



SEED YOUR
FUTURE®

Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Revised May 2018

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MISSION, VISION AND GOALS

MISSION

To promote horticulture and inspire people to pursue careers working with plants.

VISION

We envision a U.S. where:

Everyone understands and values the importance of plants and the people who work in the art, science, technology and business of horticulture.

GOALS

1 – Awareness

Create a favorable perception of horticulture and increase awareness of the value of horticulture and careers working with plants.

2 – Education

Engage, educate and excite youth about horticulture and careers working with plants.

3 – Workforce Development

Increase the workforce in horticulture and develop a strong pipeline of future talent.

4 – Partnerships

Cultivate and strengthen partnerships and collaborations to advance our mission; and diversify and broaden the base of volunteers, advocates and supporters.

5 – Resource Development

Increase financial supporters to ensure sustainability of the movement.



WHAT IT WILL TAKE



Goal 1 - AWARENESS

Create a favorable perception of horticulture and increase awareness of the value of horticulture and careers working with plants.

Objective A

By Q1 2019, leverage market research to create a multi-faceted communications and marketing plan with tailored messaging for prospective industry members by target audience.

Key Tactics:

1. Expand and execute the current campaign targeting tween and youth influencers – BLOOM!
2. Define and prioritize other market segments to create campaigns for each audience.
3. Design, build and optimize a robust digital engagement platform which includes both unique Seed Your Future-generated content and links to other compelling content from partner organizations.
4. Create and/or curate messages, including videos, that tell the exciting personal stories of people in horticulture careers; and that demonstrate the diversity and rewarding facets of horticulture careers.
 - a. Customize messaging for key audiences, utilizing audience-specific imagery, phrases and words that resonate with that market.
 - b. Continually scan the environment to keep abreast of how to appeal to the youth market with appropriate language and imagery.
5. Capitalize on existing trends (e.g., urban jungles) to align Seed Your Future with each audience and increase relevance.
6. Integrate earned, owned, and paid media strategies, as appropriate, into each campaign.

Objective B

By Q2 2019, define and illuminate pathways to entry into the horticulture industry through higher education and/or alternative training programs.

Key Tactics:

1. Provide detailed information about horticulture career opportunities, benefits of working in these careers, and information about how to prepare for these careers.
2. Continue to expand Seed Your Future's role as an aggregator of horticulture career resources and information nationwide.
3. Utilize social media to highlight career success stories.
4. Promote access to this information through social media channels and distribute to key youth influencers.

Objective C

By Q1 2021, position Seed Your Future as a leader in US horticulture workforce development resources and education.)

Key Tactics:

1. Further develop the Seed Your Future parent brand to communicate the value of horticulture and support outreach efforts within the industry (e.g. funders and industry partners) and outside the industry (e.g. government institutions, parents, youth program leaders, educators).
2. Create a product hierarchy with campaigns for each target audience under the Seed Your Future brand.



Goal 2 - EDUCATION

Engage, educate and excite youth about horticulture and careers working with plants.

Objective A

By Q2, 2019, identify gaps in curriculum support needs for specific grade levels and provide or curate educational materials to support teachers.)

Key Tactics:

1. Pursue relevant partnerships with school and teacher groups to help assess needs and collaborate to provide free resources and materials.
2. Inventory existing sample curricula, lesson plans and activities available from other partners and organizations.
3. Expand the clearinghouse resource by curating existing sample materials, or creating new materials, that support school curriculum needs to demonstrate how lesson plans and activities utilizing horticulture concepts can be integrated into existing requirements.
4. Continue to engage industry program partners who are credible with educators to share the Seed Your Future message and materials (*e.g.*, Scholastic).

Objective B

By Q4 2018, identify program needs of specific grade levels to support out-of-school time youth program leaders.

Key Tactics:

1. Pursue partnerships with out-of-school time organizations to help assess needs.
2. Inventory key out-of-school time youth programs and their program needs.
3. Inventory and provide information about existing youth horticulture competitions and contests.



Goal 2 - EDUCATION

Engage, educate and excite youth about horticulture and careers working with plants.

Objective C

By Q4 2018, provide resources and educational materials to serve as a clearinghouse to support youth exploration of horticulture careers, and youth influencers' encouragement of that exploration.

