

HOW TO CHOOSE BACKGROUND MUSIC FOR YOUR GARDEN CENTER

Music enhances life. Certain types of music can influence the habits of shoppers in your store. It can help build your brand, mask background noise and cause shoppers to browse longer. In this report, the founder of Brandi Music, a licensed background music service for businesses, shares ideas for choosing the right music for your garden center.

<https://brandimusic.com>



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by Tim Brown *Founder, Brandi Music For Business*

We've known for a long time that music can have a powerful effect on shoppers. Smart retailers are using music to increase sales and build brand loyalty. Not just any music will be helpful, however. If the tempo, genre, and volume of the music in your store are wrong, music can have the effect of additional noise.

Our company, [Brandi Music™](#), provides a wide variety of streaming music licensed for use in businesses. We were recently asked to develop recommendations for background music for a garden center. We think that the right music will improve the shopping environment, help establish a likable brand and result in improved sales. But what's right for your garden center?

We'll touch on some background music basics, the preferences of boomer shoppers vs. millennial shoppers and give you some ideas for music genres that can help create the right music mix for your store.

Background Music Basics

Music must be licensed. Each song played in your public space is considered by the music industry to be a performance of a copyrighted work. Therefore, performance rights agencies (ASCAP, BMI, GMR, SESAC and SOCAN in Canada) must be paid for the rights to use the music. Rather than pay all of those entities, you can use a background music service provider such as Brandi Music™, which pays all licenses on your behalf. Personal streaming services such as Pandora and Spotify are not licensed for commercial use and should be avoided.

How to play music. A service such as Brandi will provide a device that plays the music, you will provide amplification and speakers. An audio cable carries the music to an amplifier, which carries the music to speakers throughout your store. If you don't have a professionally-installed sound system, we recommend contacting a reputable commercial sound system contractor who will design a properly-sized system for your needs.



Tamper-proof system. The Brandi Music™ system is tamper-proof by design. The genre of music cannot be changed on-site. This prevents employees and after-hours crews from creating unexpected customer experiences. With an authorized login, you will be able to change music, blend different channels, create schedules that automatically change the music throughout the day and much more.

Set the right volume. Some retailers use louder music (foreground music) to stimulate sales activity. For garden centers, we recommend background music, meaning lower volume. Studies have shown that softer volume music results in shoppers spending more time in your store ([Ronald E. Milliman, The Journal of Marketing, Vol. 46, No. 3, Summer, 1982](#)).

Music Is A Component Of Your Overall Customer Experience. A [Washington State University Extension \(WSU Extension\) article](#) highlights some of the details that make up the overall customer experience: signage, parking, cleanliness, accent lighting, etc. Think of music in the same way. It is an important environmental feature, used to enhance the customer experience.

By now you have concluded that your own personal musical tastes, and that of your employees, must be put aside. The music will serve the purpose of building sales through attracting and keeping customers and building a more favorable brand image.

The Baby Boomer Shopper

The boomers still have purchasing clout and are more demanding than ever, says [marketing research firm Colloquy](#). 84% of this group prefers in-store shopping.

WSU Extension notes that boomers relish excellent customer service. They enjoy taking a seat in a café or on an outdoor bench. Easy-listening or lighter instrumental music adds enjoyment to their experience in your garden center.

For personal listening or “active” listening, boomers might prefer a 60s-70s mix. But background music is not active. It is atmosphere.

The Millennial Shopper

Millennials make up the largest portion of the workforce today ([Gallup](#)), and represent a lucrative opportunity for garden centers. This group represents the fastest-growing segment of all plant buyers.

What's happening? Millennials are "fulfilling a desire to connect to nature and the blossoming 'wellness' movement," says Matthew Boyle, in [a report for Bloomberg](#). In addition, millennials look to gardening to relieve the stress levels associated with their fast-paced lives (WSU Extension). Music can help relieve stress for these shoppers, according to neuroscience group [Mindlab](#).

Music is very important to this group. They're responsible for driving the streaming music revolution and listen to music more than any other age group (Bloomberg). According to [Digital Music News](#), the millennial generation listens to 75.1% more music on a daily basis than baby boomers.

For a more relaxing in-store experience, explore musical genres that can create a spa-like atmosphere. Also consider the sounds of nature, such as birdsong, to further connect to nature.



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American gardeners spent a record \$52.3 billion on lawn and garden retail sales last year, according to the 2019 [National Gardening Survey](#). A quarter of that spending was attributed to 18- to 34-year-olds, whose spending on plants has grown at a higher rate than any other age group since 2014.”

