

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LOUISVILLE BUSINESS WINS GARDEN CENTER DISPLAY CONTEST

FRANKFORT, Ky. - A Louisville garden center has won the top prize in the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Retail Garden Center Display Contest.

Boone Gardiner Garden Center was awarded the \$1,000 top prize. Two garden centers each took home second-place awards of \$550, and three garden centers each won \$300 for third place. Participating businesses were challenged to use Kentucky-grown plant material to create attractive, imaginative displays that promote the Kentucky Proud marketing program.

"The top six awards represent Kentucky garden centers from Rowan County to Calloway County," Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer said. "All the participants are to be commended for their creativity and their dedication to using Kentucky Proud nursery plants.

"Kentucky Proud plants are likely to do better because they are better suited to Kentucky's soil and climate. We encourage consumers to look for the Kentucky Proud logo at their local garden centers."

The Boone Gardiner display was based on the theme "Kentucky Color" in response to consumer demand for colorful plants during the spring. The plants were grown by garden center staff as well as Star Farms of Shelbyville and Earl Thieneman Greenhouses in Louisville.

"Many customers have said that they have seen the Kentucky Proud commercial campaign and have been very receptive to our efforts to market local horticultural products," the garden center wrote in a letter that accompanied its entry. "Our customers are pleasantly surprised when they discover that Kentucky grows so many flowering plants."

The second-place awards went to Beans to Blossoms in Murray and Allyson's Greenhouse in Berry. Hillcrest Nursery in Richmond, Rain Greenhouse in Clearfield, and Wilson's Nursery in Frankfort took third place.

The \$3,000 prize money was funded by a grant from the Kentucky Horticulture Council.

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Office for Agriculture Marketing and Product Promotion judged the 20 entries. Michael Judge, executive director of the KDA marketing office, supervised the judging, and marketing specialist Kelly Ludwig tallied the votes. Photos of each participant's display were mounted and identified only by number for judging.

Entries were judged on the basis of use of Kentucky-grown plant material (50 percent), promotional efforts to sell Kentucky Proud (30 percent), the variety of plants featured (10 percent) and creativity (10 percent).

Participating garden centers were required to showcase their displays for at least 10 consecutive days during May. They each received a free Kentucky Proud banner and signage for use in the displays. They submitted pictures of their displays and a written summary that included the Kentucky-grown items they used and where they came from.

For more information about the Kentucky Proud marketing campaign, call the Office for Agriculture Marketing and Product Promotion at (502) 564-4983.

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