

“A Plant in Time - A Touring Exhibition”

Background & Objective

‘A Plant in Time’ is an exciting, new, interactive exhibition touring National Trust gardens this year.

It aims to raise awareness of climate change and to help change people’s behaviour as a consequence. It does this through looking at the implications for the National Trust’s collection of 200 historic gardens, highlighting that there’s no better place to start making a difference to the environment than in our gardens. The exhibition makes the link between the complex science behind climate change, translating this into something the average person in the street can understand, helping them visualize what our gardens could look like in the future and how each of us can make a difference.

Concept & Implementation

A pilot workshop provided the opportunity to assess public reaction to the exhibition and have people create flowers for a photo shoot. The images were then used for all pre publicity, including a marketing leaflet, distributed to National Trust properties. The images were also uploaded onto the National Trust’s photographic library, available to press and for publicity banners/materials; all used to help promote the exhibition.

‘A Plant in Time’ featured in the 2010 National Trust handbook, magazine and regional newsletters, distributed to all 3.7 million members.

Celebrities connected with gardening were contacted and asked if they would contribute a flower. Flowers made by Vic Reeves, Jo Brand, Joe Swift and Kim Wilde, among others, featured in the exhibition and were used to help inspire people to make their own flowers.

Audience

The project was aimed at people of all ages and backgrounds, the majority making up the visiting public to National Trust gardens, as well as schools (primary and secondary) and community groups, who were invited to their own specially designed workshops.

Results

Over 20,000 people have visited the exhibition at 18 National Trust gardens nationally, alongside additional workshops at other Trust properties across England and Wales. A smaller version has also toured four major shopping centres in the North of England and the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show.

Feedback from both visitors and National Trust staff and volunteers at properties hosting the exhibition has been overwhelmingly positive. Many visitors commented that although they knew about climate change in theory, the exhibition made the implications much easier to understand engaged them in the issues and encouraged them to take their own positive steps.

Budget

'A Plant in Time' had a budget of £50k which covered the costs of a project manager, the exhibition design, hire of a van, bio-diesel fuel costs, train travel for volunteer drivers, print and production costs, press and publicity. Working with enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers, who gained experience themselves from the project, enabled them to keep costs low.

Judges thoughts:

The Judges enjoyed the creative idea of the campaign. They thought it was a very nice and engaging event, and were impressed by the statistics/numbers.

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