects. So when we make recommendations, it's understood we are the experts.

All of you have contributed to the success of our company.

Thank you everyone for your efforts!

## SEPTEMBER Events

**Free Presentation:**  
Fall Lawn Care  
Sat., Sept. 5, 2015 at 10 a.m.

**Labor Day**  
Mon., Sept. 7, 2015

**Free Presentation:**  
Fairy Gardening  
Sat., Sept. 12, 2015 at 10 a.m.

**Make it, Take it Workshop:**  
Fairy Gardening  
Sat., Sept. 12, 2015 at 11:30 a.m.

**Free Presentation:**  
Landscape Design  
Sat., Sept. 19, 2015 at 10 a.m.

**Free Presentation: Planting**  
Spring-Flowering Bulbs  
Sat., Sept. 26, 2015 at 10 a.m.

**Kid's Workshop: Plant a Spring**  
Bulb Garden  
Sat., Sept. 26, 2015 at 11:30 a.m.

**Employee Appreciation Days**  
30% off Purchases  
Sept. 21-23, 2015



# Landscape News

## Professionals Doing Extraordinary Work

September is traditionally a very demanding month for the Landscape Company. We are still busy installing our award-winning landscaping projects; and we are also signing contracts for fall clean-ups as well as holiday work.

As customers inquire about our services, please be prepared to discuss what we can do. Inform customers that we install landscapes until the ground freezes; usually well into November. Tell customers that fall is a great time for planting. Completing the project in the fall will allow customers to enjoy their landscape for the entire season next year.

Our holiday decorating crews will be lighting the exterior of your store this month. The holiday light season has moved up in the calendar over the past few years, and most customers are looking for decorating to be completed before Thanksgiving. Therefore, it is important for customers to contact us early (September is best) to get these services scheduled.

Finally, please remember the Spiff program applies to any sale the Landscape Company completes. Any landscape, maintenance or holiday project will get rewarded! We appreciate your hard work in obtaining these leads for us, and we will work as hard as possible to get you a reward!

## 2015 \$ELL FOR SUCCESS

### Values in Action: Teamwork

English Gardens Associates are team players. We understand the "magic" that happens when the spirit of cooperative action, support and camaraderie unites Associates in a store.

Getting along with others is an important part of your job. No matter how talented you are, if you can't get along with others it is difficult to reach your personal and career goals. Building strong professional ties with coworkers can add to your career success. There may be days where you are the strongest team player and you can support a person who may be having an "off" day. For example, if you know that they are facing personal challenges you may find ways to support them to learn from it.

### Characteristics of Great Team Players

1. Great team players put individual egos aside for the greater whole, without sacrificing personal goals and objectives.
2. Great team players arrive on time (15 minutes before scheduled time) and ready to work.
3. Great team players are dressed to code with uniforms, name badge and carrying necessary tools.

4. Great team players make others feel valued and appreciated.
5. Great team players communicate with others directly.
6. Great team players have genuine respect for one another based on similarities and differences.
7. Great team players are accountable. They admit mistakes and learn from them.
8. Great team players work with others to promote a vision.
9. Great team players do not gossip.
10. Great team players offer suggestions for improvement often and offer feedback only in private.
11. Great team players leave personal drama at home.

For one full day, practice assisting your fellow Associates whenever you see the opportunity to:

- Assist other Associates with keeping the store clean and neat.
- Assist other Associates with their assigned tasks, putting away tools or supplies, housekeeping, etc.
- Assist the management team with any tasks they may need to be done throughout the day.

How did you feel at the end of the day? What reaction, if any, did you get from those to whom you offered assistance?

## SEPTEMBER *Anniversaries*

### MANAGERS

- 21 Patrick Fairbrother, ACO
- 11 Kim Milewski, AA
- 7 Debbie Purdue, MO
- 2 Jim Welch, WB
- 2 Keven Radke, CT

### ASSOCIATES

- 17 Pat Birch, CT
- 7 Arnulfo Diaz-Lopez, LD
- 4 Sarah L. Miller, RO
- 1 Jeremiah F. Baur, EP
- 1 Erin M. Graebert, AA



## EASING INTO CHANGE

Many people have asked me how they'll know when it's the right time to make a change to a healthier lifestyle. I say, it's always the right time to do something positive for yourself. Sure, it's a big decision, but when you think of all the ways your life will get a boost, it will make the concept of change far easier to digest.

When you finally feel ready to make some improvements to your life, the most important thing is to be realistic. Never ask yourself to do something that you're going to fail at. I never do. Part of that is taking on something that's too big to begin with. While some people begin by making a laundry list of everything they want to change, it's far better to focus on one thing at a time. First make sure it's something that's possible and ultimately good for you; and then take it in small steps.

For instance, if you feel that being out of shape is something you want to change, don't even try walking miles your first time out! Instead, walk a couple of blocks, then a few, then several. Soon enough you'll be walking an entire neighborhood, if that's what you want.

And when you become comfortable with the new spring in your step, think about stopping to meet someone new along the way. Feeling good about yourself will show in your face and everything you do.

Remember, change doesn't happen overnight. Nor should it. When you set realistic goals and a well-paved path to getting there, you'll be surprised at how quickly these changes become routine.

Always keep things in perspective, and never lose sight of how lucky we are to have the opportunity to create change—both for ourselves and everyone around us.

