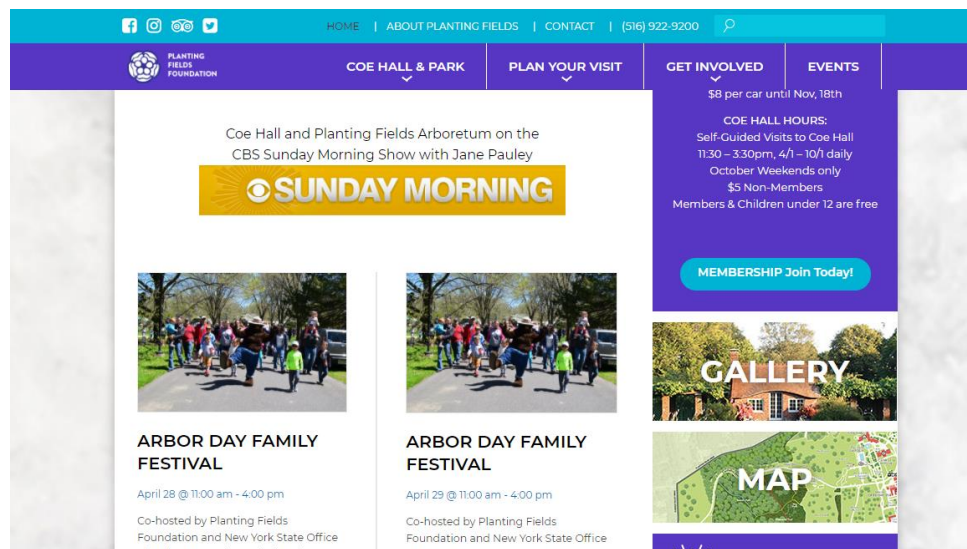Nicole Castellano

Museum Observation 1

Planting Fields Arboretum is a visitor-oriented arboretum, especially during the Spring-Fall months. Most of the interactive activities for Planting Fields are at the arboretum, with the website's home page posting many of the different events that will be taking place over the next few months. These events include festivals, concerts and daily tours.
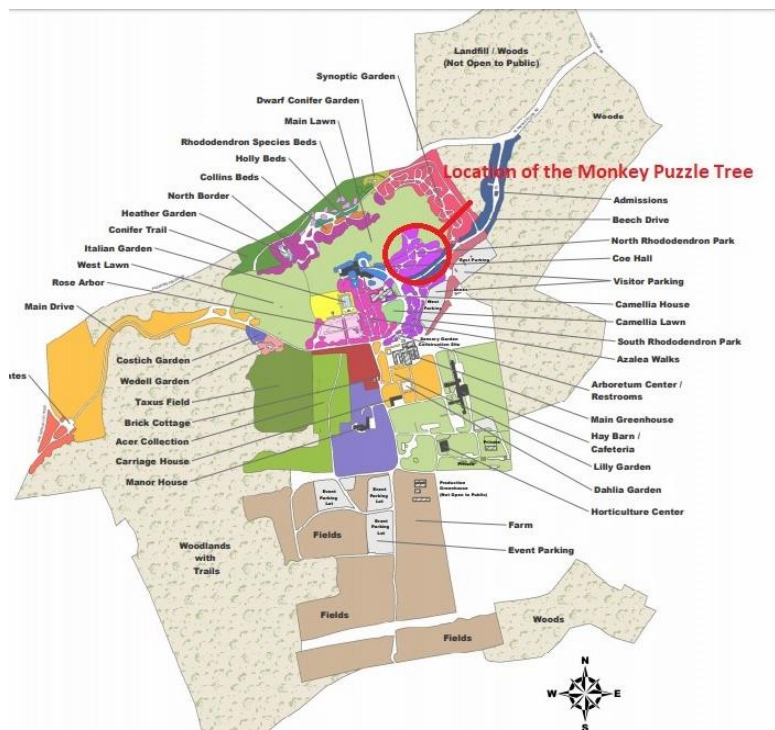

Figure 1- Screenshot of Planting Fields Foundation Homepage

Planting Fields Arboretum is a unique experience among museums because most of the exhibits are still living and not encased. This creates a special experience where there is no boundary between visitors and the exhibits. Whether at an event or a tour, visitors can get up close and personal with the plants:

> We connect our objects (plants) in multiple ways. We direct our visitors to various garden locations using maps and wayfinding signs. Once a visitor has found a specific collection, each plant within that collection is labeled. Display labels contain pertinent information, Including common name, Scientific name

(genus, species), cultivated variety, family, and origin. In addition we provide

scheduled tours of the grounds to highlight noteworthy plants in our collection,

this is one way we highlight the Monkey puzzle to our visitors.[1]

A person can also plan their visit according to the locations they wish to see most by

using the map located on the website. The Monkey Puzzle Tree is located in the North

Rhododendron Park and it can be identified by its label.

