

SETTING UP A SMALL SCALE EXHIBITION IN A BOTANIC GARDEN

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ABSTRACT

The workshop aimed to cover the practicalities of mounting a small scale (low cost) exhibition at a botanic garden. It covered the planning for a particular audience, selecting and ordering the contents of the exhibit to communicate the carefully chosen objectives. Planning the layout and selecting the appropriate media was considered as was evaluating the effectiveness of the exhibit and possible funding problems.

RESUMEN

Este taller trata de cubrir en la práctica el montaje de una exposición a pequeña escala (bajo coste) en un jardín botánico. Incluye la planificación para una determinada audiencia, seleccionando y ordenando los contenidos de la exposición para comunicar los objetivos elegidos cuidadosamente. Se consideró la planificación de la disposición y la selección de los medios apropiados para evaluar la efectividad de la exposición y los posibles problemas de financiación.

INTRODUCTION

This workshop was designed to help delegates plan and execute a small, static display/exhibition in a botanic garden. Small here means a 3m square site (or its equivalent floor area). The workshop was conducted using participative techniques to draw ideas out of the participants.

AIMS OF SUCH AN EXHIBITION

The aims of such an exhibition might be to:

- 1 - bring in new visitors;
- 2 - publicize events and Friends organisations;
- 3 - give new information without altering the garden;

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- 4 - show interesting plants;
 - 5 - give information on conservation for example;
 - 6 - outline the history of the garden;
 - 7 - familiarize the visitor with the garden layout.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The potential audience can be divided into several categories:

- 1 - casual visitors to the garden, including tourists;
- 2 - interested visitors to the garden, including retired people & families;
- 3 - school children & teachers and students;
- 4 - interested enthusiasts, including amateur (home) gardeners;
- 5 - other professionals in your field;
- 6 - other professionals in related fields;
- 7 - non-visitors;
- 8 - politicians & potential sponsors;
- 9 - press and other media.

SUBJECT CHOICE

It is important that you choose a subject that you personally are well informed about and in which your garden is strong. This is especially important the first time that you attempt this sort

of project. Before embarking on the project you should try to contact a world or national expert who might check your final text. Possible topics for an exhibition included:

- 1 - history of plant introductions;
- 2 - plant products;
- 3 - plant adaptations to environment;
- 4 - conservation;
- 5 - activities within the garden;
- 6 - culture of specific plants.

This list is not in any way exhaustive.

SELECTING PLANTS & OTHER MATERIALS

There must be some thing familiar in the exhibit to catch the eye of the visitor. Once you have their attention then you can introduce less familiar plants. Other materials that can be incorporated into your display might be:

- 1 - leaflets or booklets;
- 2 - "touchies & feelies";
- 3 - interactive material;
- 4 - knowledgeable staff;
- 5 - audiovisuals;
- 6 - models;
- 7 - something very dramatic to catch the eye.

WRITING THE TEXT

This depends on the audience but it is very important to have as many people check the text before it is committed to a permanent display. This should include a sample of the target audience plus experts in the field to check the facts.

DESIGNING EXHIBIT

This is much better done in close collaboration with a professional grap-

hic designer. This will make the project far more expensive but the final result will be much more professional. Remember your public image is being projected by the exhibit.

EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS

If there is an information package or hand out then there may be a returnable card that you could put in with the literature.