— *By Florine Mark,  
President and CEO of  
The Weight Watchers Group, Inc.*

## Safety

### General Housekeeping

When a garage, yard or office is a mess, hazards are usually covered up. A fire will spread because people are unaware of existing hazards. When the workplace is clean, the hazards are usually there for everyone to see. Loose materials and tools on a workbench or a spill on the floor are easy to spot when everything else is where it should be. Good housekeeping will prevent injuries caused by tripping, stumbling, slipping, stepping on or bumping into tools, materials or other objects.

Keep walkways, aisles, stairways, and fire escape routes clear. Never put tools or materials in a place which might cause tripping or stumbling hazards, or where they may fall and strike anyone below.

Clean up spills of liquids that pose a slipping hazard. Use the proper floor dry material—not sawdust or wood shavings. Keep a scrap-bin handy for broken glass, metal trimmings, used spray cans, sawdust

and other waste materials. Covered metal containers must be used for dirty and oily waste rags.

Good housekeeping is a sign of good workmanship. Garages, yards, and offices can be kept clean and safe when everyone works as a team to keep it that way. Take the time to care about keeping your workplace clean and your teammates alive.



# SEPTEMBER *Recipe*

## APPLE CINNAMON BAKED OATMEAL CUPS

### Ingredients

- 2 cups old fashioned oats
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup milk
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup mashed banana
- 1 large apple, peeled, cored & diced

### Directions

1. Preheat your oven to 375 degrees.
2. In a large bowl, combine the oats, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon. Add the milk, egg, and mashed banana and mix until combined. Stir in the apple.
3. You can either put the mixture into the fridge overnight or continue with the directions and bake right away.
4. Grease a muffin tin and fill each cup with the oatmeal mixture to just about the top. Bake in a 375 degree oven for 20 to 25 minutes, until the cups are set. Store in the fridge or these can also be frozen.

- [happyhealthymama.com](http://happyhealthymama.com)



# They Told Us!

Each month we will be sharing customer comments from "Tell Us" cards we have received. Thanks to all our Associates for providing top-notch customer service!

## From Eastpointe...

*"We always look for Paul G. when we are in the store; just to say "hi" or ask a question on our perennials. He is very knowledgeable and gives great guidance."*

## From Dearborn Heights...

*"We had a young man by the name of Andrew C. helping us in the Dearborn store. He was very knowledgeable and so very helpful. Nice to shop in a retail store and get such good service."*

## From West Bloomfield...

*"We will look for this wonderful, responsive person (Gale P.) every time we enter the store. She is everything a valued staff member should be."*

## From Landscape...

*"Stephanie V. did a great job with the plan. We are very happy with it. The workers were very polite and did a great job!"*

# Be on the look-out for the SECRET SHOPPER!

Did you know that English Gardens employs an outside company to send Secret Shoppers into our stores every month to rate our service?

Secret Shoppers evaluate customer service, store cleanliness, employee uniforms, operations, etc.

Our Landscape Company is evaluated through a Secret Shopper phone call.

Stores receive a percentage grade from each visit, and at the end of the year, the location with the highest overall score receives the Customer Service Award.

# Benefits Corner

## Children's Eye Health and Safety

Did you know that 65% of children nationwide haven't had an eye exam in the last 12 months? Healthy vision is essential to a child's ability to learn and achieve academic potential, as well as to play sports and other activities.

## When is the First Eye Exam Needed?

As early as six-month of age.

It's important that babies at this young age have their vision examined by an eye doctor to ensure that their eyes are developing normally and working together as a team. If not, one or both eyes may be affected, which could lead to a lifetime of poor vision.

Other exams should occur when the child is two to three years old. A pre-kindergarten exam is a must. The school-offered vision screenings are not enough. After that, eye exams should become an annual ritual, just like annual check-ups at the pediatrician's office.

## What Can Be Detected in an Eye Exam?

Children's eye exams can identify nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism, conditions that can be easily remedied with prescription glasses. A child's eye exam can also detect signs of chronic conditions like diabetes.

Early treatment can stop bigger problems down the road and detect vision issues that could impair eyesight for life.

Like any trip to a doctor, kids might be scared to see an eye doctor. But many optometrists are skilled at working with children. They can actually make eye exams fun for kids.

Don't just assume all is well unless you see your child squinting or complaining about his or her eyes. Making yearly trips to the eye doctor is as important for your family as annual visits to the pediatrician. You can easily find a VSP eye doctor in your area who specializes in working with children.



These are the scores that we received for the month of July 2015:

Ann Arbor	100%
Clinton Township	87%
Dearborn Heights	97%
Eastpointe	97%
Landscape Company	100%
Royal Oak	97%
West Bloomfield	100%

Keep up the good work, and continue looking for ways to improve!

# Get social with us!



Be sure to "like" us on Facebook at: [www.facebook.com/englishgardens](http://www.facebook.com/englishgardens);  
follow us on Twitter at: [www.twitter.com/englishgardens](http://www.twitter.com/englishgardens);  
or check out our boards at EnglishGardens on [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com).



Marketing also sends out "The Buzz" every Friday to the stores. It has information about advertising for the upcoming week.



If you have any questions or have ideas for social media, call Jennifer Youngquest: 248-855-9240, ext. 230, or e-mail at: [jyoungquest@englishgardens.com](mailto:jyoungquest@englishgardens.com)