



MEMORANDUM

Date: October 1, 2008

To: Parks & Community Services Board

From: Nancy Kartes, Bellevue Botanical Garden Manager
Parks & Community Services

Subject: New Interpretive Kiosk at Bellevue Botanical Garden
(Informational – no Board action requested)

At the Tuesday, October 14th, 2008 Parks & Community Services Board meeting, I will present information about the Bellevue Botanical Garden's new prototype interpretive outdoor kiosk.

The Challenge:

The Bellevue Botanical Garden's mission is to display plant collections for the purposes of horticultural demonstration and education. We work hard to balance our display and educational objectives, and one of our biggest challenges is finding ways to integrate informational and interpretive tools to enhance the visitor experience and connect people to our plant collections without detracting from the beauty of the gardens.

The Solution:

Visitors can now access information about our collections via our Online Searchable Database from a strategically located electronic touch-screen kiosk located within the Garden. Fully coordinated with the Garden's plant database, the outdoor kiosk provides visitors access to information within the entire BBG plant collections database. The educational value of this project lies in its delivery of plant information to patrons while they are within the Garden and takes advantage of the merits of situated learning, the ability to educate through immersion and direct interaction with one's physical environment.

The Process:

After the project concept was accepted by the IT Governance Committee, implementation required interdepartmental cooperation by the IT Department, Parks Planning and Resource Management divisions, and the Bellevue Botanical Garden Society (BBGS). The project was funded by an external funding agency via the BBGS.

Next Steps:

The kiosk will be tested, fully exposed to the elements, for one full year. A user survey is available on the kiosk to help inform future content development and placement of additional kiosks within the Garden. We are seeking funding from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust (2008) and Institute of Museum and Library Services (2009) for equipment, curatorial internship, and consultant fees for database design improvements. These efforts will ensure the integrity of the underlying data and enrich the e-learning environment. We would like to share project details with others as we believe this technology may have broader application in Parks and other departments.