

roots

Volume 12 • Number 1 • May 2015

Marketing to bring your garden to the masses



- The Legacy Of 'Cultivating Our Markets'
- Engaging the public through social media
- Creating innovative communications: signage inspired by the commercial sector
- New features!



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As part of BGCI's ongoing Communities in Nature initiative, Caring for your Community is a new manual for botanic garden professionals, based on a study of botanic gardens' work with and for their local and global public(s). The manual supports institutions in planning projects and writing effective proposals. Caring for your community includes case studies detailing how to address social issues and engage the community as well as audience research and funding projects. The manual is free to download at:

https://www.bgci.org/education/communities_in_nature/





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Forthcoming Issue

Volume 12 Number 2:
 Learning Spaces in Botanic Gardens

Cover Photo: Being inspired commercial signage is helping to engage wide audiences. This interpretation takes the theme of a café's specials (Johannesburg Botanical Garden)

Design: John Morgan, www.seascapedesign.co.uk

BGCI would like to thank the co-editors for their work in the production of Roots

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Roots is published by **Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI)**. It is published twice a year. Membership is open to all interested individuals, institutions and organisations that support the aims of BGCI.

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BGCI is a worldwide membership organisation established in 1987. Its mission is to mobilise botanic gardens and engage partners in securing plant diversity for the well-being of people and the planet. BGCI is an independent organisation registered in the United Kingdom as a charity (Charity Reg No 1098834) and a company limited by guarantee, No 4673175. BGCI is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation in the USA and is a registered non-profit organisation in Russia.

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(Meadowlark Botanical Gardens)

FIRST WORD: IS THERE A ROLE FOR MARKETING IN BOTANIC GARDENS?



Face to face marketing: During the 2014 Singapore Garden Festival, NParks' representatives approached passersby to spread awareness of their UNESCO bid and gain public support for the gardens. Botanic Gardens (NParks/Singapore Botanic Gardens)

Marketing is a concept that originates from the business sector and is closely linked with advertising. Kotler and Keller (2006) define it as 'an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders'. Many botanic gardens have developed marketing activities either by establishing a distinct department within their organisation (which applies to gardens with a lot of resources) or by integrating marketing responsibilities to positions that responsible for communications, PR or even education.

Marketing has been adopted by the museum sector (including botanic gardens) as it offers theory, tools, and skills that enable them to increase audiences, build relationships with stakeholders, and increase revenue streams (Kotler, Kotler and Kotler, 2008). Many professionals perceive its role as predominantly focused on bringing in paying visitors, which is crucial in times when museums face decline in public funds and are impacted by a global financial crisis. Black (2005) suggests redefining marketing's role as 'the first stage in engaging your target audience with your site and its collections' and looking at how marketing approaches can be inclusive in order to reach broader

audiences. Audience segmentation, is a tool that provides data which breaks down audiences into groups, often based on demographics, geography, socio-economics as well as interests and motivation for visiting. Based on the data gardens can develop targeted approaches to attract and satisfy both current visitors and non-visiting sections of the population.

In this issue of *Roots* case studies from three continents highlight different aspects of the value of marketing in botanic gardens, useful to those seeking to attract more visitors and ensuring the benefits of botanic gardens are reached by a wider part of the population.



A thematic approach: This activity represents the incineration of drugs as part of Wuhan Botanical Garden's work on drug control (Ms. Changli Chen)

This applies also to gardens with a strong scientific focus that aspire to communicate their science to the public.

Neil Gerlowski from Jardin Botánico de Vallarta Jalisco in Mexico narrates how TripAdvisor, photo exhibits at the airport and developing a relationship with the local tourism bureau and other botanic gardens can boost the visibility of a garden. In Meadowlark Botanical Gardens in Virginia, USA a strong marketing strategy has been developed to engage with Title I schools that cater for students at risk of academic failure and living at or near poverty. According to Keith Tomlinson, Jules Maloney and Carolyn Ramwell, Schools from underserved audiences need a more targeted approach in terms of promoting/advertising the educational offer a garden has that is relevant and beneficial for their students.

Singapore Botanic Gardens, which is already a very popular destination, uses social media as a prime marketing tool to promote heritage, biodiversity, the plant collections and events rather than to raise awareness of the existence of the garden. Ada Davis and Emmalyn Lai provide ideas and tips on how to use facebook to engage the public and achieve two-way communication. Similarly, as a way to encourage science tourism, Wuhan Botanical Garden uses digital and traditional marketing tools that link the garden with the government, communities and enterprises.

For gardens that are free of charge such as the Botanical Gardens of Johannesburg in Africa marketing in the form of signage is used to ensure that the daily users of the site, runners, dog walkers and picnickers understand that their site is not just a nice park but an institution of education, research and conservation.

In this issue of *Roots* we aspire to look at the value of marketing in botanic gardens with a fresh eye so that professionals will not perceive it as solely commercial in purpose but rather as a tool that supports



A targeted approach: Meadowlark Botanical Garden specifically design fieldtrips for underserved schools (Meadowlark Botanical Gardens)

botanic gardens to fulfil their mission. We also invite our readers to look at *Roots*, with its new features, with a fresh eye. We no longer provide translation of the abstracts and resources in Spanish and French, but do offer a new element that celebrates an inspirational professional that contributes to public engagement with plants. We have reduced the number of resources to provide more in-depth information on why particular books and educational materials are recommended for use in gardens. We hope you will find the changes worthwhile and that you will provide us your feedback through this on-line questionnaire:

We look forward to hearing from you.

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CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS TO BRING INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS TO VALLARTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

Without government funding or endowments for its support, the Vallarta Botanical Garden (VBG), just outside of Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico, fully relies upon the contributions of visitors and members. Staff and volunteers at this progressive young garden connect with new visitors through a powerful marketing presence including a monthly magazine, *The Leaflet*. One of the VBG's less conventional but highly effective marketing accomplishments includes partnering with their regional airport for an orchid photo gallery along the corridor through which all international arrivals pass. These photos prominently feature the VBG's branding and help attract many new visitors. The VBG also collaborates with its "sister city garden" in Santa Barbara, California for cross-promotion and parallel events including a "botanic BEER garden day". This draws in new visitors, especially young adults, to learn about plants.



The Vallarta Conservatory of Orchids and Native plants (Krysią Jędrzejewska-Szmek)

They say “sex sells”. Alcohol advertisements with white sandy beaches also have a reputation for catching one’s eye. Botanical gardens may be up against some stiff competition for grabbing people’s attention, but the products we deliver—stunningly scenic guest experiences, interactive environmental education, insights into cutting edge research and conservation, and much more—merit powerful marketing that brings in crowds and leaves them begging for more. With all of the sophisticated marketing methods we have to choose from, we can’t forget the power of the personal touch in appealing to others to advertise for us. A simple modification to business cards can help better tap into this power.

At the Vallarta Botanic Garden, we’ve noted that nearly half of our visitors either find out about us through TripAdvisor.com or read about us on our website before visiting.

With this in mind we redesigned our business cards to include a TripAdvisor review reminder and a blank space for staff and volunteers to write their names. By themselves these cards are nearly meaningless, but each time a representative of our garden connects with a guest and writes in their name these are transformed into tools that have placed us as the #5 attraction in Puerto Vallarta out of nearly 200 “things to do” on the TripAdvisor site. Instead of reviews just inspired by our garden, we now mostly receive reviews directly inspired by interactions with our staff and volunteers.

First impressions are important too and for most Puerto Vallarta tourists this includes their walk through the airport. When our regional airport was looking to makeover their international arrival corridor we were only too happy to create an orchid photo gallery which prominently features our branding. Of course, it certainly helped that managers of the airport first came to visit the garden and fell in love with the place. They clearly saw the power of an emerging garden tourism market to revitalize Puerto Vallarta’s reputation with international travellers.



Folkloric Dancers in the Vallarta Conservatory of Orchids and Native Plants at Vallarta Botanical Garden (Neil Gerlowski)

If your garden doesn’t yet have a relationship with your local airport, stop by and invite some of their staff for a special employee’s day so that they can get to know you.

Instead of visitors leaving your town asking themselves, “I wonder if they had a garden there?” they’ll be checking into their hotels asking, “How do I get to the garden?”

Our monthly magazine, The Leaflet, has spread the reach of our promotion and, quite literally “taken off”. Alaska Airlines recently posted one of our events, The Vallarta Flower and Garden Show, in their in-flight magazine. All of our work to create a beautiful and content-rich monthly publication finds its reward when other media use it as a source for their own content. Through relationships that we’ve fostered with several of our locally-based printed media publishers we now routinely

find reprinted full articles directly as we write them with complete and proper credits. This is done at no charge to us.

