



## Marketing Munchies Podcast Transcript

### Episode #10: Debbie Hamrick #PlantsDoThat

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Announcer: Welcome to the Marketing Munchies Podcast series hosted by Dr. Bridget Behe. Each week Bridget and her guests will share information, insights, research-based findings, and her 30 years of experience to help your horticultural business connect better with current and future customers. Now, let's join our host, Dr. Bridget Behe.

**Dr. Bridget Behe:** Welcome to this week's podcast. Today I'm really fortunate to have as my guest Debbie Hamrick who is the director of specialty crops for the North Carolina Farm Bureau. Debbie also has been very active in a program called NICH, the National Initiative for Consumer Horticulture. Welcome today, Debbie.

**Debbie Hamrick:** Thank you.

**Dr. Bridget Behe:** I'm really excited to have you on the program today because I want to talk about these infographics that the National Initiative for Consumer Horticulture, the economics committee developed. Maybe just by way of starting could you give us a little background on what that committee is and how the infographics came to be.

**Debbie Hamrick:** Well, the economics committee for the National Initiative for Consumer in Horticulture is one of three committees that NICH has. We are a formed organization to grow a healthy world through plants, gardens, and landscapes. We have a vision that we have stakeholder partnerships that will increase the percentage of U.S households participating in consumer horticulture to 90% by 2025. One of the ways we hope that we can work to do that is by helping the industry see that we can position plants beyond just pretty by using as evidence based that has been developed by the amazing Charlie Hall down at Texas A&M University. He had several graduate students over time pull together research papers on the value of plants from an environmental, health and wellness, and an economic perspective. The committee thought, the committee is made up of industry members from private companies, from public sector like yourself, Bridget, thank you for serving on the committee, like myself from Farm Bureau here in North Carolina. We've determined that we wanted to help get this information out to the industry and release the information so that the industry can benefit from it by putting it into a form that will empower people to use it. We were fortunate enough to be able to identify Jennifer Grey. Jennifer works with Cultivate. Many people go to Cultivate every year. She is an employee of AmericanHort and she also works for Horticulture Research Institute. Jennifer Grey has put together these amazing infographics. What the committee did was we isolated the information that was in evidence-based developed by Charlie Hall. Jennifer creatively determined to have us present this information in a format that helped communicate the message about plants to the industry, to others that are in positions of power, like regulators or politicians, and directly to the consumer. That's why developed these. We developed these to get evidence-backed information out to the public so that is can be used to help the industry to leverage ourselves as efficient in plants.

**Dr. Bridget Behe:** Yes, infographics are the perfect way, I think, to do that because what you did was take that great evidence-base and turned it into something that can be looked at by anybody in the industry or outside the industry, especially consumers, and they can understand the fact-based things that plants do for them. We have five infographics now. What are the titles of those Debbie?

**Debbie Hamrick:** The original one infographic we introduced last spring and it was simply titled “#Plantsdothat” and it was a subtitle of “Horticulture- the Art, Science, and Business of Plants”. Jennifer came up with a great concept to show a road that travels through quote “an hour town” and we had some bullets about the business of plants where we live, where we work, where we shop, and where we play in the outdoor space. For example, where we shop. Stores that have landscape areas sell more and they do much better. I recently saw a great article about Greenville, South Carolina and how planting trees in the downtown area, 20 years ago, that was a vision the town politicians had, to plant trees and those trees have created a downtown space where people want to spend time. Plants create a sense of place, a sense of community and connectivity that’s just not there when we don’t have plants. The first infographic was the “#Plantsdothat” and that was about the greater industry. \$196 billion impact on the U.S. economy with more than 2 billion jobs created. The next series of the infographic that we just recently completed, we received is “#Plantsdothat-Inside and the Benefits of Putting Plants in our Personal Spaces”. The connectivity that we have when we actually connect with a plant. Plant is a portable piece of nature and you can carry it with you wherever you go. Plants and cut flowers. The “#Plantsdothat-Inside”, we released in four infographics because there’s so much evidence about the benefits of keeping plants in our personal space. We introduced “#Plantsdothat-Inside Where We Live”. The second infographic was “-Where We Learn”, the third “-Where We Heal”, and the fourth, and the most bullets we found were the benefits of plants in our instore spaces, “-Where We Work”. Plants are amazing when we work with plants in our space. We are more creative. We are happier. We get more done. We have less error rates. We are in the flow more. We are more professional. It’s just an amazing benefit of plants. We have an indoor space, an office space, you really need to have plants there if you want to get more out of your employees. The other one that was really cool is the benefit of plants in schools. When children are in classrooms where there are plants, they do better on tests. They also don’t misbehave as much. Children that do have ADD, don’t experience their symptoms as much when there are plants around in the classroom. Everybody is kind of calmer, more relaxed, connected feeling when they are in a classroom with plant material. They perform better on tests.

**Dr. Bridget Behe:** Yes.

**Debbie Hamrick:** Plants are great.

**Dr. Bridget Behe:** Yes, so when I think about how the industry can use these, so many growers and retailers have school children come for visits and tours and this would be perfect to send home with the kids for the parents to see but also to get into the hands of teachers. I think about using the “#Plantsdothat -Where We Work”, a lot of people inside the industry could put that up around the breakroom but even to share that with family and friends to have that posted around the watercooler or the coffee pot where people work could help reinforce those messages. Then certainly for caregivers, healthcare professionals, we really need to get that “#Plantsdothat-

Where We Heal” to help people understand that part of the healing process. Cut flowers and plants can really expedite that healing process. I was just so excited to see Charlie’s research-based evidence operational wise. He was a guest on the podcast a few weeks ago. It was just so exciting to see that and Jennifer Grey did a fabulous job, as did the rest of the committee putting that together. Debbie, are there any plans for future infographics or anything else you want to share with my audience about how to use these infographics?

**Debbie Hamrick:** Well, we did not copyright these infographics on purpose because we want them to be used broadly by the industry. Please, everyone kept them in their Facebook feeds, on Instagram, print them out, POP point of sale of retail, outlooks as you mentioned, giving them as handouts, when you have someone come by for a tour, or when you’re making a presentation. Some of the things that our industry does do when we need to get results to a city council or county commissioners, it’s a perfect item to use to talk about the importance of plants in the everyday world. That’s one of the reasons why we developed them was to give the industry some professional materials that they can use to leverage in their local communities to benefit their business and to benefit their community at large, to benefit the plants.

**Dr. Bridget Behe:** Well, thanks Debbie. I really appreciate you being a guest on the podcast today and I will put a link to those free, let me emphasize *free* infographics on the transcript and on the website. Again Debbie, thanks for being on the show today.

**Debbie Hamrick:** Bridget, thank you.

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Announcer: Thank you for joining us on this week's Marketing Munchies Podcast. For more information or to download the transcript of this podcast, please visit, [connect-2-consumer.org](http://connect-2-consumer.org). That's C-O-N-N-E-C-T, dash, the number two, dash, C-O-N-S-U-M-E-R, dot, C-O-M.