

Development of Educational Materials for Flower Forest Botanical Gardens

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The Flower Forest Botanical Gardens is a 53-acre property with a cultivated 10 acres that attract locals and tourists alike with its flowering plants and tropical trees. The gardens are abundant with plant species endemic to the Caribbean, bred at the gardens, and imported from abroad. The main goal of our project was to enrich visitors' experiences by promoting engagement and appreciation of the gardens through multiple educational materials: plant labels, brochures, a scientific poster, and a promotional video.

The Flower Forest has labels for many plants that include the scientific name, common name, family and origin; however, many plants were without labels, as the database had been last updated in 2018. Our group worked to create 150 more labels to identify the unlabeled plants (including the common name, scientific name, family, and origin on the label) and used different coloured labels to showcase the plants native to the West Indies, imported plants, and plants with special uses.

The Flower Forest had a one-page promotional brochure that needed essential information, which prompted us to create a tri-fold brochure highlighting prominent features of the garden, amenities, basic information, how to get to the garden and the experience at the garden. This brochure would be used in the hospitality industry in Barbados to encourage visitors to the gardens. We created two more brochures: one for flora and fauna and one for special plant uses, displaying plants found throughout the garden with informative descriptions of their unique characteristics and uses. These were created to engage visitors and encourage them to explore the garden. There were a series of studies such as Brito & Pratas that informed the structure and layout of the brochures. Further, peer reviewed articles such as Caio et al. and Burns-Cusato et al. were consulted when writing about the green monkeys and connection between hummingbirds and heliconias in our Flora and Fauna brochure.

We also created a scientific poster explaining the connection between spending time in green spaces and restorative health benefits. This was created for visitors to view before or after entering the garden to promote environmental sustainability and alternative restorative health measures. Williams et al. and Carrus et al. studies were used to explain how botanic gardens can positively influence visitors' environmental attitudes (Williams, 2015). Other peer-reviewed articles such as Hansen et al. and Song et al. studies were reviewed to explain how nature therapy is directly connected to decreasing stress on a physiological level for humans.

Lastly, we created a promotional video for the Flower Forest that features the garden's beauty. We used the United Nations report on facilitating interviews in an ethical manner when conducting interviews of the staff and the owner of the Flower Forest.. We used these interviews in our video so visitors could understand how unique the forest is and what the Flower Forest is about.

The promotional video and brochure will attract more visitors to the garden, while the labels and two other brochures will enhance visitors' experience at the garden.

Our project would not have been possible without the help of our mentor David Spieler, the staff of the Flower Forest, specifically Junior Mascoll and Angela Hurdle and our project supervisor Dr. Caroline Begg.