

Business growing strong for 25 years

Twenty-five years ago, a young man, George Papadellis, set up a roadside stand to sell tiny plants he had started from seed.

The family - Gust and Niki and their two sons, George and Mark - lived on a quiet street in Troy that was a perfect place for George to "set up shop."

The business was such a success that it kept George busy through his high school years.

He attended the University of Michigan to study biology, but each summer he returned home to work in the flower stand, which by then was a successful business. The quiet street had turned into a five-lane highway.

George also loved providing flowers for Troy residents. George also enjoyed building a business.

George had a big decision to make in the summer of 1987. Should he apply to medical school, or continue to develop Tellys Greenhouse and Garden Center?

The garden center won. With the support of his parents and encouragement of his friend, Kellie, a fellow student at the U of M, George continued to expand the business and to sell all manner of flowers, vegetables, shrubs, trees, etc. to his many loyal customers. (Kellie is now George's wife and the mother of their three children.)

His brother, Mark, began to sell trees and shrubs on the grounds a few years ago, and now that is another aspect of the business.

ON THE GROW

Tellys Greenhouse and Garden Center is now a thriving business that not only offers a full range of plants, but



George Papadellis says, "There is always something new and exciting in the gardening world at Tellys."

garden art, tools, furniture, accessories and much more. It is at 3301 John R in Troy, between Big Beaver and Wattles roads (phone (248) 689-8735).

Tellys continues to expand and now is having some renovations.

Recently we walked around the garden center and George enthusiastically showed me some new plants that are now available.

The annual *Tulipum* "Jewels of Opus" has glossy gold leaves and delicate pink flowers on airy spikes.

Another annual, *Argyranthemum* "Chelsea Girl," is a 12- to 18-foot tall tree with thread-like gray/green foliage to 1 inch, with daisy-like flowers.

Salvia "Azura" has deep purple/blue flower spikes; it is an annual.

Euphorbia coccinea, exclusive to Tellys, sports heart-shaped leaves that are maroon with olive green on the back veins. This 6-plus-foot tree has soft gray bark.

Any hosta lover will be impressed with the variety of hostas, such as "Liberty" and "Praying Hands," also exclusive here.

One hundred different kinds of annual coleus will knock your socks off. "Brilliantia" has large leaves and grows 4

feet tall, with delphinium-blue flowers on long spikes. "Perilla Magilla" is another winner.

Centuria gymnocarpa, "Colchester White," with extra large, coarse foliage, can be trained as a standard.

Other plants have been trained as standards, and the topiary selection can't be beat.

"We have all sorts of stuff in topiary that really has no business being topiary!" George said.

CREATIVE CONTAINERS

George wants customers to know that there are many alternatives to the spike that is so over-used in container plantings.

All are either annuals or tender perennials. Included in the selection are:

■ *Phormium* - Its leaves are pink, brown and green with maroon edges. The sword-like leaves are arranged as a fan and the tall, lily-like flowers are brownish red or yellow.

■ *Cortylus* - This has leaves that are long and dark purple/red with a lighter center vein. They radiate perfectly from the center.

■ *Dianella* - This has green and white, or green and gold, leaves.

Other choices are *Penstemon* "Purple Majesty" and *Saccharum* "Sugar Cane," with a bronze leaf.

Miniature impatiens stay under control in a mixed pot, George says. ("Pretty cool.") Some unusual veggies are available, such as maroon lettuce "Merlot" and striped corn.

Customers can also buy a metal carrier that contains a variety of mixed plants that is professionally designed. This container collection can then be transferred to your own pot.

Not only does this company sell all manner of things to beautify gardens, it reaches out to its community.

Tellys is very involved with helping others raise funds and has several programs to help groups in this endeavor.

It has donated much time and money through various fund-raisers.

Garden clubs are invited to hold meetings on the site.

George is available as a speaker for group functions and as a group leader for day trips or extended travel to horticultural destinations. (For information on customizing a program for you, group, e-mail Tellys@aol.com.)

Pre-arranged group tours of the facilities are available. Saturday workshops are offered from April to December.

Be sure to pick up a schedule. The staff welcomes suggestions and questions.

When you visit Tellys, say "Happy 25th!" and enjoy a leisurely trip through the grounds as you make your selections.

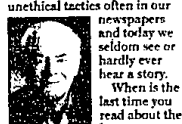
GOODGARDENWORD

medium - potting soil or other materials in which a container plant is grown

Mark Tellys is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (334) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone. Her fax number is (248) 644-1314.

Consumers wise up to bait and switch

Many of you folks reading this column can relate to the common consumer complaint of "bait and switch." We used to read about these unethical tactics often in our



Appliance Doctor Joe Gagnon

newspapers and today we seldom see or hear a story.

When is the last time you read about the homeowner who sees an advertisement for a dishwasher on sale for \$199, enters an appliance store to purchase it,

only to be told there are no more in stock? At this point the consumer is quickly talked into buying the \$400 model.

Hence we have a bait and switch.

I don't think this practice happens anymore, at least not in the appliance sales business. It makes me ponder the thought of why it doesn't and the answer is simple - it's the education of the American Shopper.

Quite simply put, we got much smarter. The old story goes like this - "I saw the ad in the paper and went to the listed store to buy it. The salesperson told me they ran out of that particular model and even offered a raincheck, but it would be three months before the store received their next order from the factory. I need a dishwasher now, not in three months, so I paid for a model twice as expensive."

This story was repeated to me over and over again. Consumers read about it, heard it and in some cases lived it.

We all got smarter from the repeat messages given out by the media.

This bait and switch violates the Michigan Consumers Protection Act and the Attorney General's Office was

taking action against such retail practices.

Not so long ago, every consumer over the age of 16 knew where there was an two particular appliance store chains. One would give you a pound of coffee if they couldn't beat your best deal. Were these large appliance retail outlets guilty of such behavior? I know they were because I used to call them and try to help consumers who came to me with the problem.

This kind of thing happens only once to a shopper and you can imagine how quickly they became educated in shopping. I guess if you bait and switch enough consumers, they just don't shop at your store anymore. By the way, what ever happened to those appliance stores?

Back in those days of appliance sales, I used to own a store which sold a major brand of product. There was a washing machine which sold real cheap and that's the one they wanted me to use in my advertising.

When I ordered a truckload of the new product from the factory, they would only allocate a few of these inexpensive models into the mix.

I really didn't have any to sell when people came into my store and that is exactly what I would tell consumers when they came through the door.

It didn't take me long to realize that the whole system starting right at the manufacturing level was a set-up job.

Today in this market we have people selling appliances who are a lot smarter as well. They also have learned from the past mistakes of others and they present a much cleaner image than years past.

Joe Gagnon is host of Ask The Handyman on Infinity Radio AM 1270 B a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. You can hear his tips on WWJ 950 on weekdays. You can call him on his show at 1-248-356-1270.

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