Pricing and Planning Continuing Education Programs

Tuesday, June 20, 10:15 to 11:45 am

P. Laslett, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, Richmond, Virginia
M. Ross, Longwood Gardens, Inc., Kennett Square, Pennsylvania
L. Vogel, Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Chaska, Minnesota
G. Drake, VanDusen Botanical Garden, Vancouver, British Columbia
S. Hall, Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
D. Himmelman, Mt. Cuba Center, Hockessin, Delaware
Why?
What are we covering today?

• Overview and side-by-side of panelists’ gardens and education efforts
• Each panelist’s approach to planning and pricing continuing education programs
• Breakout: working session to determine how you can better plan and price programs at your institution
Who’s at the Table?

Longwood Gardens
Mt. Cuba Center
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
Royal Botanical Gardens
Minnesota Landscape Arboretum
VanDusen Botanical Garden
Longwood Gardens
Matthew Ross, Coordinator of Continuing Education

- Offered since 1950’s
- 3.5 staff, 39% external instructors
- Annually: 168 classes, 6,126 registrants
- Less than 1% cancellations
- Content/formats: floral design,* landscape design,* ornamental horticulture,* short courses, workshops and tours, professional courses, visual arts, online classes, and conferences
Mt. Cuba Center
Duncan Himmelman, Education Manager

- Offered since 2007
- 4.5 staff, 65% external instructors
- Annually: 130 classes, 3,241 registrants
- 11% cancellations
- Content: gardening, conservation, art, and wellness
- Formats: classes, workshops and lectures, offsite trips
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
Phyllis Laslett, Adult Education Coordinator

- Offered since 1987
- 2.6 staff, 100% external instructors
- Annually: 140 classes, 2,200 registrants
- 13% cancellations
- Content: 8 different program areas
- Formats: Garden walks, demos, lectures, hands-on workshop, studios, symposia
Royal Botanical Gardens
Sabrina Hall, Customer Programs Manager

- Offered since 1947
- 2.25 staff, 60% external instructors
- Annually (2016): 156 classes, 3,238 registrants
- 17% cancellations (2016)
- Content: gardening & horticulture, health & wellness, arts, food, horticultural therapy
- Formats: lectures, workshops, multi-session classes, tours, walks, festivals
• Offered since 1968
• 4 staff, 90% external instructors
• Annually: 164 classes, 4,247 registrants
• 8% cancellations
• Content: horticulture, fine arts, photography, food and wine, pollinators and environment, healthy living, policy
• Formats: lectures, workshops, demonstrations, conferences, and walks
VanDusen Botanical Garden
Gillian Drake

- Offered since 1980
- 1 staff, 100% external instructors
- Annually: 97 classes, 1,265 registrants
- 7% cancellations
- Content: gardening, ecology, botanical arts, health & wellness, plants & people
- Formats: classes, lectures, workshops, multi-session classes, walks
Mission-Based Approach to Programming

Longwood Gardens
Matthew Ross, Coordinator of Continuing Education
Mission-Based Approach to Programming

Where does it all begin???
CELEBRATING CONNECTIONS
HERITAGE • PARTNERSHIP • PROGRESS

Mission
Based Approach to Programming • Where Does it All Begin???
Mission-Based Approach to Programming

Where does it all begin???

- Same ‘ol same ‘ol or “We do this every year”
- Solicitation from instructor/lecturer
- Other gardens are doing it?
- Awareness
- Need to pair it with an exhibit
- To interpret a collection
  – Living or non-living
- Audience demand
- It’s cool
- It’s what popular
- I want to do it
- Someone else wants to do it
- To drive attendance
- For revenue generation
- Or...
What is your **Mission** Statement?
Our Mission

Longwood Gardens is the living legacy of Pierre S. du Pont, inspiring people through excellence in garden design, horticulture, education and the arts.

Our Vision

Longwood Gardens is one of the great gardens of the world. We strive for innovation in horticulture and display.

We present the arts in an unparalleled setting to bring pleasure and inspire the imagination of our guests.

We contribute to society through excellent and diverse education programs, horticultural research, environmental stewardship, and cultural and community engagement.
The Importance of Connecting Continuing Education to Your Mission

• How does EDUCATION fit into your mission?

• What is the directive of your education Department or Division?

• Do you provide free programming within your department or division?