Another potential publicity champion for you to win over is your local tourism bureau. How do they brand your area? Is garden tourism part of that branding yet? Making friends with tourism folks is easy because they love people and they love to visit different places. Invite them to visit your garden during their next “fam trip”. In case you’re not yet hip with the lingo, “fam” is short for “familiarization” and these trips are usually offered for free or a reduced cost to travel agents, consultants, etc, with the intention that they will promote your destination. These special visitors don’t expect you to dust off the red carpet, but are happy for an opportunity to experience your garden as any guest would. If they are dazzled, they can bring in the hordes for you. Ask your most cheerful and welcoming staff and volunteers to give them a warm reception and offer to answer questions or follow up with anything that stumps them.

On my most recent trip to our local tourism bureau I noticed that the place was packed shoulder to shoulder with tourists (Puerto Vallarta can get quite busy in peak season!) and that our brochures there were lost in the shuffle among hundreds of others in giant stacks at waist height. I introduced myself to the new municipal tourism director, showed him a design for a beautiful new sign for our garden including a built-in brochure rack and asked if I could mount it to the wall at eye level. When he said yes, I called our printer the moment I walked out of their office. Our brochure now flies out of there faster than any other. There is always a creative solution to gaining more visibility and setting yourself apart from the competition.

Another way that we've caught the attention of our local tourism bureau is through awards we've received in garden tourism. The new International Garden Tourism Network is working to bridge the gap between the public garden industry and the tourism industry, promote garden tourism awards, and coordinate the efforts of regional conferences such as the North American Garden Tourism Conference, which representatives from our garden have attended. Participation in this network is a great way to introduce the work of your garden and may help for consideration of future awards. A small but important niche within our visitorship and strong support comes from our Sister City of Santa Barbara. The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden (SBBG) has become our Sister City Garden and we've been working to cross-promote each other's events for the interests of our interconnected communities. Our first activity within this partnership was arranging a travel exchange raffle to fundraise for our respective organizations. Additionally, we have extended reciprocal visitation benefits to our members.

This partnership has most recently led to the VBG scheduling a copy-cat version of the popular "Santa Barbara Botanic BEER Garden" in which a *cicerone** matches up local microbreweries with distinctive parts of the garden. In Santa Barbara this includes red ales paired with a grove of coastal redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*) and at the VBG it will involve Agave Maria Amber Ale being served amid native blue agaves (*Agave tequiliana*). The logic behind this event is

that people can form associations with gardens and their collections based on something they enjoy, in this case beer. Most don't primarily connect with gardens intellectually but rather through visual cues like drops of dew on delicate orchids, the scent of magnolia, and memories they've created with friends and family who have visited with them.

Events that can build memories and engage the taste buds can deepen the relationships people form with your garden.

There is much that even small gardens can do to deepen their impact in their communities and draw in more visitors. Our strategy engages our visitors, the tourism industry, and media to advertise for us for to create a collective impact. Over the last three years our visitation has increased by well over 25%, and our

membership revenue has gone up by roughly five times (also boosted by our new tiered membership system). Focusing on the essentials, which for us is earned revenue and strong member support, has made a huge impact on our financial condition giving us more capacity to expand our mission.

**Cicerone*: the beer industry's version of a sommelier, best known for expertise in wine pairings. This term is in memory of Roman philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BC – 43 BC) who once wrote "Si hortum in bibliotheca habes, nihil deerit." (If you have a garden and a library, you will want for nothing).

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Tillandsia jalisco monticola at the Vallarta Botanical Garden (Neil Gerlowski)

MARKETING FIELD TRIPS TO UNDERSERVED PUBLIC SCHOOLS: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

From 2012 to 2014 Meadowlark Botanical Gardens (MBG) initiated a marketing strategy with multiple Title I Schools in the suburban Washington DC region. Anticipating administrative challenges, MBG developed a marketing approach focused on teacher training, classroom enrichment, curricular coordination and financial assistance with transportation. The benefits of interacting with nature through physical activity and interpretation formed an overarching theme. This marketing strategy fostered teacher and student engagement while integrating long established conservation priorities.





Volgenay teacher training tour at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens (Meadowlark Botanical Gardens)

From 2012 to 2014, Meadowlark Botanical Gardens (MBG) initiated a marketing strategy with multiple Title I Schools in the suburban Washington DC region, through a grant from the Volgenau Foundation. Title I schools are defined when 40% or more of the students receive supplemental lunch programs and classroom instructional support. Annually this federally funded program provides over \$14 billion to 56,000 schools in the United States for students at risk of academic failure and living at or near poverty.

Anticipating administrative challenges, MBG developed a marketing approach focused on teacher training, classroom enrichment, curricular coordination and financial assistance with transportation. In addition, the psycho-social benefits of interacting with nature through physical activity and facilitated interpretation formed an overarching theme. This marketing strategy fostered teacher, parent and student engagement while integrating long established conservation priorities based on native plant conservation and river basin/ecoregion biogeography at MBG (Tomlinson, *et al.*, 2005).

Previously Title I schools made up less than 10% of our elementary and middle school visitation. This is due, in part, to the fact that Meadowlark is located in one of the wealthiest suburbs in the United States. However, the economic

geography of the greater region is diverse and represents notable household income variability. This is partly due to long-term, dynamic immigration trends in the region. It's not uncommon to have 30 or more languages spoken at a single Title I school.

Identifying needs and expectations of Title I schools

Student populations at Title I schools are frequently living in homes with limited financial resources and social mobility. Often a direct correlation in academic underperformance exists (Borman & D'Agostin, 1996).

The program focused on appealing to the unique organizational objectives of Title I schools. We took into account curricular and psycho-social strategies for academic success in these schools.

Fieldtrips reinforced classroom science curriculum and student socialization. Parents and teachers are expected to participate beyond class management. Parents attend fieldtrips as chaperones; their presence is a perfect opportunity to encourage return visits with the entire family. In this process we strived to combine formal and informal learning steeped in the aesthetic medium of the garden.

In marketing these programs, Meadowlark staff considered the students and schools from a holistic perspective, including staff support to encourage field trips. We identified a need for additional planning support for Title I educators. The combination of demands in Title I schools makes for a challenging teaching environment. Many of the students speak English as a second language. This, in turn, leads to learning challenges associated with text and instructional material. In addition, as in all Virginia schools, teachers must follow a curriculum dictated by state administered Standards of Learning (SOLs).



Volgenau teacher training tour (Meadowlark Botanical Gardens)



Young children and their guardians explore the gardens (Meadowlark Botanical Gardens)

We marketed teacher engagement as an essential element from the beginning, in combination with the distribution of ideas; mainly the idea that conserving plant diversity is central to human well-being at the regional, national and global level. As a result, several teacher workshops were held at the garden. These focused on Meadowlark's Potomac Valley Native Plant Collection. Thus, the topics included floristics, river basin geography, clean water access and biodiversity conservation in general.

Collectively our strategy as a public garden for this program focused on the unmet needs of Title I schools. These include: exposure to a high quality natural setting; support with integrating SOL mandated science curriculum, teacher training and actively celebrating the cultural and linguistic diversity of the students.

Integrating the particular garden experience to the underserved audience

In the Washington, D.C. Region, most Title I students are exposed to nature in a highly urbanized setting. City parks and recreation facilities near Title I schools typically feature paved ball courts, poorly maintained turf and exotic or invasive trees. These areas often receive less care and funding in municipal budgets. We specifically marketed MBG to teachers as an exceptional space, both aesthetically and biologically. Moreover, we integrated

the natural science SOLs into fieldtrip topics. This provided teachers with a curricular foundation on which to launch classroom natural science lessons.

As a public space, Meadowlark embodies several programmatic assets; large ornamental collections, focused conservation collections, three lakes and a visually engaging topography. We knew the garden would be appealing to Title I students and staff as a carefully managed intriguing landscape.

Ideally, the emotive quality of the garden has a foundational appeal for all visitors especially underserved youth.

This broad appeal was a fundamental marketing point in recruiting fieldtrips. Any garden engaging underserved audiences will need to market its particular aesthetic and educational attractions. Ultimately, the gardens and collections must be interpreted as a remarkable open air classroom. This is a baseline for effective marketing to populations with limited economic and social assets.

