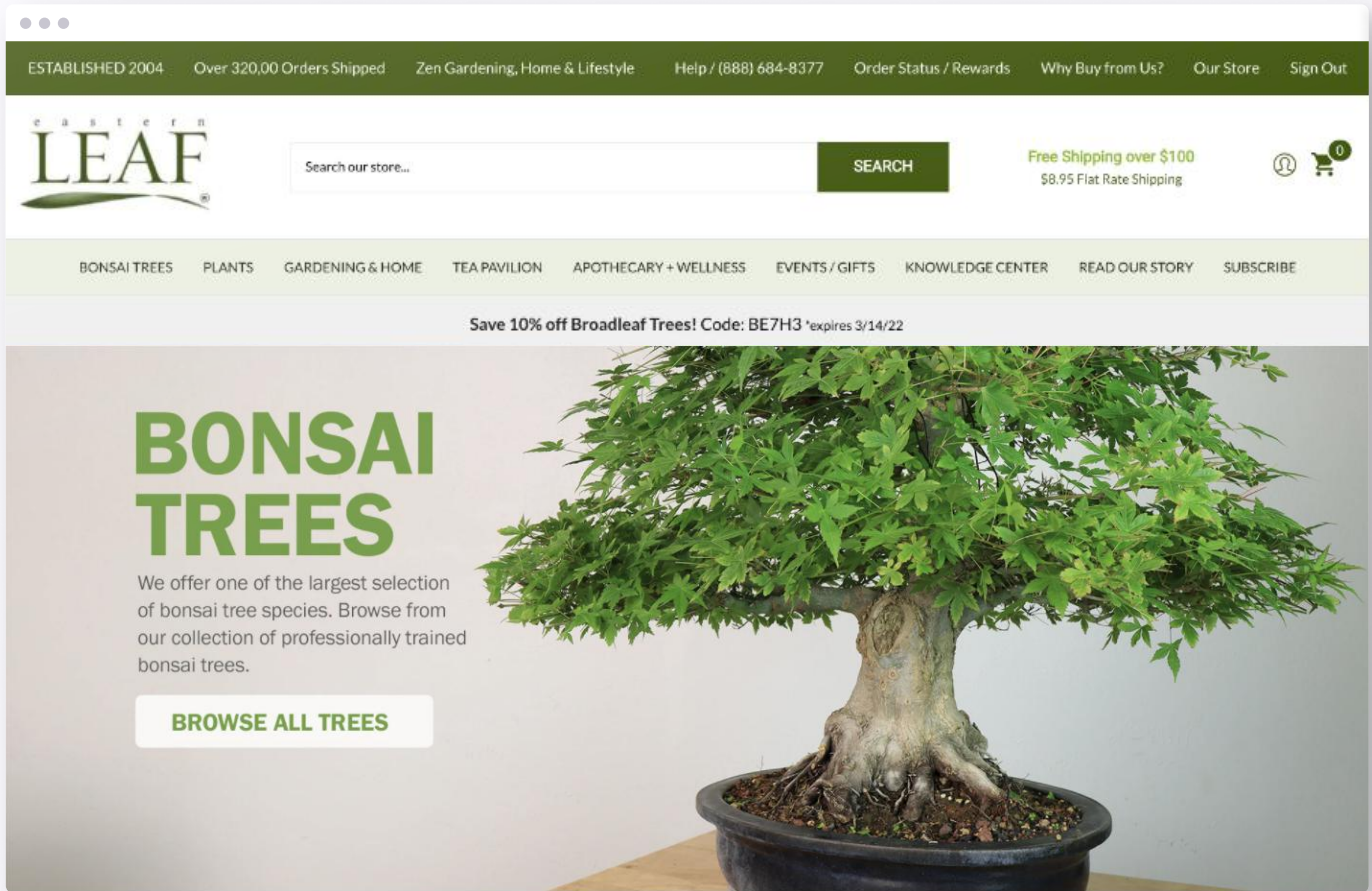


CASE STUDY

Eastern Leaf Boosts Site Performance and Simplifies Store Updates Using Site Designer



BUSINESS

Eastern Leaf

INDUSTRY

Gardening & Hobbies

FOUNDED

2004

LOCATION

Chino, CA

EMPLOYEES

25 Full-Time

WEBSITE

easternleaf.com

“Growth is in our business’s future. On the site, we plan to add more content and easier ways to get to that content through search, navigation, categories, and the homepage. Site Designer will make that easier to do because we can make edits quickly and easily.”