• How does this work into the planning process for developing programming?
  – Filtering through the Mission
  – Provides instant “relevance”
  – Connects with your organizations CORE VALUES
  – Platform for partnerships
The Benefits of Connecting Continuing Education to Your Mission

• Provides justification for programs that may not drive revenue

• Stronger overall connection with programming at your institution

• Increase the likelihood of inclusion in marketing materials

• Organizational support
Case Study: Utilizing Mission in Course Justification

- Longwood Lecture Series
- FREE Lecture Program
- Access to top thought leaders in the world that were principles on the Main Fountain Garden Revitalization
- 9-part series offered over a 3 year period reaching close to 2,000 in person guests
- Recorded presentations for inclusion in micro-site reaching up to 15,000 views online
- Return on Mission (ROM)
Thank you!
Programming Approach

• All programming is mission driven
  • Appreciation of native plants/habitats/conservation
  • Goal: “take action” at home, community, etc.
• 4 categories of courses:
  • Gardening; Conservation; Art; Wellness
  • Use our on-site assets: gardens, staff, etc.
• Class Structure:
  • 1 day sessions or multiple day sessions
    – 1.5 hour “walk & talk” is minimum time for a class ($25)
  • Workshops: professionals + homeowners
  • Lecture Series (new 2017) – 1 hour ($20)
  • Off-site multi-day excursions: (new 2017) – Shenandoah; Delmarva Peninsula
Programming Approach

• Certificate Program (begun in 2014)
  – 14 required courses (158 hrs)
  – 4 graduates 2015
  – 8 graduates 2016

• Intentions: develop MCC identity as “the” place to get steeped in native plants/conservation – not intended as entrée to employment
  – Homeowners
  – Land trust folks
  – Already employed wishing to transition...
Programming Approach

- Attractive to our Audience
  - 50-65 y/o; educated; leisure time; live within 1 hr. drive
  - High quality experience (content and presentation)
- Unique to Mt. Cuba Center
  - 33 gardens in the vicinity! Brand identity is important!
- Pricing Model: Challenging! (33 gardens)
  - Start with per hour rate
  - Adjust for topic (plants & gardening vs. art)
  - Materials fees included in price of class
  - Class fee includes garden entrance fee
  - Does not include staff salaries /overhead
Member vs. Non-member

• Do not have a membership program
• Have “Season Passholders” (i.e. members):
  • 10% off Certificate courses only
• Pricing: no Member/Non-M differential
Revenue Generation

• New focus at Mt. Cuba Center
• No weddings; no commerce (*i.e.* shop)
• Endowment: doesn’t last forever
  – Objective is to develop revenue streams over next 20 – 25 years
    • Visitation: 2016: 46% of MCC income
    • Education: 2016: 54% of MCC income
    • 2017: increase each by 5 to 8%
Revenue Generation

• All classes must make a profit (break-even +1)
  – cover all class expenses
  – pricing model does not include staff salaries, overhead

• Marketing is key:
  • Our website
  • E-blasts from Education (targeted to students)
  • Monthly newsletter to all MCC associated people
  • Social media: FB, Instagram
How to Increase Revenue?

- Increase class pricing?
- Certificate Program: minor pricing increase?
- Offer second tier Certificate?
- Offer sections of classes in evenings/weekends
- Go slightly off-mission???
- Offer more classes in the November to March time frame? (MCC is closed to visitation Nov – April)
- Market classes as “Exclusive” approach?
- Professional level programs?
- Marketing: new strategies?
Thank you!
Pricing Strategies: Position Yourself for Success

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
Phyllis McLeod Laslett, Adult Education Coordinator
### By the Numbers

#### Horticulture
- **7,861** Total accessions
- **5,538** Total taxa/unique types of plants
- **876** Total genera
- **204** Total families
- **1,762** Total species
- **3,776** Total cultivars
- **8,995** Current total groups of plantings
- **19,003** Total groups of plantings since 1985

#### Education
- **1,757** Adult guided tour and group program participants
- **2,318** Adult education program participants
- **14,087** Students participating in education programs
- **354** Students in service learning and vocational programs
- **546** Teachers participating in workshops

#### Guests
- **467,143** Total annual visitation (general admission, students, rental clients, shoppers, divers, etc.)
- **86,629** Dominion GardenFest of Lights visitation (16-17)
- **11,485** Highest daily visitation (Genworth Free Community Day, Labor Day 2016)
- **4,718** Highest Dominion GardenFest of Lights visitation (December 22, 2016)
- **1,290** Daily average visitation

#### Members
- **22,776** Adult members
- **13,774** Member households

#### Communications
- **717,621** Total website sessions
- **480,590** Total unique website users
- **27,051** eNewsletter subscribers
- **15,931,852** Advertising impressions
- **2,405,050** Social network followers

#### Personnel
- **66** Full-time staff
- **650** Volunteers
- **47,351** Volunteer hours worked
- **24.3** Equivalent full-time staff with volunteers

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Calendar Year 2016

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**Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden: 2017-2022 Strategic Plan**