Once the aesthetic theme is established, collections based education follows. Meadowlark conservation collections are specifically developed to educate visitors

about regional plant diversity as related to local natural history. Accordingly, we work to interpret landforms, ecoregions, surface geology and basic ecology (Tomlinson & Tomlinson, 2010). This approach works well for elementary SOL objectives focused on natural science topics with a local focus. Our experience suggests the classic hands-on experiential approach to nature interpretation is a strong driver of cognitive prowess in underserved students. Acceptance of the outdoor recreation-cognition connection has grown considerably in the last decade (Louv, 2012).

Additional experiences that market your gardens mission and resources

With the educational aesthetic and cognitive objectives established as marketing priorities, we also consider the basic tenants of child wellbeing and physical activity. Most fieldtrips at the MBG will involve walking about three kilometers. The 38 hectare property features both paved and mulched trails. Students negotiate these trails at variable walking speeds with interspersed breaks for interpretation. We actively encourage running across our "Great Lawn." In addition, children are allowed to roll down an adjacent hillside. These activities lend a discreet yet robust physical element to the day's activities. Several studies clearly illustrate the benefits of physical exertion and increased learning potential (Rauner *et al.*, 2013). Every garden will have differing resources that engender physical activity as part of the fieldtrip experience, but the specific inclusion of such activities is a strong marketing tool.

Identifying ways to reach potential audiences

MBG's grant funded program was specifically tailored to Title I schools and educators. Funding allowed teachers to earn a modest stipend for attending a two day workshop.

Email, Facebook, websites and traditional mail were used to market these specific workshops. Personal contact with school Principals was also useful.



Engaging the next generation with plants (Meadowlark Botanical Gardens)

Teachers are encouraged to work with MGB staff to foster a continuum of formal and informal learning collaboration bringing the garden and school together. We also offer school visits to supplement teacher led activities. This can include developing schoolyard gardens.

While attending the workshop, teachers were given a newly published map of the Potomac River Basin designed specifically for classroom use. The map emphasizes the physical geography of the river basin and highlights the areas of geologic and botanical interest. Grant funding also paid for travel expenses from the schools to the garden. This was a particularly welcome aspect of the grant as fieldtrip funding is cut first when budget shortfalls occur. Collectively, these incentives proved to be a highly effective marketing strategy for bringing groups to MBG.

Audience satisfaction and post program evaluation

While Title I students are at the heart of the program, teachers are the best formal evaluators of the experience. Our post trip evaluations solicit comments in three specific areas:

1. Fieldtrip Planning Process – reservations, pre-trip materials provided, friendliness and responsiveness of staff and explanation of program content.

2. The Program – quality of content and activities, content relevance for students and SOLs, students' interest throughout the fieldtrip and overall satisfaction level.

3. The Educators – the assigned interpreter's preparedness, relevant knowledge and ability to engage students throughout the visit.

Increasing the visitation of underserved audiences and providing meaningful educational experiences require more planning and outreach in the marketing process.

Marketing strategies will by necessity vary from one institution to another based on spatial assets, collections, staffing and specific school needs.

While these programs are potentially attractive to donors, funding should be included in annual operating budgets when possible. Ideally, social relevance for botanical gardens will increase with programmatic diversity and effective marketing. From conception to execution reaching underserved audiences is a unique challenge. Public gardens that rise to these challenges offer an important service to both individuals and groups. Effective marketing need not be a commercial enterprise; it is a social contract endowed by the recognition

that every person counts, regardless of social or economic standing. This integrated approach to marketing benefits students, teachers and gardens mutually.

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ENGAGING THE PUBLIC THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA EXPERIENCES FROM SINGAPORE BOTANIC GARDENS



Visitors often turn up by the thousand for the free weekend concerts at Singapore Botanic Gardens. (NParks / Singapore Botanic Gardens)

For the past two years, Singapore Botanic Gardens was voted #1 park in Asia on TripAdvisor. With a history spanning more than 150 years it has long been popular with locals and tourists. With the exception of the National Orchid Garden, entry is free. Thus, we see high numbers of visitors. This leaves us in a position to focus our marketing efforts on public engagement and promotion of our heritage, biodiversity and collections, rather than trying to raise awareness of our existence. Social media is an important component of our marketing strategy. Through it, we share varied content to capture interest, and organise contests to keep the online community vibrant. Our engagement via social media also transcends the virtual world to result in face-to-face interaction with members of our online community. For example, we held a photography workshop for regular Facebook contributors, which became one of the most successful engagement activities with our online community to date.

The Singapore Botanic Gardens was established in 1859. This was early in Singapore's history; only 40 years after it was founded as a trading post for the British East India Company. In many ways, it matured alongside the development of the island, enduring pivotal changes such as the Japanese occupation of WWII and independence in 1965, and as a result is part of Singapore's national identity. For nearly as long as the Gardens has existed, it has been a vibrant green space beloved by the local community and a key site for visitors from overseas.

The Gardens is managed by Singapore's National Parks Board (NParks), and is considered a key component of Singapore's vision to become a City in a Garden. NParks offers the Gardens as a public space with free entry to all areas but the National Orchid Garden, where there is a small charge. Thus, we are not dependent upon admission fees to cover our operations and maintenance costs, allowing us to target our marketing efforts toward engaging the public to promote our biodiversity and collections as well as increasing visitorship. We are currently awaiting the verdict on a bid to become Singapore's first UNESCO World Heritage Site and many of our current engagement efforts are focused on generating enthusiasm for the bid and pride in our heritage.

[Did You Know?]

Did you know that the Ginger Garden in Singapore Botanic Gardens has a collection of edible ginger, ornamental plants and some rare gingers as well? The best time to visit the Ginger Garden would be in the morning or early afternoon, when the gingers look their best. Don't forget to look up as some gingers are perched on trees or grow in rock crevices. 😊

#singaporebotanicgardens #sbgdidyouknow #gingergarden #sbg



5,112 people reached

Boost Post

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Large numbers of tourists explore the grounds every day (NParks / Singapore Botanic Gardens)

Our 'Did You Know?' posts and eye catching photographs help to capture the interest of our online audience. (NParks / Singapore Botanic Gardens)

Our more traditional marketing methods include actively reaching out to the local community to promote the Gardens during various events organised by NParks. We also print posters to advertise our programmes, talks and workshops. These are visible around the Gardens' grounds and its periphery. To attract visitors from further afield, we work with the Singapore Tourism Board to market the Gardens through its platforms, and subscribe to the Association of Singapore Attractions, which distributes our brochures to various tourist sites. At the same time, we are reaping the benefits of non-traditional marketing avenues such as consumer-driven third-party websites like TripAdvisor, which rated us the #1 park in Asia in both 2013 and 2014.

Perhaps the most powerful marketing tool that we are currently using is social media and we are finding ourselves increasingly focusing our efforts in this area.

Of the various social media outlets available, we have found that Facebook is an effective channel; allowing us to reach the greatest number of 'netizens'.

We also like its design interface, which allows us flexibility in the methods that we use to engage and interact with the online community. When we started the Facebook page dedicated to the Gardens themselves in early 2013, we had two years previous experience managing a Facebook page for NParks, so the platform was familiar to us and we were able to tap into an already-existing audience. This allowed us to establish a fan base quickly. The Gardens' Facebook page is managed by staff from NParks' Communications and Community Engagement team. We post daily, and our content is a collaborative effort, with contributions coming from various staff across the gardens, including from our education, visitor services and horticulture teams. We write our posts in a fun and engaging way, with headlines



Facebook is proving a wonderful tool to promote our heritage to the public. (NParks / Singapore Botanic Gardens)

like 'Did you know?' to capture interest and share facts about the Gardens. The subject of our updates varies and ranges from posts about our biodiversity and heritage to advertisements for upcoming events, exhibitions and workshops.

Nearly all of our posts are accompanied by a photograph. Naturally, we have found that higher quality images tend to generate greater online enthusiasm. To build up a collection of good quality photographs, we worked with a group of professional photographers from the community to capture wonderful images featuring the Gardens' iconic landmarks and landscape. These images are not only used on our Facebook page, but also exhibited at strategic locations around the Gardens. When assessing the effectiveness of our social media efforts, we consider the quality and content of the public commentary generated by our posts. We find comments to be largely positive and often entail people sharing personal experiences of the various flora, fauna or heritage features that we highlight. We value these comments as indicators of how effectively we are engaging the public with biodiversity, our collections and heritage.

