

Each business owner has their own circle of people, and every one of them plays a part in curing plant blindness. BLOOM! is a tool that boosts the signal on how diverse the green industry is in the United States.

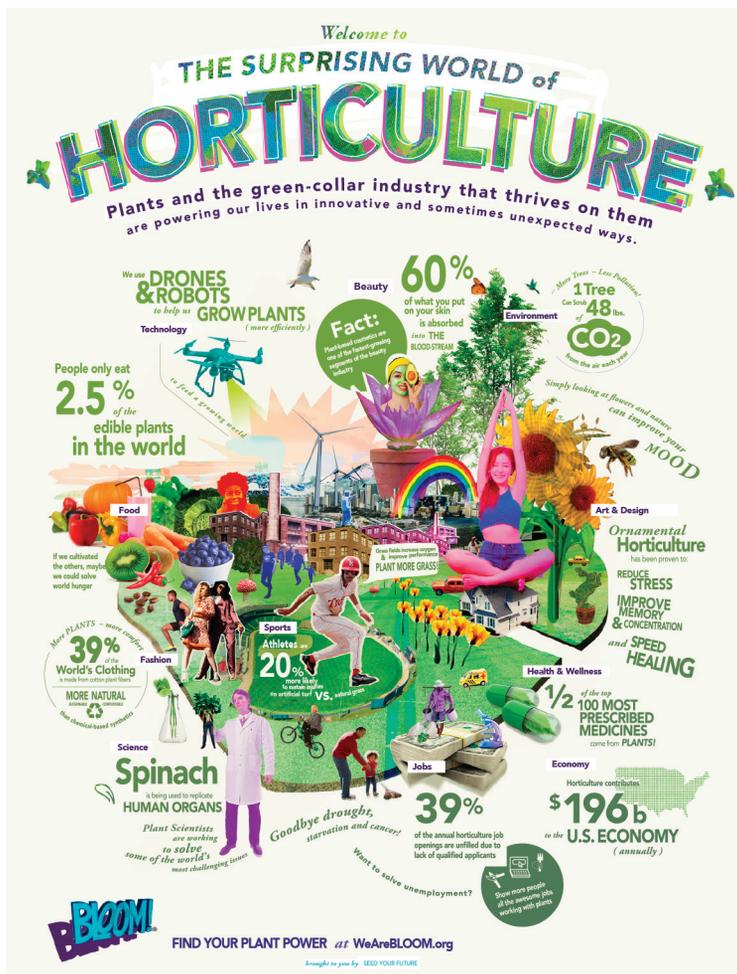
“Some people have already used the videos and tools to help their own businesses think about how to get more people interested in plants — not necessarily the ‘careers in horticulture’ piece of our work — but just this idea of how plants are making an enormous impact on our planet,” Yoder said. “Once they know more about plants you can entice them with stories of the awesome careers in the green-collar industry.”

Wholesale growers and nursery operators will find the large-format infographics and posters valuable when interacting with their network of customers, business partners, and associates, too. The WeAreBLOOM YouTube videos are easy to share, and new ones will be released over time. They can be downloaded at tinyurl.com/yb42hz8n, and nurseries can use them in their own stories.

Creating the custom message

Like any business investment, Seed Your Future wanted to ensure that there would be the best possible return on investment with their campaign outreach, so they conducted plenty of market research. Many focus groups were brought together with kids, their teachers and their parents to dig into the mindset of the youth marketplace.

“It was really fun!” Yoder said. “We went to them and first asked them what they wanted for their futures. Then we asked them about plants and careers in horticulture. We mined a rich library of information and strategies from them.”



From there, Yoder and her team used that material to create a messaging tool that works to bridge the gap between the kid's diverse personal interests and a plant-related job or career area. In the spirit of today's teen idols or even imaginary heroes with superhuman powers, the team invented a set of customized personas — or behavior-specific profiles — that feed off traits that already inspire young minds, and added a plant-friendly twist.

The tool became known as the Plant Powers.

“So, for a kid who is already interested in a particular thing, we're making the connection for them in the plant world,” Yoder said. “One example comes from talking with kids who were really, excited about professional sports, but maybe they won't end up in the big leagues as an athlete someday. We talk about great jobs working with plants that keep them close to the sport, such as groundskeepers and irrigation specialists. We show them how someone working in these fields can help their teams do better.”

“The Challenger,” one of the first in the package of eight Plant Powers, was made for the sports-oriented kid who can cheer the team on without the need for a helmet. On their website, www.wearebloom.org, they give a brief description and a short video of many ways to support horticultural professions and products that help the players on the field.

Other Plant Powers include the Guru, a technology-focused individual; the Artist, someone specializing in visual arts; the Foodie, who cooks with plants in mind; the Trendsetter, a designer or stylist considering natural fibers; the Health-Nut, a nutritionist or diet consultant; the Master Mind, a researcher for plant breeding; and the Guardian, a social justice warrior.

Yoder states that there are going to be 18 total Plant Powers for the full campaign, which will be released over time. Many Oregon businesses, known for their sales of trees and shrubs, can look forward to future plant powers centered around the topic of urban forestry and the ways we can scrub CO₂ from the atmosphere.

Discovering what a kid's plant powers are is as simple as an interactive, online quiz. A series of drill-down questions asks them to pick from fun icons like a green alien head to say they like science fiction, or giving them the choice of picking a hamburger, paintbrush, or microscope. Based on their answers, the kids are matched to one of the prescribed Plant Power personas.

The free marketing materials available to download on their website, www.WeAreBLOOM.org.

Seed Your Future began in 2014, with its origin story published in *Digger Magazine* in June of 2017 (read the full article at www.diggermagazine.com/future-people). ©