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**Celebrating Connections**

**Heritage • Partnership • Progress**
Adult Education at Lewis Ginter

More numbers
263 / 998
$10 / hr
Staff & volunteers are free
Non-member price pegged to cost of admission
Instructor compensation: more than some, less than others
Rule of thumb for break-even

**Formula**

5-hour class = 2, 2.5 hr classes

5-hour class @ $40 base rate + 2 prep hours =

$280 instructor fee / Cost of class = $50 (5 hrs x $10)

6 minimum
Max is 12 = ok
Max is 10 = recalculate
**Consider**

- Class offerings at mission-driven non-profits are discretionary purchases
  - Avocational
  - Social
- What does your community want?
  - What makes your offerings unique?
    - Availability? Unique collections?
- Practicalities
  - Competition
- Strategies
  - Negotiation
  - Ride the wave
  - Analysis
Consider a Certificate Program

Fits the niche between community colleges and university offerings

- Lewis Ginter:
  - Gardening & Garden Design, Floral Design, Certificate of Competence in Botanical Illustration

- Pros
  - A way to organize existing classes into a logical sequence
  - Creates a motivation
  - Simplifies planning

- Cons
  - Attendance in upper level classes drops off
  - Need to provide incentives for students completing course to come back

- Care and feeding
  - Find an easy way to track student progress; semi-annual reports
  - Step up handouts & materials: notebooks / folders
  - Show that you take it seriously
Nuts & Bolts: Determining Prices

Sabrina Hall, Customer Programs Manager
Nuts & Bolts: Determining Price

- Mission-driven but with revenue-generating targets
- How much instructional time? What type of program?
- What are your base costs/expenses?
- What is your competition offering?
- How are registrations processed?
  - By staff or Online: incorporate ‘booking fee’? Hidden in cost or upfront as add’l fee?
  - Provincial/State taxes? Added at the end, or rolled in and rounded up?
- Based on above responses:
  - What’s your break even # of registrations? Is this attainable?
  - Is the program able to run at a loss (loss leader based on mission)?
  - Member discount?
Paddling in Paradise

Length of program: 3 hours

Base expenses and constraints:

- Internal staff = 3 hrs lieu or paid $100
- 10 canoes = 20 people max. less instructor

Max. Revenue: 19 * $45 = $855

Cost: $45 (tax incl.)

Variable Operating Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor's Fee</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Materials Costs</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brochure Development Graphic Design Fee</td>
<td>$28.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing Costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Expenses</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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Revenues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Registrants</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Cost per Participant</td>
<td>$45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Projected Gross Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$855.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Revenue Contribution</strong></td>
<td><strong>$701.15</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profit Margin</strong></td>
<td><strong>82%</strong></td>
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</table>
# Junior Gardener’s Club

## Variable Operating Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor’s Fee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Materials Costs</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brochure Development Graphic Design Fee</td>
<td>$14.10</td>
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<td>Printing Costs</td>
<td>$12.82</td>
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<td>Other Expenses</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,516.92</strong></td>
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## Revenues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Registrants</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Cost per Participant</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Projected Gross Revenue</strong></td>
<td>$2,850.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net Revenue Contribution</strong></td>
<td>$333.08</td>
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<td><strong>Profit Margin</strong></td>
<td><strong>12%</strong></td>
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*Photo © MarkZelinski.com*
## Multi-Session Programs

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<th>Variable Operating Expenses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor's Fee (10 week session)</td>
<td>$660.00</td>
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<td>Materials Costs</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brochure Development Graphic Design Fee</td>
<td>$28.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing Costs</td>
<td>$25.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Expenses</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$713.85</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenues</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Registrants</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Cost per Participant</td>
<td>$125.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Projected Gross Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,500.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Revenue Contribution</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,786.15</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Profit Margin</strong></td>
<td><strong>71%</strong></td>
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## Intoxicating Plants: Tequila & Mezcal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Operating Expenses</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor’s Fee</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials Costs (Tequila and Mezcal)</td>
<td>$370.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochure Development Graphic Design Fee</td>
<td>$28.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Printing Costs</td>
<td>$25.64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Expenses (Catering)</td>
<td>$625.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,048.85</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenues</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Registrants</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Cost per Participant</td>
<td>$75.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Projected Gross Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,875.00</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net Revenue Contribution</strong></td>
<td><strong>$826.15</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Profit Margin</strong></td>
<td>44%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## RBG Tea Festival

### Revenue Estimates
- Vendor table fees (24 @ $150) $3,600
- Admissions ($16 GA, aim for 150) $2,400

**Projected Gross Revenue $6,000**

### Expenses Estimates
- Tea cups $1,200
- Pipe and drape $350
- Coffee/muffins for vendors $150
- Brochure $250
- Signs $250
- Door prize $100