We utilise Facebook Insights to gain information about the diversity of our audience.

[Heritage of the Gardens]

Records suggest this Saga tree (*Adenanthera pavonina*) dates from 1882. It survived World War II and the Japanese Occupation due to the invaders' esteem for objects of scientific value. From its location on the slope of the Bandstand Hill, it would have stood by prisoners-of-war as they slaved away building the brick steps leading to the Plant House. It is comforting to think that the captive soldiers might have found respite in the shade of this tree.

Learn more about the Saga tree on NParks - Let's Make Singapore Our Garden Flora & Fauna Web here: <http://bit.ly/1Bi9E0z>, and find out more about our Heritage Tree from the 'Tall Tales: Singapore Botanic Gardens Heritage Trees Trail Guide', available at the Gardens Shop @ Nassim Gate, Library Shop and major bookstores at \$9.50.

#heritageofthegardensbg #singaporebotanicgardens #sbg #heritage #history #talltales #heritagetrees #sbgheritetrees #florafaunaweb

We sometimes receive comments that highlight our shared history with the local community. (NParks / Singapore Botanic Gardens)



In September 2014, we held a photography workshop and guided tour for our Facebook fans who regularly contribute photographs and commentary on our posts. (NParks / Singapore Botanic Gardens)

These analytics tell us that our online fan base comprises mostly women (roughly 61%) and the majority of our audience belongs to the 25–44 age group. In 2014, our overall ‘reach’ (the number of times that people would have had our posts appear on their news feeds) was 12,044,507 – a dramatic increase from 2013, when it was 1,553,865. We also know that our Facebook page attracts audiences from many different countries and, although the majority of our fan base (76%) is in Singapore, significant numbers come from other Southeast Asian countries (with the greatest number of fans based in the Philippines), the West, including the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia.

We also use the general metrics available through Facebook’s Page Insights to assess the popularity of our content in terms of the number of people who have liked, commented on or shared our posts. Using these metrics, we have been able to determine that our most popular posts are generally those that advertise free events and activities. We have also experimented with online contests and competitions, and have had great success with this approach. In fact, one of our most popular posts to date was a

contest in which we asked our audience a simple question for a chance to win a gift certificate to one of our restaurants – the online response was overwhelming, generating more than 300 comments (much higher than our average of six comments per post!).

While it is clear that our posts are creating enthusiasm amongst our online audience, it is less clear how well our social media efforts are motivating people to transcend the virtual world and engage with us in person. We use bitly.com to shorten our event URLs, which we then include in our Facebook event posts. This service also allows us to track the number of clicks that these URLs receive. Although we are not certain how many of the people that click on these links actually turn up for the events (particularly the free ones), the click-on statistics tell us that our promotion efforts through Facebook are resulting in increased awareness about the events.

So far, our most tangible success in face-to-face engagement with our virtual audience has come through an initiative to reach out directly to targeted members of our Facebook fan base. We contacted the people who most frequently

contribute photographs or comments, to thank them for their support and extended a personal invitation to attend a free photography workshop and guided tour of the Gardens in September 2014. The uptake was good and those who attended gave very positive feedback. The participants enjoyed the workshop and learnt a lot about the Gardens. We hope that these ‘netizens’ will be supportive of the Gardens and our initiatives in the future.

What we have learnt so far is that Facebook is an extremely effective marketing tool for us to promote our biodiversity, collections and heritage, and increase awareness about our events.

By posting eye-catching photographs and varied content in a fun and engaging way, we have established a vibrant and active online community, the members of which can be coaxed into in-person interactions through creative means. Moving forward, we will continue to experiment with different ways to interact with our Facebook audience, both virtually and in-person and investigate how we can better utilise social media to motivate the public to support the Gardens and Singapore’s transformation into a City in a Garden.

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THE LEGACY OF ‘CULTIVATING OUR MARKETS’: THE LARGEST PROJECT EVER UNDERTAKEN BY CANADIAN BOTANICAL GARDENS

Make a substantial improvement in public interest, visitorship and support: These were the objectives of ‘Cultivating Our Markets’ (COM), the largest initiative ever undertaken by Canada’s botanical gardens. This \$1.3 million (CAD), two-year (2012/14) project was funded by a grant from the Department of Canadian Heritage, matched by in-kind contributions from participating botanical gardens and arboreta. COM created tools with which to cultivate potential markets and provided an opportunity for botanical gardens to play a lead role for Canada’s entire garden experience sector. COM also confirmed Canadian Heritage’s recognition of the social, cultural and environmental role played by gardens in communities across the country. The Canadian Garden Council looks forward to growing this market in the years to come.



Having fun at the Toronto Botanical Garden’s Summer Day Camp for kids (Janet Davis)

The ability to attract visitors possessed by Canadian botanical gardens, arboreta and related institutions based on collections of living plants (hereafter collectively 'botanical gardens') was defined as the most significant factor affecting their financial sustainability and social relevance.

While hard data was scarce to come by, according to the most recent Tourist Activity & Motivation Study (TAMS) conducted by provincial and federal tourism ministries (Statistics Canada, 2006) "visiting a botanical garden, or garden themed attraction is among the top 10 things that the mature, affluent Canadian and American traveller wants to do while on an overnight trip in Canada of more than one night". Factor in the fact that gardening was cited as one of Canada's most popular outdoor leisure activities (Anon, 2006) and excerpts from Richard Benfield's 2013 book *Garden Tourism* suggesting that, "as baby boomers age, garden tourism in Canada is on the rise for the next decade," one would be correct in assuming that botanical gardens are popular cultural destinations for the Canadian public.

The Canadian Botanical Conservation Network (CBCN) recognized that the number of visitors attending and supporting Canada's botanical gardens was not robust when compared to the United States or other countries.

Perhaps because the public is largely unaware of, or ambivalent about, botanical gardens' roles as keepers of specialist knowledge, exemplars of horticultural skills and know-how, promoters of environmental sustainability and protectors of plant diversity. While all that is important, it should never be forgotten that the primary reason the majority of people visit botanical gardens is because of their beauty and their ability to provide a peaceful respite from the hustle and bustle world.

Whatever the reason, it was recognized that Canada's botanical gardens were facing a set of common challenges that were directly affecting their social and economic sustainability.



In the heart of the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden, the 310m long tree top canopy walkway hangs from huge Douglas firs, Red cedars and Grand firs, many of which are over 100 years old. (University of British Columbia Botanical Garden)

Enter the COM project

With the objectives of making substantial improvements to public interest, visitation and support for the botanical gardens of Canada, the CBCN fostered the 'Cultivating Our Markets' (COM) project – the largest collective initiative ever undertaken by Canada's botanical gardens.

COM's \$1.3 million (CAD) budget was funded by a grant from the Federal Department of Canadian Heritage's