BACKGROUND

Sharing the Art of Zen Gardening

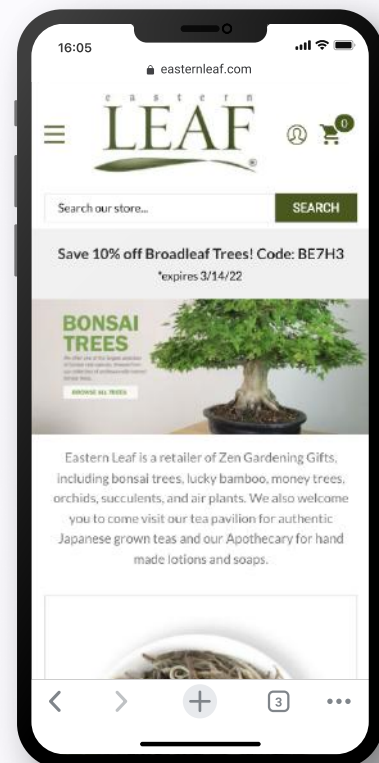
Jason Chan and his wife Renee started their business in 2004 in San Diego, California selling lucky bamboo and bonsai arrangements in farmer's markets. After a few months of this arrangement, they opened an online store to allow their loyal customers to order online—and to expand their business's footprint. Within a few years they had grown out of their garage and into a warehouse, moving to progressively larger warehouses over the ensuing years. Today, Eastern Leaf has established itself as an authority on all things zen gardening.

For Jason and Renee, the business has always centered on educating and sharing the art. "Bonsai is a new hobby for a lot of people, ranging from teenagers and kids all the way to people who are retired," states Jason. "Our site is catered to those people who are new to it, who are already interested in gardening or art." To expand their educational capabilities, they launched a [YouTube channel](#) in 2011 where they share information and tips to generate excitement about the hobby and position themselves as industry leaders.

THE CHALLENGE

Building a Better-Performing Store More Easily

Having used Volusion as their ecommerce provider for many years, Jason was familiar with the process for making site updates; however, as someone who was not a full-time coder, he found it to be a bit tricky. "We were having to use the live file editor a lot...you can make one mistake and clear out your whole site, which I've done in the past." With this in mind, Jason hoped for a simpler site-editing solution, as well as a way to improve the site's performance. Knowing that his site speed was affected by a large number of plugins, Jason hoped to resolve some of the workarounds he had employed so that the site would load more quickly and perform better for customers.