— [HuffPost, September 2019](#)

Experiment To Get The Mix Right

Getting the music fine-tuned for your environment isn't all scientific. It will take some experimentation. Brandi Music™ has a user control panel that allows you to combine genres or channels of music to create a unique mix or blend. Consider these musical characteristics when trying out various channels:

Tempo. Our music curators think in terms of fast, medium and slow tempos. Some Brandi Music™ channel names will give you clues to help you find the desired tempo. Easy Instrumentals are slower than Bright Instrumentals. Peaceful is slower yet. A study published in the Journal of Marketing found that faster background music can cause shoppers to pick up their tempo as they shop, doing less browsing (and buying) ([Millman, 1982](#)). Another vote for easier, lighter music.

Instrumental vs. vocal. Instrumental music is often less complicated than vocal music and does a better job of staying in the background. Instrumental music is associated with reduced stress. Brandi Music™ lets you blend channels, so you can play an occasional vocal song as a test.

Familiar vs. unfamiliar. We've often heard that people want to hear songs they know. This may be true for foreground music, but the science says shoppers spend more time shopping when exposed to unfamiliar music ([Yalch and Spangenberg, Journal of Business Research, 2000](#)). Don't be afraid that shoppers may not recognize background music songs and artists. Familiar music might be useful as part of a multi-channel mix, as an experiment, but we recommend using a base of unfamiliar instrumentals.

Log in and experiment with music. Brandi Music™ offers 70 channels, so there's much to discover. For a preview of channels, visit <https://brandimusic.com/music-for-business/channels/>

Adding It All Up

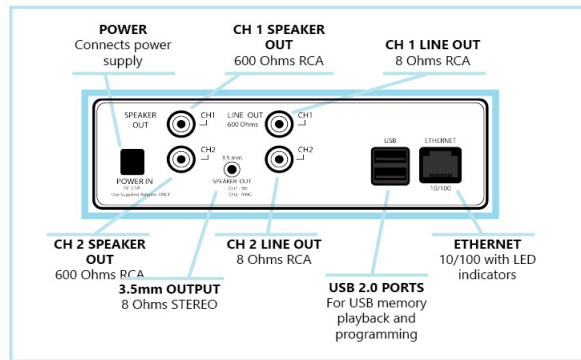
For a garden center, we think background music, not foreground music, is best. It's an important part of customer experience design. Keeping the tempo down likely lengthens a shopper's visit. Baby Boomers will feel relaxed. Surprisingly, soft or spa-like music is well-accepted by Millennials, who feel a connection to nature and music.

Catering to younger shoppers does not necessarily call for current or upbeat music. Using a blend of light music with occasional birdsong effects in the mix might be just the thing to help young buyers escape the frenzy of modern life and choose items they need as they build their oasis at home.

Music Options

Automatic Music Scheduling. Changing the music mix throughout the day can add variety that is welcomed by employees. If your morning clientele is different from other times of the day, you can easily create a morning blend that automatically changes later.

Unique Music Zones. You may be able to utilize more than one stream of music at your facility. You can create “zones” such as “indoor” and “outdoor” or “garden” and “floral” if it is important to separate these as unique experiences. The device provided by Brandi Music™ can receive two unique music streams from a single internet connection. After purchasing the service for \$35/month, the additional “zone” is just another \$10 per month.



What Kind Of Music Do Plants Like?

Finally, a thought about how music may help your plants. You’re familiar with studies, some debunked, about music helping plants grow. While the jury is still out, we find it notable that music is still being played for plants in some commercial settings, with positive results.

Grower Robert Coxon is experimenting with music in his greenhouses. He anticipates increased plant growth and productivity. The project is being done in Mexico in 7 hectares (15 acres) of high-tech greenhouses. You can hear peaceful music being played in a video on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/jQwfMzWGeT8>



“The vibrations picked up by the plant might speed up the protoplasmic movement in the cells. This stimulation then could affect the system and improve performance, such as the manufacture of nutrients that develop a stronger and better plant. Louder music, like rock, features greater pressure, which some people think might have a detrimental effect on plants. Imagine the effect of strong wind on a plant compared to a mild breeze.”

— [Mazlan, writing for Dengarden.com](https://www.dengarden.com)

What do you think? Could background music in your garden center help both plants and humans? Let us know.

About The Author

Tim Brown is the founder of Easy On Hold® and Brandi Music™. He is responsible for building the first streaming platform specifically for music and messages on hold.

Brandi Music™ is sold by Easy On Hold®
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