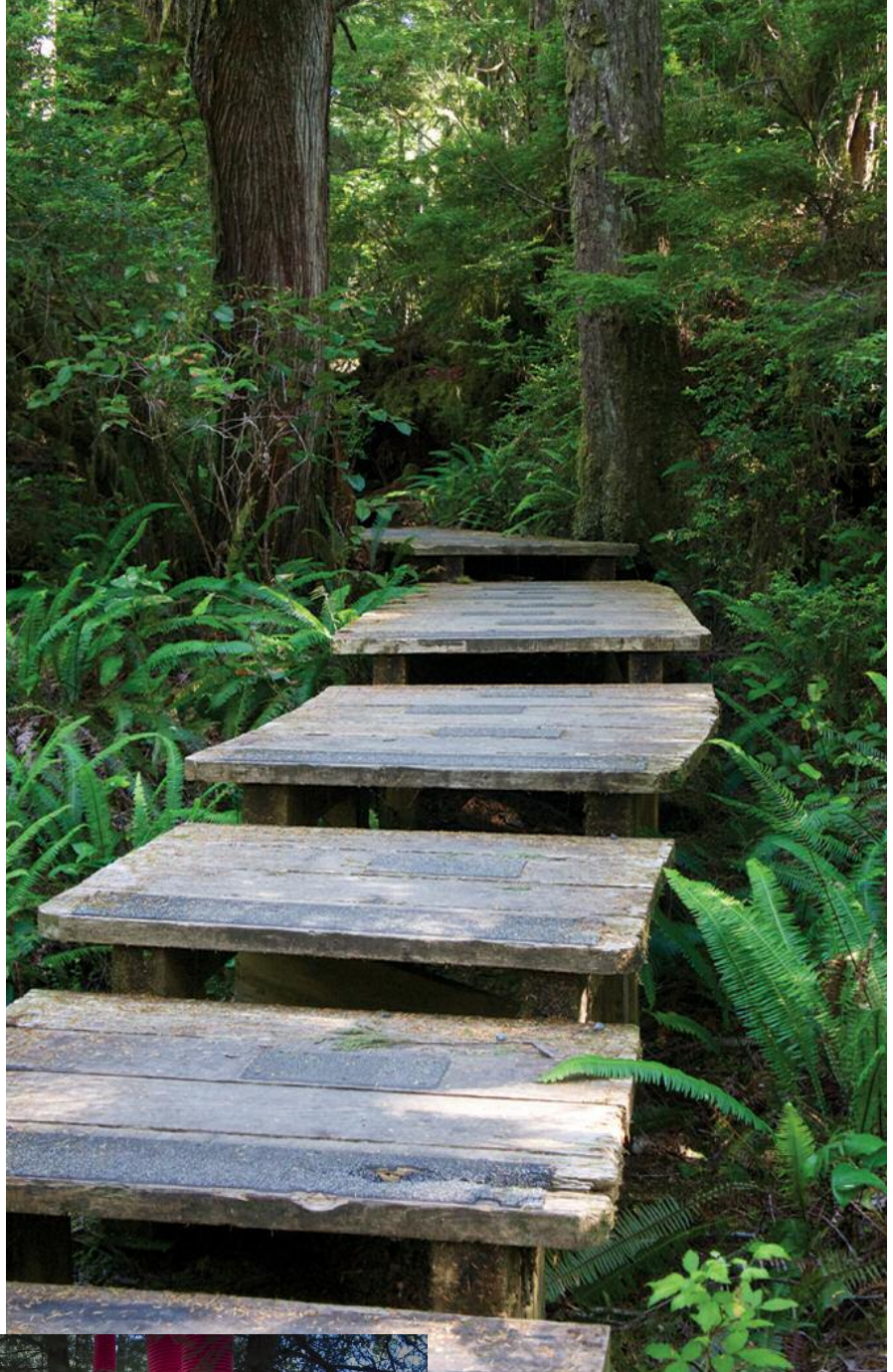
Cultural Initiatives Fund, matched by in-kind contributions from the 17 participating botanical gardens and arboreta as well as two industry sector associations – Canadian Nursery Landscape Association (CNLA) and the Canadian Garden Council. Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG), Canada's largest botanical garden and home of the CBCN took on the role of project lead for this two-year (2012 to 2014) initiative.

In order to achieve the project objectives it was necessary to: examine present marketing and business models; explore

new ways to attract additional visitors and supporters; develop a program of engaging and exciting marketing messages and tools which would form the basis for local, regional and national campaigns; and create recommendations on how to brand/promote botanical gardens as a significant component of Canada's cultural and tourism sector.

COM began with two major components:

1. The first comprehensive tourism market/capacity analysis and brand study for the botanical gardens of Canada. Including:
 - Developing, implementing and analyzing member, visitor, staff, volunteer and general population surveys across all botanical gardens to track interest and construct a baseline of support;
 - Analyzing research and survey results to identify present and potential visitor metrics, key performance indicators and best practices;
 - Proposing post-project tracking measures for attendance and revenue
2. Research into botanical garden networks in the US and other countries in order to identify best practice in marketing and outreach which could be applied in Canada on a national level.



Reford Gardens/Jardins de Métis's 'Pink Punch' delighted kids and adults alike. It is a 2014 Festival installation created by New York City architect Nicholas Croft and landscape designer Michaela MacLeod (Martin Bond)

Explore the paths and boardwalks of Tofino Botanical Gardens, one of the jewels of north Vancouver Island's Clayoquot Sound.

Evolved thinking from the Chimps

With survey data and collected information in hand, the communications firm Chimpanzee devised a plan that would address the COM objectives.

What was needed was an organized, novel approach to developing and sharing messaging to both internal and external audiences that all botanical gardens would find appropriate to their missions, roles and offerings. Having shared, recognizable elements in the marketing repertoires of large and small botanical gardens, regardless of individual budgets, would significantly



A total of one million visitors, a historic record for summer traffic, enjoyed the fabulous Mosaïcultures Internationales de Montréal exhibit at the spectacular Montréal Botanical Garden in the summer of 2013.

enhance the Canadian public's perceptions about the roles and values of botanical gardens and provide incentives to increase visitation.

In terms familiar to marketing professionals, botanical gardens across Canada appeared to lack 'brand recognition.'

In this context, a brand is not a logo or a slogan, but a promise of value or a set of associations that are recognized by a segment of the public and contribute to their interest in taking up what the institution has to offer.

Long story short, and after much consultation with, and review by the project partners, the Chimps created a veritable treasure chest of tools with which the partners could market themselves under a common brand. These included: a compilation of national and international market research and best practices, a brand map and guidelines, a brand logo, a colourful life

campaign, a proposed marketing plan and a website – gardenscanada.ca – dedicated to showcasing the COM partners, Canada's botanical gardens. Supplementing the website, the Chimps also produced a 'digital toolkit' that included: social media tools, tips on driving traffic to one's website, a key to understanding web analytics and customizable posters, banners and advertising templates.

The website went live 22 months into the 24 month project. It and the digital tool kit were a terrific outcome of an extremely valuable project. However, given that the 'season' for Canada's gardens is May to October, the real impact will be felt in the 2015 garden-visiting season and in the years to come.

The COM legacy

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is now in place between the RBG and the Canadian Garden Council for the transfer of all the legacy assets of the COM project to the Council to use in support of its activities, including integration into the Canada's Garden Route website.

Managed by the Council, Canada's Garden Route (www.canadagardenroute.ca) contains the most comprehensive listing of the country's garden experiences, including botanical gardens, and is a valuable garden tourism resource for Canadians and garden-loving visitors from around the world.

The Canadian Garden Council is currently exploring another project with the Department of Canadian Heritage. The premise for this new initiative is that now we have 'cultivated' the botanical garden sector, let us 'grow' it and all public garden experiences. Growing Our Markets (GOM) will be all about connecting gardens to their communities and connecting communities to the gardens in their midst in order to fully integrate gardens into the cultural fabric of the community and the country.

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A STUDY INTO THE MARKETING SYSTEM OF SCIENCE TOURISM AT WUHAN BOTANICAL GARDEN, CHINESE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES



New media platforms are used to engage visitors of all ages (Wuhan Botanical Garden)

Wuhan Botanical Garden, CAS, uses a public oriented approach to develop products to encourage science tourism and expand its marketing channels. It has used its comprehensive marketing system to develop a Four Season Flower Show and themed activities with coherent branding as well as investing in advertising to build a communication network and expand cooperation with the government, communities and enterprises.

Introduction

Built in 1956 and covering an area of 70 hectares, Wuhan Botanical Garden, CAS has collected approximately 10,000 species of plants and become the host of the most diverse plant and germplasm resources in Central China. It also possesses the largest collection of aquatic plants and Actinidia germplasm in the world as well as being a national research base for ex-situ conservation of plant resources. Focusing

on three themes—plants and the living environment, biosafety and water and human health, Wuhan Botanical Garden makes full use of its resources and talents to launch popular science education. Due to its innovation and development, it has also been deemed a National Popular Science Education Base, National Science and Technology Education Base for Adolescents, and Popular Science Education Base and Environmental Education Base for Hubei Province and Wuhan City.



Chrysanthemum seedlings are given out in the local community (Wuhan Botanical Garden)

The marketing system of science tourism of Wuhan Botanical Garden

Wuhan Botanical Garden relies on a marketing approach that highlights the connection between its botanical resources and research and popular science.

Aimed at both domestic and overseas tourism markets, Wuhan Botanical Garden has developed science tourism products and expanded its marketing channels.

This has included developing a Four Season Flower Show and themed activity brand as well as investing in advertising to build a communication network and expand cooperation with the government, communities and enterprises. These activities form the basis of the garden's comprehensive marketing system, which helps the garden encourage science tourism, boost its reputation and expands its social influence.

Developing products for the Four Season Flower Show and cultural activities for science tourism

Based on the characteristics of the garden's environment and collection, Wuhan Botanical Garden carefully planned its Four Season Flower Show around the theme: "Enjoy tulips in spring, lotus and water lily in summer, chrysanthemum in autumn and tropical orchids in winter". Wuhan Botanical



Chrysanthemum displays help link plants and culture (Wuhan Botanical Garden)

Garden has developed displays of specific species for the seasonal flower shows. Based on seasonal changes and market needs, the garden also develops flower shows on other themes such as, the World's Strange Plant Show, Xishuangbanna Tropical Rainforest Plant Show and Space Melon and Fruit Show, to engage various audiences.