Figure 2- Screenshot of the Monkey Puzzle Location

[1] Michael Runkel, e-mail message, March 20, 2018.

Figure 3- Onsite picture of the Monkey Puzzle Tree Label

For people who are more interested in the life-cycle of the actual plants, there are also maps for the Synoptic Garden and Woodland Trails that "… [offer] visitors the opportunity to observe the growing habits and aesthetic qualities of each plant in all four seasons."[2] For people who really enjoy the aesthetic design of Planting Fields Arboretum, they are allowed to take their own pictures without permission, such as this picture of the Monkey Puzzle Tree.
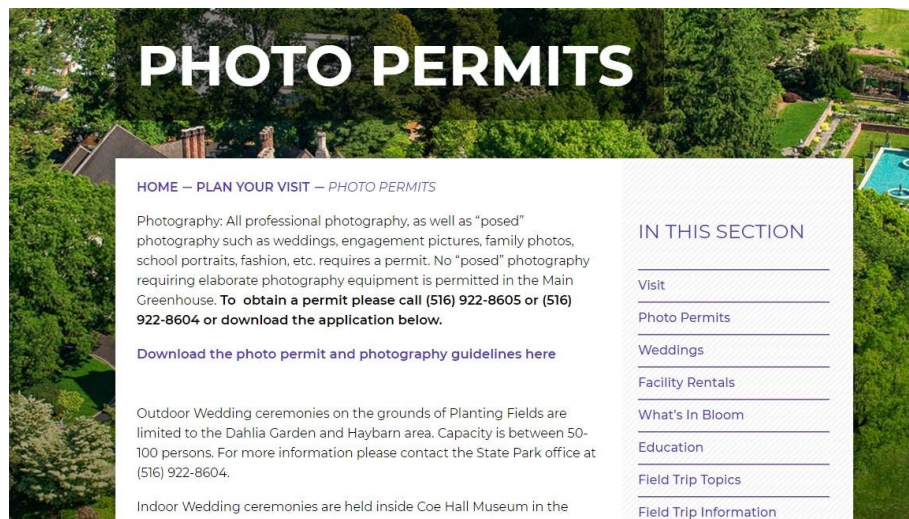
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[2] "Synoptic Garden Map and Guide," *Planting Fields Foundation*, last modified 2017. https://plantingfields.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Synoptic-Garden-MAP.pdf.

Figure 4- Onsite Picture of the Monkey Puzzle Tree

Or visitors can have professional photos taken for weddings and other events as well with a photo permit that can be located on the website.

Figure 5- Screenshot of The Planting Fields Photo Permits Page

For people that cannot get to the arboretum, there are still ways for visitors to discover what's located in the gardens. There's a gallery page on the website that shows

pictures of plants in the arboretum, but activating the dropdown menu on the "Coe Hall & Park" option leads to many different links that have information on the entire park, whether it's historical information about the Coe family or an archive of plant listings. If a person knows which type of tree he or she wishes to find, that person can request more information on the archives using an "Archives Request Form."