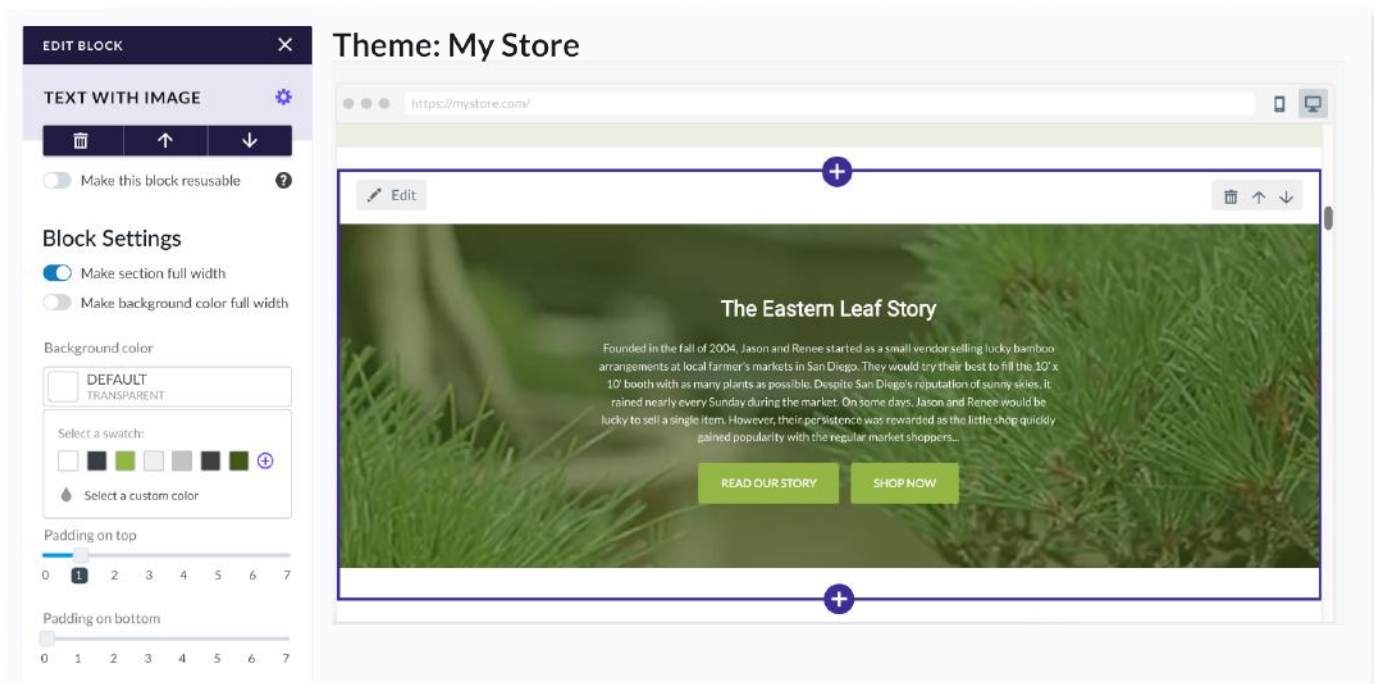


THE SOLUTION

Volusion's Site Designer

Volusion's newest product release, Site Designer, was the perfect fit for Jason's struggles. Powered by Volusion's innovative Element technology, this site builder allows store owners to easily create and update their storefront design, as well as add functionality and any necessary third-party integrations, with just a few clicks rather than having to write code. Using "blocks" of pre-built code, Site Designer allows store owners to make updates or changes for site components such as product review displays, integrated blogs, announcement bars, and much more. Jason knew this would be ideal as he was looking to move out of coding through Volusion's live file editor.

In addition to simplifying the site update and customization experience, upgrading to Site Designer would place the Eastern Leaf online store at the forefront of ecommerce tech. Site Designer's backend tech uses server-side rendering, automated image optimization, and more in addition to eliminating workarounds and plugins to make sites load faster. Its block-based architecture also allows users to customize stores by providing a gallery of regularly-updated blocks, making site building more flexible. Finally, Site Designer's easy-to-master nature requires little ramp-up time and lets users preview staged updates before being pushed live.



“I found the staging site to be really helpful. All I had to do was go in there and experiment and see if all my categories worked and how the products would look.”



RESULTS

Streamlined Site Updates and Enhanced Performance

Upgrading to Site Designer solved many of the challenges Jason faced. *"While our site was operating well enough, we felt like we'd reached the max threshold we could reach on the original Volusion platform. Now we'll be able to bring the quality higher just because of the capabilities of Site Designer and the newer template."* Here are a few of the advantages Jason and his team have enjoyed the most:

A Simpler Site Customization Experience

Jason has found using Site Designer to make edits and updates to the Eastern Leaf site much easier—and less dangerous—than having to code multiple areas of the site himself. This brightens his outlook for the future:

"Growth is in our business's future. On the site, we plan to add more content and easier ways to get to that content through search, navigation, categories, and the homepage. Site Designer will make that easier to do because we can make edits quickly and easily."

No Development Downtime

Before upgrading his old site to a new site built with Site Designer, Jason understandably wanted to play around with the feature—without sacrificing his customers' shopping experience in the meantime.

"I found the staging site to be really helpful. All I had to do was go in there and experiment and see if all my categories worked and how the products would look."

Meanwhile, the original Eastern Leaf site was up and running for shoppers, giving Jason all the time he needed to feel comfortable with his finished product in Site Designer.

Fast Implementation

Once the new site was ready to go live, Jason found that the act of replacing the old published site with the new Site Designer site happened quickly and seamlessly.

"When it flipped over, it was pretty smooth. It happened in about 15-20 minutes."

This fast turnaround time meant that the Eastern Leaf site spent minimal time offline and was able to start serving its customers a better site experience almost instantaneously.

A Better-Performing Storefront

Several months post-upgrade, Jason observes that Eastern Leaf's site is performing better than ever.

"I've noticed a significant increase in site speed, and we've also received a lot of positive customer feedback regarding the site. More importantly, I've also seen some increase in SEO placement both for new keywords and existing top keywords. The effects of the new site are very positive."