To complement the Four Season Flower Show the garden has developed activities around four themes: "Tulip Cultural

Tourism Festival", "Chrysanthemum Cultural Tourism Festival" and "Tropical Orchid Cultural Tourism Festival". These have been very successful, especially in spring and autumn. These cultural festivals enrich visitors' cultural and scientific knowledge and promote the cultural importance of the garden. The spring Tulip Show features cultural elements from The Netherlands. Visitors have the opportunity to learn about tulips and experience Dutch culture. In autumn, the garden engages visitors in traditional customs surrounding Chrysanthemum such as eating Chrysanthemum and drinking Chrysanthemum tea.

Expanding marketing channels through "Science Tourism exchange"

With the aim of encouraging science tourism, Wuhan Botanical Garden constantly seeks to expand cooperation channels with the government, communities and enterprises to cultivate mutual benefits, promote the gardens scientific activities, win public trust and develop a solid market for sustained audience development.

Cooperating with the government

Through years of effort, Wuhan Botanical Garden has established relationships with government agencies, including the Science and Technology Association, Hubei Drug Control Committee and



Engaging the public through games using Chrysanthemum (Wuhan Botanical Garden)



Chrysanthemum displays help link plants and culture (Wuhan Botanical Garden)

Wuhan Municipal Bureau of Parks. The garden and these agencies jointly hold popular science activities to create influential activity brands and encourage the stable development of science tourism. The Drug Control themed activities have been found to be the most influential. In 2001, combining an exhibition of images related to drug control with an exhibition of living poppies, Wuhan Botanical Garden developed an effective method for communicating messages related to drug control. Since then, the garden has been expanding the theme and developing further related activities. So far these have reached more than 1.6 million visitors.

Cooperating with communities

Since 2007, botanical experts from Wuhan Botanical Garden have been visiting communities to develop activities out with the garden. This has involved getting to know the issues faced by local citizens and providing solutions, teaching the community to care for plants and prevent pests as well as answering their technical questions. In the past seven years, the garden has developed activities in over 200 communities. Of this work, its joint project with Wuhan Municipal Bureau of Parks has been the most influential. Each year, over 10,000 pots of chrysanthemum seeds are given to about 10 communities who are also

trained in cultivating them. To go along side this, the garden holds competitions to spread knowledge on chrysanthemums in an engaging way.

Developing three-dimensional communication

New media communication platforms

In the context of “Wise tourism”, Wuhan Botanical Garden has developed an integrated communication platform through new media, such as microblog, WeChat, Apps, remote observation and Near Field Communication (NFC) – which allows smartphones and other devices to share information when in close proximity. Through the garden’s official WeChat the public can listen information about plants in real-time. On the microblog the public can acquire real-time popular science knowledge.

The garden’s App is considered a Botanic garden in the palm if your hand to engage the public with the garden itself.

Tour guide commentary

In 2014, having adopted NFC and two-dimensional code technology (like QR codes), Wuhan Botanical Garden has

developed about 1000 commentary tags for plants in the garden, to help the public acquire plant-related knowledge through mobile scanning rather than live tour guides. Moreover, 6 webcams have been installed to broadcast real-time video of plants, thus the public can stay tour the garden from the comfort of their own home.

The news and traditional media

Wuhan Botanical Garden has established relationships with about 30 media channels. When the Garden develops its activities or holds plant exhibitions, these channels give full reports to promote the garden’s work to a wider audience and thus expand its reach and influence

Wuhan Botanical Garden has developed an integrated marketing strategy to generate public participation and awareness. This approach relies on the seamless connection between the gardens plant resources, research achievements and popular themes in science as well as an integrated portfolio of activities and communication streams. This has been reinforced by cooperation with government and encouraged interaction with communities. The garden’s approach can be seen as a reference and role model for other gardens seeking to develop an effective marketing strategy.

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CREATING INNOVATIVE COMMUNICATIONS: SIGNAGE INSPIRED BY THE COMMERCIAL SECTOR

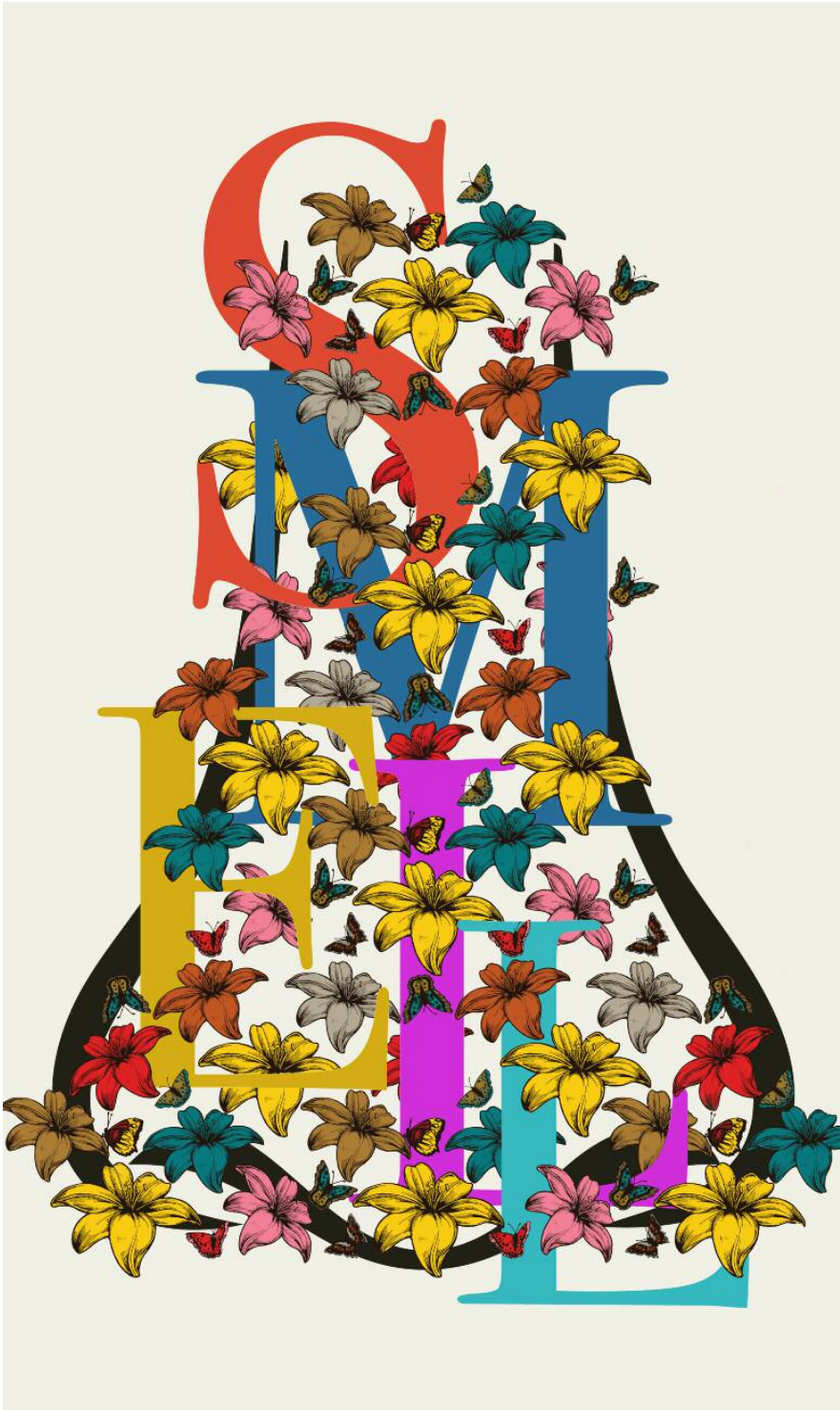


The entrance welcomes a variety of visitors, there for a variety of reasons, to Johannesburg Botanical Gardens (Onke Somtsewu)



Being inspired by commercial signage helps to engage wide audiences. This interpretation takes the theme of a café's specials (Johannesburg Botanical Gardens)

Botanical gardens are excellent centres for education. Despite this they are mostly used for recreation. The Johannesburg Botanical Gardens strive to create opportunities where education can be delivered through recreation. The challenge does not so much lie with schools as there are existing well designed programmes, but in finding opportunities to establish the value of the gardens within the casual visitor. Johannesburg Botanical gardens are frequented by daily visitors exercising themselves or their pets. Engagement on a deeper level with such visitors is limited. Many events such as concerts, weddings and exhibitions are hosted at the botanical gardens. These events create opportunities for engagement but often the desired impact is lacking. How can we communicate with our visitors to ensure they appreciate the important work of the botanic garden? To achieve this Johannesburg Botanical Gardens has created fun and innovative signage, with lessons learned from the commercial sector, to engage with passive audiences and enhance their visit to the garden.