Key Tactics:

1. Establish informal youth advisors to assist in assessing what youth need and want to be able to explore potential career and college options.
2. Attend state and national association events for teachers and youth program leaders to build relationships and better understand their needs.
3. Target specific out-of-school time groups to collaborate with on this objective including: Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the USA, 4-H, FFA, American Camp Association, Boys and Girls Clubs.
4. Collaborate with parent groups to build relationships and better understand the resources parents need to assist their children in career exploration.
5. Build digital capacity so that the Seed Your Future website can serve as a resource portal for youth, teachers, parents and other youth influencers.
6. Create a clearinghouse resource by curating existing materials or creating new materials that support in-school and out-of-school time youth programs with lesson plans and activities related to horticulture concepts.
7. Post on the Seed Your Future website and promote resource availability through multiple channels, including social media.
8. Assess the first year of BLOOM! materials with Scholastic and develop plans for following years.



Goal 3 - WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Increase the workforce in horticulture and develop a strong pipeline of future talent.

Objective A

By Q1 2019, understand the current employment data related to the horticulture industry in order to inform the future progress of the movement.

Key Tactics:

1. Obtain baseline data regarding the current employment state of the horticulture industry (including skilled and unskilled professions) including but not limited to salaries, degree/certificate requirements, retirement projections, and unfilled position statistics.
2. Curate and make available information about the current employment status of the industry.
3. Pursue partnerships with relevant organizations (NGO and government) to continue to assess the employment status of the industry.

Objective B

By Q2 2019, complete foundational work to increase the number of horticulture students in college and university programs.

Key Tactics:

1. Obtain baseline data of the current number of horticulture students in college and university programs.
2. Collect and maintain accurate information about 2- and 4- year college and university horticulture programs across the country and post on the Seed Your Future website.
3. Create a new area on the Seed Your Future website for resources for colleges and universities.
4. Pursue/increase relationships and information sharing with colleges and universities.
5. Collect and maintain information about scholarships available for 2- and 4- year horticulture students at colleges and universities and post on the Seed Your Future website.
6. Pursue partnerships with youth horticulture programs (*e.g.*, FFA, 4-H, National Junior Horticultural Association) to encourage youth enrollment in higher education/certification programs in horticulture. (See objective C below).
7. Develop and implement an effective communications plan that expresses the positive benefits and life-rewards of working in the horticulture industry (see Goal 1 as well).
8. Attend and present at key college- and university-related events (*e.g.*, Association of Land Grant College and Universities, Council on Agricultural Extension Teaching).



Goal 3 - WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Increase the workforce in horticulture and develop a strong pipeline of future talent.

Objective C

By Q3 2019, encourage and support certification programs, apprentice programs and other alternative pathways to careers in horticulture.

Key Tactics:

1. Obtain baseline data of current certification programs, apprentice programs and other alternative training programs for horticulture careers.
2. Collect, maintain, and post on the Seed Your Future website, information about certification programs, apprentice programs and other alternative training programs for horticulture careers.
3. Collect, maintain, and post on the Seed Your Future website, information about scholarships available for certification and apprentice programs.
4. Pursue partnerships with relevant organizations providing training for horticulture careers to encourage enrollment in certification and apprentice programs.
5. Examine the feasibility of creating a (or promoting nationally an existing) program to provide college AP credits to high school students in horticulture programs through articulation agreements, etc.
6. Examine the feasibility of creating a (or promoting nationally an existing) certification program that is evaluated and recognized by potential employers and can be used to secure jobs.
7. Attend and present at key events of organizations dedicated to certification programs, apprentice programs and similar groups.



Goal 4 - PARTNERSHIPS

Cultivate and strengthen partnerships and collaborations to advance our mission; and diversify and broaden the base of volunteers, advocates, and supporters.

Objective A

By Q1 2019, establish a set of organizational principles regarding partnerships that allows for partners to support the work of Seed Your Future, and that positions Seed Your Future to help promote the existing and future initiatives of other organizations that align with our mission.