**Projected Total Expenses $2,300**

**Projected Net Revenue $3,700**

**Projected Profit Margin 62%**
### RBG Tea Festival

#### Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Actuals</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vendor table fees</td>
<td>$1,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions (540 tickets sold)</td>
<td>$4,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,825</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Actuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tea cups</td>
<td>$1,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipe and drape</td>
<td>$315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee/muffins for vendors</td>
<td>$165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochure</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door prize</td>
<td>$75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,185</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Net Revenue** $4,370

**Profit Margin** 64%
## Build an Institutional Pricing Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Program Details</th>
<th>Non-Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>2-hr program (Child/Adult)</td>
<td>$10/$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>Speaker's Series (Members $6)</td>
<td>$18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General, 2-hr</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>$25 + up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessions (8 weeks)</td>
<td>Botanical Watercolour</td>
<td>$165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessions (10 weeks)</td>
<td>Yoga, Tai Chi, Drumming</td>
<td>$125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Workshops</td>
<td>Half-day Workshop</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Botanical ID Workshops (2-day)</td>
<td>$310</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10% Member Discount on all programs
* Student, Staff and Volunteer rates

Many of the same “types” of programs will begin to fall into a category, and your net revenue calculations will become less...
Get the most out of a program

• Beg, borrow and steal ideas - modify and build around criteria that will make them succeed at your institution

• Winner/early sell-out? Offer an additional class!

• Loser? Don’t be afraid to let it rest

• Social media and website:
  – Pictures, pictures, pictures!
  – Publication to feature programs
  – E-blasts (targeted or generic)
  – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
Thank You!
Adding Value without adding Cost

Gillian Drake, Customer Programs Manager
What is Value? - Value is personal

Know Your Community
What do they care about?
What do they want for themselves?
What do they want for the community greater good?

Do they even want more stuff?
Do they want information that they can get online?
Do they want a fun and enriching experience?

What will they pay more for, because they find value in it?
The Stuff - Takeaways

Items made in class: compost teabags, herbal vinegars, planted containers

Seeds
Plants (4” class demos, tree donations)
Hand lenses
Demo made during class
Books/other donations
The Stuff - Consumables
You want people to feel great about participating, and about your organization.

Make it:
• Welcoming
• Fun, personal and positive
• Educational and relevant
• Easy to take part
• Unique
• Of the highest professional standards
The Importance of the Experience

Every new class participant is potentially a donor

It can be far more than a class
• Facilitate emotional and social connections
• A key part of the lifetime engagement with the Garden
• The enhanced relationship is a very positive feedback mechanism for future registrations, membership, bring-a-friend, giving to the Garden
Exclusive Opportunities

- Hang out with staff gardener
- Build something in the Garden (ie lasagna garden)
- Behind-the-scenes
- Small batch beer never available again

Sell it as exclusive: “class limited to 15 participants” with “long-time staff gardener”
Plants - Your collections!
- Get the class outside for a while.
- Participants have a breath of fresh air, diversified learning experience, deeper engagement with the garden, increased probability of retaining information, introduced to unknown parts of garden.
- Clearly warn participants to come prepared!

Longer-term benefits for your Garden
- New audiences have a taste of the garden
- Course becomes more appealing to Garden Guides, who then spread the info to other guides, visitors
Use Your Best Resources

The Experience – Use Your Best Resources

People

- Garden staff
- Volunteer Teaching Assistants – they work every class because we can’t
- Contract instructors

Set them up for success

- assist instructors to use the garden – show them plant examples, locations for activities, route for walk
- Keep them informed of garden news
- Office Volunteer to summarize evaluations
Use Your Best Resources

Places: Library, classroom, greenhouses?
Knee Deep In The Organic Veggie Garden

Participants learn:
• Class-specific objectives
• In a multi-sensory way

But also:
• That VanDusen sends all the food to the Food Bank, and that the summer camp kids do the harvesting
• That VanDusen runs summer camps
• VanDusen’s overarching sustainability guidelines
• The importance of the ecosystem approach to gardening
First evening
- Presentation by staff from local brewery and botanist on staff at VBG
- Microscopes showing resin on hops, germinated barley
- Tasting of two beers brewed specifically for this event, from materials collected in the Garden

Second evening
- tour & tasting at Bomber Brewing
When Should You Give It Away For Free?

No additional costs incurred

Celebrating those who “Garden for the Greater Good”
K-12 teachers & PAC
BC Housing Community Garden sites
Bring-a-friend last minute discount for registrants
Vouchers for instructor to give away
Thank you!
Breakout Session: Let’s Get to Work!