This fun and bright signage seeks to make visitors stop and smell the flowers (Johannesburg Botanical Gardens)

Despite the fact that botanic gardens are excellent centres for conservation, research, education and awareness, they are mostly used for passive recreation. The Johannesburg Botanical Gardens strive to create opportunities where recreation can be used to deliver the scientific, conservational, educational and

environmental messages the garden has to offer. The challenge does not so much lie with schools as there are existing well designed programmes, but in finding opportunities to establish the value of the gardens within the casual visitor. Johannesburg Botanical Gardens are host to 26 species of plants which are classified as endangered, vulnerable,

threatened and rare and kept in the special collections area in the nursery. A brochure was printed detailing these important specimens. Visitors are able to make an appointment to view them, however this means that they are missed by the walkers, cyclists, wedding parties and concert goers.

The gardens are frequented by daily visitors exercising themselves or their pets. Engagement with such visitors is limited

The challenge is to create opportunities to inform them of the full range of services and resources the garden has to offer.

Many events such as concerts, weddings and exhibitions are hosted at the Johannesburg Botanical Gardens. Events create engagement opportunities but often lack the desired impact. The traditional format of an exhibition, i.e. making use of posters and showcasing important plants, does reach certain sections of the garden's audience but the daily visitor is perhaps not aware of these valuable plants, the effect humans have on biodiversity and the role plants play in ecosystems.

How can we communicate with our visitors to ensure they appreciate the important work of the botanic garden?

There are recognised opportunities for doing this, relying on tools such as social media, invitations to events and educational exhibitions, as well as general communication to visitors and signage. Engaging passive visitors requires an approach which learns from sectors outside the botanic garden and museum world. This includes the use of familiar formats of signage and other communications, not usually expected within a botanic garden, based on more commercial trends.

Johannesburg Botanical Gardens are putting some of these ideas into practice with interpretive signage. Each campaign

uses a targeted approach designed to elicit a response from the different visitor groups. The campaigns are still in the design stage. They use everyday signs and symbols and adapt them to the context of the botanical gardens. There are a number of campaigns that will all be launched over the next three months, these include the examples outlined below.

The aim is to have fun with signage and to revise it often to keep people entertained and give them new knowledge

It is based on the premise that a joke is more memorable and engaging than a dry fact. The messages can be reinforced using social media and on the website, which can also attract more visitors.

Traffic sign campaign

This interpretation relies in the familiar canon of traffic signage to provoke an action. It includes signs such as:

*“Stop and smell the roses”
“Caution ahead – endangered species fighting for survival”
“Go – Lithops divergens awaiting your visit”*



Wedding events held at the garden are an opportunity to communicate conservation messages. (Johannesburg Botanical Garden)

The good company campaign

This set of interpretation is targeted at people using the garden as the venue for their wedding.

It is designed to make people aware that the garden is not just a place to take photos but a special place that is host to endangered species with which you happen to share your wedding. It seeks to make wedding guests take note of the special place they are in and will include signage like:

“Congratulations! Your wedding is celebrated in the good company of Haworthia serreta – a critically endangered plant belonging to the family Asphodelaceae.”

The clever people campaign

This campaign is aimed at children and seeks to encourage them to respect their environment. It includes simple and to the point phrases and was conceived as a positive spin on the “do not litter” campaign. It includes messages such as:

*“Clever people love clean spaces”
“Clever people know what dustbins are used for”
“Clever people love wetlands”*

Signage is more effective in attracting the attention and focus of visitors if it uses images and is framed around familiar concepts or ideas (Gibson, n.d.). The message should create anticipation and excitement on the part of the visitor. A positive slogan or humorous message or an interchangeable element that announces special events can provoke positive expectations in visitors.

According to K.C Evans (2008), sign artists, effective signage should:

Visitors enjoy the serenity of Johannesburg Botanical Gardens (Mohammed Loonat)



- be readable – good font and colour scheme are important
- complement the environment in which it is installed
- attract interest – if people keep ignoring signs, a change in the message or appearance of the sign may be needed
- be durable if the sign is expected to be displayed for some time

Signage in local government institutions is often traditional and can often be prohibitive in nature; almost always focussed on the delivery of information. It is important that botanic gardens are not seen to fall into these trends and offer something engaging and interesting to their visitors.

An example of a way in which signage can, not only deliver, but also receive messages from visitors, is by using black boards. Visitors can be invited to leave their own thoughts and messages about what they would like to see in the garden or begin a conversation about a particular topic. Black boards are easy to maintain and cost effective and can create a fun space for our visitors to interact with staff and each other.

Signage in botanic gardens should be an investment. It should engage and communicate with visitors to result in increased loyalty and support from its regular visitors as well as ensuring the institution's messages are understood by the public.

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Concerts attract large numbers of visitors (Johannesburg Botanical Gardens)

PIONEERS IN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

SHEILA VOSS

Team Leader – Educator – Marketing Maven in Service of Earth
Vice President for Education, Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis, MO, USA



Sheila Voss came to garden education from an odd but truly relevant field: marketing! Her early posts included writing promotional copy for an apparel company, where the word “sizzle” was key to selling shirts and pants. When she moved on to write for the education department of Sea World, co-workers sought out her help to “Sheila-fy” their messaging. Around Missouri Botanical Garden today, images and events as well as words excite the capacity to learn in both adults and kids.

Sheila’s own shorthand speech enlivens the efficiency of staff interactions: We all gather “Intel” as we synthesize the “PiecesParts” – always hoping to earn her coveted “YesYesYes!”

Ginny Busch, a longtime friend and colleague in the Busch Entertainment Corporation, recalls how Sheila introduced the Sea World marketing department to some of the country’s most influential conservation organizations. “She understood and used the power of messaging to capture our visitors’ attention. She helped her team make an immediate vivid connection in delivering the educational points they most cared about.” And she let her team shine. Busch remembers Sheila was “not the person in the spotlight, but the ‘do-er’ in the background, helping her entire team to do their best work.”

Today, serving as Missouri Botanical Garden’s Vice President for Education, she leads an entire division of passionately committed educators. Several share their experience: “Sheila has a tremendous ability to connect - with staff and with our audiences.” “She



(Missouri Botanical Garden)

coaches us to balance and blend our mission-related education with the ‘ultimate visitor experience,’ whether that is programmatic or impromptu.” “Her leadership springs from a genuine love of what she does every day.”

As a leader of the core team for the garden’s community-wide BiodiverseCity St. Louis initiative, Sheila leverages the resources of ongoing programs to advance ambitious (and as yet minimally funded) public education and motivation efforts. A recent example is “Biodiversity: Dig In!” This collaboration between garden educators, the non-profit Forest ReLEAF of Missouri (which she serves as a board member), and the St. Louis Public Schools uses tree planting as both community building and nature engagement. The project was developed as part of the garden’s larger Sprouting

Science program, funded by a grant from the Boeing Company. Staff identified five city parks located within walking distance of schools in the program, and worked with the St. Louis City Parks Department to define planting sites for 500 native trees and shrubs supplied by Forest ReLEAF. Students and families – including Sheila and her son Will – participated in Saturday plantings, and learned how to care for their new neighborhood trees.

Garden educators everywhere can learn from Sheila Voss’s leadership style: embodying her desired results. As another staff member states, “She has taught me that you can’t be all things to all people, but, as a division leader, you can be a great listener, supporter, and model of the professionalism you want to see in your team.”



Wakehurst Winter Forest a collaborative artwork (Wakehurst Place)

BRIGHT THINGS - GREAT RESOURCES

FINDING THE FOREST THINKING WALK

<http://www.greatplanthunt.org/biodiversity>

Thinking Walks are based on the Sand Walk which Charles Darwin did each day at his home Downe House in Kent UK. Our Thinking Walks were created between 2009 and 2013, as part of the Great Plant Hunt project, to celebrate Darwin's two hundredth birthday and formed the link between Darwin and plant science for primary schools. Thinking Walks use collecting or selecting devices to focus children's attention on a particular topic or theme.