Figure 6- Screenshot of The Planting Fields Dropdown Menu and Archives Page
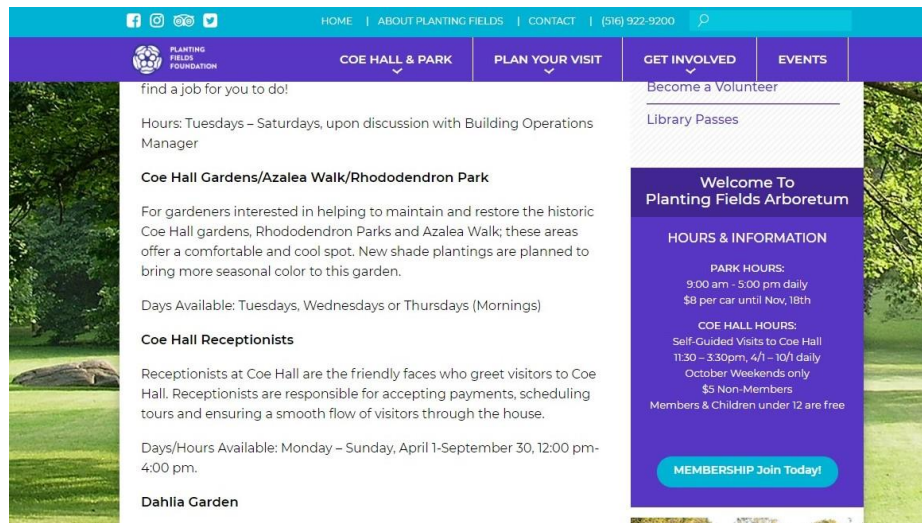
There are also many programs that are being created for Planting Fields to expand how people can interact with the arboretum, either in person or from home: "In the future we will have a web based searchable database of all our collections. This will allow visitors to search for specific plants or even memorial trees from their phones or personal computer before they arrive at the arboretum."[3] Being able to search for specific plants and trees will give people a more personal experience when visiting Planting Fields.

There are also opportunities for people who want more of a hands-on experience with Planting Fields. Visitors are able to sign up for memberships, engrave a brick on the grounds, or volunteer. For visitors who want to become volunteers, they actually have the
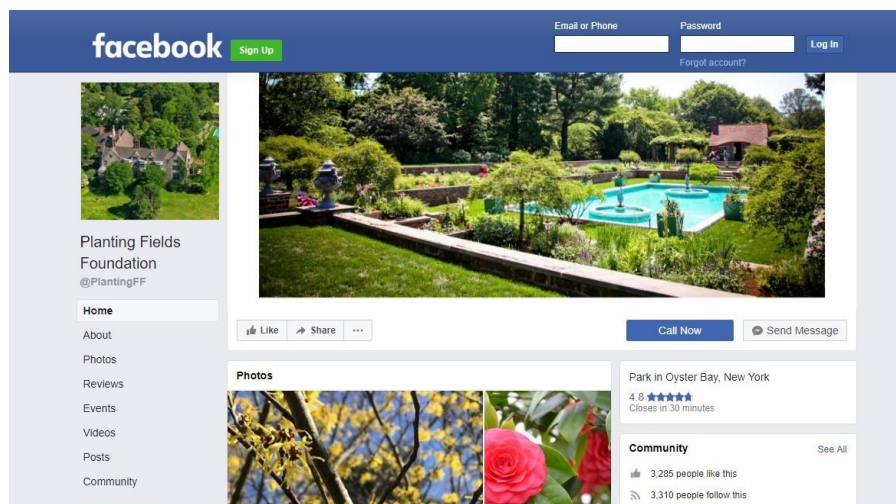
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[3] Michael Runkel, e-mail message, March 20, 2018.

opportunity to maintain the gardens in Planting Fields. There is even an option to help

garden in the Rhododendron Parks, where the Monkey Puzzle is located.

Figure 7- Screenshot of The Planting Fields Volunteer Opportunities Page

Beyond the actual arboretum and the website, Planting Fields also has a strong

social media presence. Planting Fields has accounts on several social media websites,

including Trip Advisor, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. The homepage of The

Planting Fields Facebook account shows its positive reviews from past visitors, and also

allows new visitors to post their reviews as well.

Figure 8- Screenshot of The Planting Fields Facebook Page

The Facebook page is public, so people don't need an account to look through the photos and past reviews, but they will need an account in order to post their own reviews.

Visitors who go to Planting Fields Arboretum will find that this particular arboretum is focused on providing opportunities that will bring people closer to the plants, and, with enough information, people can even look for specific plants, such as the Monkey Puzzle Tree. People don't even have to be at the arboretum in order to enjoy the exhibits being displayed. Between the online sources that both list and photograph the plants and the events at the arboretum that celebrate nature, visitors have many different ways to connect with Planting Fields Arboretum.

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    MAP.pdf.

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    MAP.pdf.