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**HOME & GARDEN SHOWPLACE YEAR 2000 PLANS  
UNVEILED IN NEW ORLEANS**

**Chicago, Ill., August 23, 1999** - E-commerce, retail technology, recognition of key vendors and retailers and the launch of a new brand-building advertising program were the highlights of TruServ Corporation's Summer Garden Center and Nursery Market in New Orleans in July.

500 of the co-op's Home & Garden Showplace and TruGardens members attended, representing 250 retail outlets. As part of the two-day market, four Home & Garden Showplace members were recognized as "Regional Members of the Year." Also, two vendors were recognized for their assistance in the recent growth of the business, with 54 new members signing on. In addition, plans were unveiled for an extensive national advertising program in 2000.

In the Southeast, Heberts Home & Garden Showplace has had a very busy year. This New Iberia, La., member was chosen as the Southeast Regional Member of the Year for several reasons. In addition to a huge purchase increase and a 100% sales increase in a recent five-month period, Heberts also built a new store and expanded their space to over 15,000 square feet, dedicated to a garden center, greenhouse and a rental area.

Leppeks Home & Garden Showplace, a 13,000 square foot garden center in Brighton, Mich., was recognized as the Midwest Regional Member of the Year. This past spring, Leppeks celebrated the grand opening of a brand new ground up store, in addition to opening a successful florist department, a new category for the store. Leppeks also serves as a destination for grills and water gardening.

Tagawa Home & Garden Showplace, located in Aurora, Colo., has been named Southwest/West Regional Member of the Year. In addition to their participation in programs sponsored by the co-op, Tagawa also boasted the largest purchase increase in the western region.

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With two locations in Connecticut, Vinny's Home & Garden Showplace was named the Northeast Regional Member of the Year. The Wallingford and East Hartford-based Vinnys had the biggest volume sales increase in the region.

Technological advances introduced at the event include a program to help Members get their individual stores on the Web and a TruServ Nursery Vendor Guide Intranet site. Home & Garden Showplace members also recently began selling a selection of green goods online at their gardenplace.com Web site.

The Home & Garden Showplace 2000 national advertising program was also announced, including approximately 385 cable television spots per market (225 tagged with local stores), four seasonal events and several consumer gardening magazine ads in the spring season.

A significant portion of this advertising program will focus on the successful Garden Gems (Plants of the Year) promotions. These six perennials, annuals, shrubs and other plants are chosen by a nationwide vote of Home & Garden Showplace members, and will be featured in the spring and fall circulars as well as any other national advertising promoting Home & Garden Showplace. According to Dave Meder, general manager of the Home & Garden Showplace business of TruServ, "These are all plants deserving of the Home and Garden Showplace stamp of approval."

On the supply side of the garden center business, Ball Seed was named TruServ's "Partner of the Year," a recognition of the level of support existing between the two companies. In the past year, Ball Seed provided circular ad photos and advised bedding plant growers of the particular needs of Home & Garden Showplace members. "Our arrangement with Ball Seed was expected to be mainly mutual support. But we also achieved significant added sales because many of our Members are growers as well as retailers."

In addition, Henri Studios was recognized as "Vendor of the Year" for its close work with TruServ members and buyers, for introducing new products and for a special

advertising circular insert. “Henri Studios has been a tremendous vendor for us,” said Meder. “Their support, service and quality make them an invaluable supplier to Home & Garden Showplace members.”

Home & Garden Showplace ([gardenplace.com](http://gardenplace.com)) is one of the several retail identities that form TruServ, the world’s largest member-owned wholesale cooperative with sales of \$4.3 billion, supporting annual retail sales of more than \$14 billion. In addition to Home & Garden Showplace, the TruServ cooperative includes more than 10,000 independent retailers worldwide operating under the store identities of True Value, ServiStar Hardware, ServiStar Lumber Yards/Home Centers, Coast to Coast Hardware, Coast to Coast Home & Auto, Grand Rental Station, Taylor Rental and Induserv Supply. Additional information on TruServ and its retail identities is available at [truserv.com](http://truserv.com).

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