This resource includes a PowerPoint of lovely images depicting forests, how to make a Forest Finder (the collecting device), going on a Thinking Walk (to explore and find items to attach to the Forest Finder) and ideas for how to use the completed Forest Finders back indoors. The activity is designed to be accessible for all primary children (4-11 years) in urban and rural environments, in any season. The information is presented in a way that makes the resource simple or

challenging to suit differing abilities. It can be used with a class, an after school club, or as a weekend or holiday activity in a variety of settings. It encourages the reuse of materials e.g. newspapers, allowing the theme of sustainability to be incorporated.

In the February half term of 2011, we created a programme around the theme of 'Wood from the trees' for the International Year of Forests. This included activities such as making a

Forest Finder to use in the gardens. Visitors were given the choice of whether they wanted to take their Forest Finder home or add it to our collaborative art work, 'Winter Wakehurst woodland' which grew from one tree to a forest over 5 days. We used rubber bands for easy use with all ages and old newspapers. Children rolled and made their own Forest Finders with the help of their accompanying adults plus our trusty volunteers. There were also other tree related activities for all ages such as creating bark art and looking at wood with microscopes.

We collected feedback in the form of messages on leaf shapes 'Leaf your mark'. These included many which said they loved making the tree and collecting fallen items. Parents and grandparents got involved and made their own Forest Finders too.

The Forest Finder was such a popular activity when we did it in 2011 that we adapted it in 2014 to create a Lucky Dip Meadow Stick for our meadow themed summer activities. Visitors made a similar structure but modified the top to form a



Busy collecting for the Forest Finder (Wakehurst Place)

grass or meadow plant and then they selected a texture, a shape and a colour from our 3 lucky dip bags to add to the stick. They then explored the gardens trying to match their lucky dip selections with things in the garden. A further adaptation for older children would be to use plaited grasses to tie the items to the stick instead of rubber bands.

On the website <http://www.greatplanthunt.org/biodiversity> you will find our other Thinking Walks which include making a Biodiversity Fortune Teller, Plant Champions Dice, and Fractal Fun Finder Cards.

Susan Allan - Manager of Schools and Families, RBG Kew, Wakehurst

Astrid Krumins - Interpretation Producer, RBG Kew, Wakehurst
 Wakehurst is the country garden of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew. It is approximately 500 acres of Botanic Garden, SSSI nature reserve and woodlands in Sussex UK.

Website: <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wakehurst-place/>

Matching texture, colour and shape on the Lucky Dip Meadow Stick (Wakehurst Place)



BOOK REVIEW

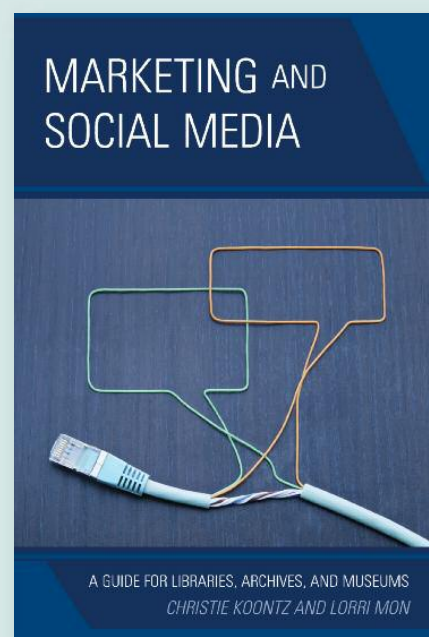
MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA: A GUIDE FOR LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES, AND MUSEUMS

By Christie Koontz and Lorri Mon, 2014

ISBN-10: 081089081X

ISBN-13: 978-0810890817

Publisher: Rowman and Littlefield, Plymouth, UK.



This book seeks to, as the authors put it “be a useful working guide for practitioners and advocates” (Koontz & Mon, 2014:p. ix) and to this end offers a step by step guide for developing, delivering and evaluating an effective marketing strategy for non-profit intuitions. Since it follows this approach it captures the main important themes in marketing and puts them in a practical framework that builds from simple ideas to more complex, in depth methods. Real life examples from museums, archives and libraries contextualize the information and provide working examples. There is even two chapters that consist of detailed case studies in which the authors break down and analyze the marketing carried out by various institutions to offer best practice, recommendations and warnings of the pit falls, challenges and common mistakes that face public serving institutions and provide a marketing toolkit to make the content of the book relevant and applicable to botanic gardens. The book starts with the first steps, including a description of what non-profit organisations can learn from retailers regarding caring for customers needs, i.e. “A customer centered approach” (Ibid :p 1). It then introduces the technicalities of marketing. The authors outline the four step marketing model used in as a

framework for the whole book: 1. Market Research; 2. Market Segmentation; 3. Marketing Mix Strategies; 4. Marketing Evaluation. There is then discussion of the importance and practicalities of understanding the internal and external context of your institution. This includes a guide to completing an effective SWOT analysis: summarising the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats facing an institution and a practical guide to audience segmentation. This offers an institution, like a botanic garden, insight which can increase the efficiency of their marketing and project development. Towards the end the authors turn to discussion of what exactly non-profit organisations are marketing and what they need to consider when developing and promoting their ‘products.’

Each chapter considers its subject in relation to social media. Social media is surely a valuable marketing tool and therefore these sections are extremely useful. There is also a section dedicated to “social media: pros and cons” (p. 158), in which the authors discuss the strength and weaknesses of a variety of social media channels. This serves the beginner very well, but it is worth noting that, considering the speed with which these technologies evolve, it is already (the book was published in 2014) somewhat

outdated. Despite this, it does offer an interesting and useful insight into how best to make use of the unique characteristics of different social media which could be easily applied at a botanic garden seeking to start making its name on the web or used to refresh the methods currently being used.

Useful to those completely new to marketing or those looking for new ideas, tips and rigorous methodologies, Marketing and social media: A Guide For Libraries, Archives, and Museums works well to provide an expansive overview of all aspects of developing and delivering a marketing strategy. The book is particularly useful to educators as it looks at marketing from a holistic perspective highlighting the importance of understanding your audience’s needs and catering to them at every turn, which is surely a sentiment at the heart of engaging informal education.

HAVE YOUR SAY IN THE FUTURE OF ROOTS

BGCI is currently refreshing its education biannual journal and is asking its members to contribute with their comments and ideas on the future of the publication. Please give 10 minutes of your time to provide us with feedback by completing the online survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/refreshingRoots>

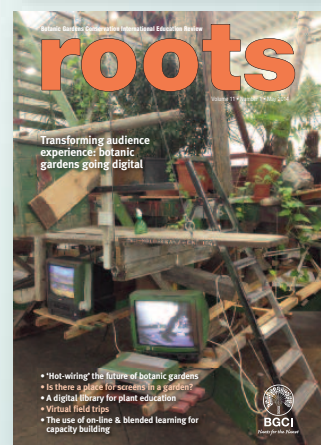
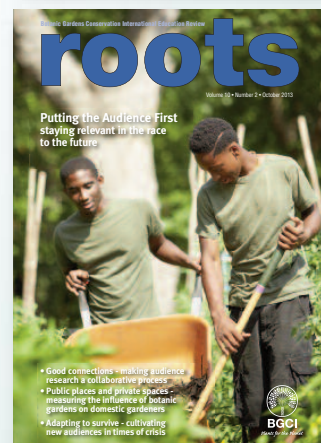
All the data will be used anonymously.

1. Design changes

2. Translations are no longer available

3. Resources section now includes a review of an educational resource contributed by a botanic garden professional and an in-depth book review as opposed to the previous list of books and on-line resources

4. New profile of an inspirational professional from a botanic garden who contributes to public engagement with plants





BGCI

Plants for the Planet

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ISSN 0965-2574



EUROGARD VII, the Seventh European Botanic Gardens Congress

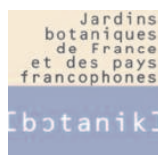
**European botanic gardens in the Decade on Biodiversity
Challenges and responsibilities in the countdown towards 2020**

**National Natural History Museum, Paris
July 6-10, 2015**

The scientific program will be in line with the new version of The European Botanic Gardens Action Plan which will be officially launched during the Conference Agenda.

For further information and to register for the Congress, please visit:
<http://eurogard2015.sciencesconf.org>

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