Key Tactics:

1. Scan the environment to locate other initiatives that are promoting horticulture and encouraging people to pursue careers working with plants.
2. Develop partnership guidelines and protocols and share with potential partners to establish shared understanding of any partnership agreement.
3. Pursue partnerships with organizations that can assist in the implementation of the strategic plan – and those that Seed Your Future can assist in promoting their aligned initiatives.
 - a. Identify and attend appropriate partner meetings/industry events to promote Seed Your Future and to learn about their initiatives.
4. Utilize Seed Your Future's digital platform and social media channels to promote appropriate initiatives of partner organizations.

Objective B

By Q4 2018, identify, recruit, and leverage volunteers to help implement the strategic plan and advance the mission of Seed Your Future.

Key Tactics:

1. Cultivate and maintain an influential, diverse, and engaged National Leadership Cabinet and Advisory Council to lead and govern the organization.
2. Identify and consistently review a list of potential stakeholders to ensure that all segments of the horticulture industry are represented within the volunteer leadership of Seed Your Future.
3. Regularly assess our contemporary volunteer engagement model that offers opportunities for volunteer involvement that are significantly varied and diverse, allowing for short- and long-term participation by a wide variety of individuals based on their level of interest in our work.
 - a. Create, utilize and sunset volunteer committees and work groups to best align with the strategic plan and advance the mission.
 - b. Provide written roles and responsibilities for volunteers at all levels.
 - c. Provide clear direction to volunteer groups.
 - d. Continually monitor effectiveness of volunteer work and adjust as needed.
4. Identify and solicit media influencers, *e.g.* performers, media personalities and celebrity chefs, as ambassadors and messengers for the movement.
5. Harness Master Gardeners and others as ambassadors and messengers for the movement.



Goal 4 - PARTNERSHIPS

Cultivate and strengthen partnerships and collaborations to advance our mission; and diversify and broaden the base of volunteers, advocates, and supporters.

Objective C

By Q1 2020, establish relationships with national educational groups to advance the mission.

Key Tactics

1. Scan the environment to determine and consistently update the list of appropriate national educational groups (*e.g.*, NASSP, CCSO, FFA, 4H, Homeschool Network).
2. Develop and implement outreach action plans for appropriate national educational groups.
3. Explore and leverage best practices of other organizations that are successfully engaging students in the out-of-school time (*e.g.*, National Recreation and Parks Association, American Camp Association, Afterschool Alliance, YMCA of the USA).

Objective D

By Q4 2019, increase awareness of and support for horticulture and careers working with plants with key policy influencers and public officials.

Key Tactics:

1. By Q1 2019, develop a public policy agenda.
2. Collect industry data across the country.
 - a. Understand where horticulture careers rank within each state.
 - b. Identify the ten largest horticulture states.
 - c. Understand federal legislation related to specialty crops (horticulture).
3. Create and communicate the economic impact about the value of the industry and the career opportunities it provides.
4. Pursue opportunities to meet with key policy influencers and public officials across the country.
 - a. Pursue opportunities to speak at appropriate events (*e.g.*, State Secretaries of Agriculture Conference.)



Goal 5 - RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Increase financial supporters to ensure sustainability of the movement.

Objective A

By Q4, 2020 increase fundraising and resource development efforts by \$9,000,000.

Key Tactics:

1. Continually assess the resource development goals and resources developed in 2017. Refine as needed.
2. Utilize the fundraiser's toolkit as a resource for fundraisers to cultivate donations for the movement.
3. By Q4 2018, identify and begin working with a crowdsourcing firm.
4. Update the three-year budget projections and develop correlating fundraising goals.

Objective B

By Q1 2019, explore potential public and private sector workforce development grants to fund specific initiatives.

Key Tactics:

1. Scan the environment for potential grant opportunities.
2. Submit at least three grant applications per year.

Objective C

By Q1 2021, evaluate the status and stability of the organization in order to consider whether separation from the fiscal agent is needed and warranted.

Key Tactics

1. Develop key indicators of if and then when to move from a model of a fiscal agent to a stand-alone non-profit.
2. Engage leaders from the fiscal agent (American Society of Horticultural Science) and the employer of the staff (Longwood Gardens) to recommend the future status of the organization to the National Leadership Cabinet.

