NOTTINGHAM BOTANIC GARDEN QR CODES

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In 2017, the Worcestershire group exhibited a stand at the Chelsea Flower Show which won a Silver Gilt Medal. As well as their ground-breaking revolving stand, they used a very innovative idea to label their plants: something called QR codes. These are square, digital patterns that, when scanned on a smartphone (with a QR code reading app), will take you directly to more information or pictures.

As soon as I heard about this, I knew it was an idea that would add a little bit of something to the Botanic Garden. While I was teaching, I was using this QR code idea in my history classes. I would create codes, print them out, then hide them around the classroom. The idea was that the pupils would be allowed to use their smartphones in class - an immediate hit - to scan the codes for information to complete a question sheet, or just collect clues for a QR treasure hunt-style game.

One morning, a member of the Friday group made a chance remark about how only the older generation were interested in gardening. My creative juices began flowing, and the link was made; I would create QR codes, attach them to plant labels and the younger generation (and silver surfers, although I loathe that term) could scan away and learn something about the plants.

I have to add that, although I had the idea and could create the codes, it took the technical expertise of Notts Group Newsletter Editor, Erica Thomson, to link it with her garden photos and really get the idea off the ground.

There are twenty plants in the Nottinghamshire Group Botanic Garden that will have QR Codes on their labels, so if you get the chance to visit, don't forget to download a QR code scanner app (*QR Reader* or *Red Label*, for example).

Do go onto the Botanic Garden page of the Notts Group website and have a look. We have called the page *Plant Stories* - **www.nottmhps.org.uk/botanic-garden/plantstories** - and, even if you do not have a smartphone or you never intend to use a QR scanner, you will be able to see exactly the same information as those smartphone users.

I hope the stories and plants I have chosen are of interest and/or stimulate discussion. It is not a finished project; if you have a plant story to tell, please do share it with me and I will happily create more codes.

Try using a smart phone to decipher this QR code

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